

## SSM Health Care's new St. Clare Health Center goes green from the "top down"

One of the most overlooked areas of any hospital for making a major positive ecological statement is literally over people's heads: *the roof*.

But Premier member St. Louis-based SSM Health Care plans to top off its new 430,000-square-foot acute care facility, SSM St. Clare Health Center, with a state-of-the-art "green roof" when the hospital opens in Spring 2009, thanks in part from a \$55,000 grant from The Home Depot Foundation. The grant will also be used to develop educational materials highlighting the benefits and value of the green roof and other landscaping initiatives on the healthcare campus being built in Fenton, Mo.

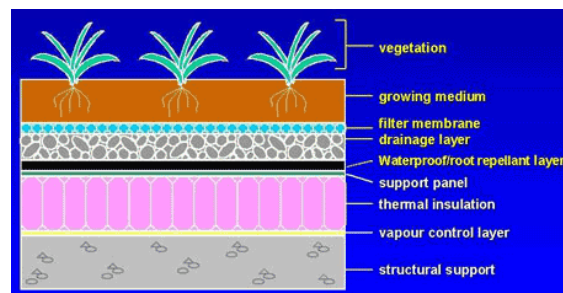


**Rendering of SSM St. Clare Health Center, scheduled for Spring 2009 opening.**

SSM St. Clare Health Center will replace SSM St. Joseph Hospital of Kirkwood, which will close when the new facility begins operations.

The green roof is just part of what SSM Health Care plans as part of a "unique healing environment, inside and out" in St. Clare Health Center. The design of the 54-acre campus will take full advantage of the site's natural beauty and soothing qualities, including rolling hills, water features, lush landscape and wooded areas. Simply put, according to a hospital spokesperson, "it will make being in a hospital feel less like being in a hospital."

SSM St. Clare Health Center will feature a full-service, 154-bed hospital with the latest in clinical technology and information systems, a 24-hour emergency department, comprehensive medical/surgical services including heart, cancer, orthopedics and women's services, and an outpatient care center offering one-stop convenience to a full range of diagnostic and outpatient services.



To many, SSM Health Care is on the cutting edge in designing its new hospital, thanks in part to its partnership with The Center for Health Design's Pebble Project research

program, a unique partnership of hospitals and healthcare systems dedicated to facility design.

“Our goal is to redesign the healthcare experience, from the ground up, for patients, physicians and staff,” said James Sanger, President/CEO of SSM Health Care-St. Louis. “Without question, this is not going to be your traditional, cut-from-the-same-mold hospital.”

Indeed, green roofs are a relatively new phenomenon in U.S. construction, but have been popular in Europe for decades.



**Example of green roof vegetation.**

According to Green Roofs for Healthy Cities, a founding member of the World Green Roof Infrastructure Network, a typical green roof system boasts a high quality water proofing and root repellent system, a drainage system, filter cloth, a lightweight growing medium and plants. Green roof systems may be modular, with drainage layers, filter cloth, growing media and plants already prepared in movable, interlocking grids, or, each component of the system may be installed separately.

Green roof development involves the creation of “contained” green space on top of a human-made structure. This green space could be below, at or above grade, but in all cases the plants are not planted in the “ground.”

### **Benefits of green roofs**

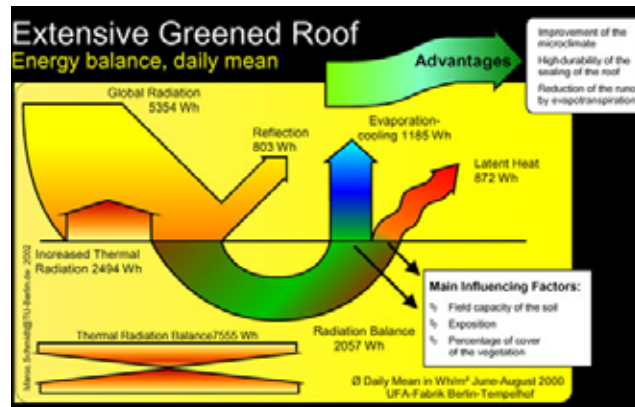
St. Clare’s green roof will be planted with low-maintenance foliage that will provide improved drainage and storm water retention, added insulation and improved air quality, according to a spokesperson for SSM Health Care. SSM said the roof will prevent heat absorption, overcoming the “heat island” effect typical of large roof surfaces.

Green roofs can provide a wide range of public and private benefits, according to Green Roofs for Healthy Cities.

Green roof technologies not only provide building owners with a proven return on investment, but also represent opportunities for significant social, economic and environmental benefits, particularly in cities.

Benefits include:

- Potential to reduce the size of storm water management ponds or cisterns, resulting in cost savings.
- Potential for grants related to energy efficiency and/or green roofs.
- Potential to reduce the size of heating, venting and air conditioning equipment, resulting in significant capital and operational savings.
- Potential to reduce the amount of standard insulation used.
- Protection of the building's roof membrane, resulting in decreased maintenance and savings in replacement costs. Some estimates show that a typical green roof will last up to twice as long as a conventional roof.
- Savings on energy heating and cooling costs, depending on the size of the building, climate and type of green roof. A typical one story building with a grass roof and 10 cm (3.9 inches) of growing medium would result in a 25% reduction in summer cooling needs.
- Sound insulation. Soil, plants and the trapped layer of air can be used to insulate for sound.
- Aesthetic appeal, increasing the value of the property and the marketability of the building as a whole, particularly for accessible green roofs. For example, American and British studies show that "good tree cover" adds between 6 to 15 percent to the value of a building.
- Food production. Some facilities use their green roof systems to produce organic foods. For example, the Fairmount Waterfront Hotel in Vancouver uses its green roof to grow herbs, flowers, and vegetables, saving its kitchen an estimated \$30,000 a year in food costs.



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