



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**CONTACT:** Sean Ryan, Communications Director  
[sean.ryan@cityofracine.org](mailto:sean.ryan@cityofracine.org) or cell: 262-977-3595

## **Hotel Verdant's LEED Gold Certification Adds to Greening of Racine**

RACINE, WI - On Earth Day, Mayor Cory Mason visited Hotel Verdant in downtown Racine, which recently became the second hotel built in Wisconsin to achieve a national LEED Gold certification for its sustainability features.

The city has supported several sustainable developments in recent years, including Hotel Verdant, and has new pilot programs in the works this spring to also protect the environment.

"The city of Racine's growth is improving both its economy and environment," Mayor Mason said. "The Hotel Verdant is a great example. It is creating jobs and bringing more visitors to the city, while attracting national recognition for its sustainable technology."

Dominion Properties' Hotel Verdant expanded and restored the former Zahn's department store building at 500 Main St., creating 80 hotel rooms, two ballrooms, the Marguerite restaurant, a rooftop lounge and small plates destination called Eave, and the new Café Verdant coffee and cocktail bar that recently opened on its first floor. The hotel opened for business in August 2023, and gained the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, or LEED, Gold certification this month.

"Community is at the core of this hotel, designed to be a true living space for all and implementing sustainable initiatives," said Mike O'Connor, principal and CEO of Dominion Properties. "Ensuring we keep our footprint at a minimum is essential to that mission. The property's unique sustainable elements, from renewable energy use, to eco-minded transportation offerings and food & beverage operations, go hand-in-hand with Racine's spirit of community and appreciation for the region's natural beauty."

Hotel Verdant's sustainable features include solar panels and wind turbines on its green roof. A geothermal system cycles water from underground wells to heat or cool the hotel, depending on the season.

That achievement this month means the city of Racine has 14 commercial developments that earned a LEED certification. Racine ranks fourth among Wisconsin municipalities in achieving that green building standard.

The city of Racine provided financing to help make the Hotel Verdant development possible. Other projects that received city help, including Belle City Square, and the Breakwater 233 apartments under construction downtown, also meet high standards for sustainability.

Mason said the city of Racine is pursuing several new programs this year to address waste, the city's ecosystem and clean water, for example.

"Racine continues to embrace new practices and technology that mean a healthier environment for future generations," Mason said. "These steps will make the city cleaner, and more prosperous."

The city's No Mow May pilot program debuts this year. This program was approved by Common Council and allows residents who register with the city to let their lawns grow from May 1 – May 31 without mowing. The fee is \$25 and those registered will receive a yard sign showing their exemption from the city's weed height restriction. The goal of No Mow May is to provide more flowers to feed pollinators like butterflies and bees that play an important role in growing fruit, vegetables, and flowers.

Efforts are also underway to enroll Racine residents in pilot programs that will turn food waste into compost to use in gardens. The city and private sector partners like Hotel Verdant and the Racine Interfaith Coalition are working with Compost Crusader on those efforts.

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*Racine, Wisconsin, is a thriving city located on Lake Michigan with a rich history and diverse population of about 76,500. Known for its historic downtown, award-winning architecture, top freshwater beach, strong community, and notable contributions to history and innovation, Racine is a wonderful place to live, work, and explore. From its progressive history as part of the Underground Railroad to its status as the Kringle Capital of America, there's always something new to discover in Racine.*