

Business

Baltimore stone company first tenant in new green office building

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BALTIMORE -

If you're going to talk green, you might as well be green, says Rachel Taylor.

Taylor recently moved her 10-year-old stone products company, Athena Stone, into office space in a new energy-efficient and environmentally friendly building at the refurbished Lucky's Warehouse in Brooklyn on the Middle Branch river.

"I realized if you talk about being part of the green movement, you've got to be a part of the green movement," Taylor said at her new office, complete with concrete floors, 9-foot-tall windows and a clean energy system.

Athena Stone, with about 25 employees, fills the entire first floor of the building.

Rachel Taylor, president of Athena Stone, and Michael Furbish, president of Furbish Co., stand on the roof of the newly refurbished Lucky's Warehouse, with solar panels and other green amenities, in Brooklyn. — Chris Ammann/Examiner

The company outgrew its office space at Tide Point, and Taylor said she was eager to capitalize on the benefits of energy-efficient building techniques.

"The utility bills at Tide Point are outrageous," Taylor said. "Here, our bills will be a fraction of what they could be."

The three-floor, 18,000-square-foot building features a clean energy system that offers tenants energy cost savings of about 65 percent over conventional systems, said Michael Furbish, owner and founder of the Furbish Co., a Baltimore firm specializing in sustainable building techniques. Furbish purchased the building, renovated the structure and will soon relocate his offices to the location. About half of the building is still available for lease.

Furbish equipped the building's roof with 28 4-foot-by-10-foot solar panels. The panels collect solar energy to heat water in a 1,500 gallon water tank, secured with several layers of insulation on the roof.

The water then flows beneath the concrete floors, heating and cooling the floors and creating a comfortable climate in the office. When the sun is in short supply, a geothermal heat pump taps the heat stored beneath the ground. Double-pane windows keep the building well-insulated.

"Developers have been a little slow to jump on the [green building] bandwagon," Furbish said. "The marketplace is really demanding more of it."

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