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ROCK ISLAND, Ill. — Quad Cities MetroLINK recently began construction on its \$33 million Transit Maintenance Facility in the Quad Cities area, which is located on the Iowa-Illinois border. The 150,000-square-foot, single-story project aims for LEED Silver certification from the U.S. Green Building Council. Quad Cities MetroLINK is the primary public transportation system in the area. The facility is slated for completion in early 2014.

Meridian, Colo.-based firm CH2M HILL serves as the lead designer on the project. The company was brought back for this project after developing a master plan for MetroLINK in December of 2006. The project was intended to be very green from the beginning, as the MetroLINK representatives instructed the design firm to develop a structure that could provide a showcase for the Federal Transit Administration's Livable and Sustainable Communities Initiative. The initiative focuses on lowering emissions, redoubling efforts to make sound land management decisions and meeting the needs of all public transit riders.

Bush Construction, based in Davenport, Iowa, was selected as the general contractor. Jennifer Garrity, MetroLINK's manager of administration, explained that the firm was selected because "they have considerable expertise in sustainable construction."

A.J. Loss, president of Bush Construction, said he felt the highly visible project would inspire local business leaders to consider green projects of their own.

"Green buildings save money in heating, air-conditioning, electricity and water usage costs. They can offer incredible benefits for a building's efficiency and for the environment," Loss said. "They are also more comfortable and healthier for the people who use them."

The facility will include a bio-swale to absorb storm water, cutting down on the amount of runoff entering the sewer system. At least 75 percent of the construction waste will be recycled.

A photovoltaic solar array will provide energy to heat water for the on-site bus-wash system. This part of the project will be funded by a grant from the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation. The independent foundation was established in 1999 with a \$225 million endowment from Commonwealth Edison, the largest electric utility in the state.

High-efficiency window glazing and other lighting control strategies will create a more efficient and comfortable structure. A white thermoplastic polyolefin roof will also increase efficiency by reflecting heat, while also providing a tight waterproof seal.

The new facility will more than double the number of buses that can be stored on-site, jumping from 57 vehicles at the old location to 120 at the new building.

The updated structure will also help grow the green vehicle portfolio at MetroLINK, with an on-site compressed natural gas fueling station. Seventy percent of the fleet currently runs on natural gas. The new facility will allow the entire fleet to be stored on-site and allow for possible expansion in the number of vehicles later.

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A rendering of the Quad Cities MetroLINK Transit Maintenance Facility displays the solar panels, bio-swale and high-efficiency roof, which administrators hope will make the structure a beacon for green design in the area.