


BUSINESS VANCOUVER

Mountain Equipment Co-op moves to new False Creek Flats HQ

\$28 million, 112,000-square-foot site touted for sustainability as it was built to LEED Platinum standard

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 Retail & Manufacturing (/sections/retail-manufacturing/)

By Glen Korstrom

About 300 of Mountain Equipment Co-op's (MEC) 820 B.C. staff are moving to a new headquarters in the False Creek Flats.

The \$28 million, 112,000-square-foot complex at 1077 Great Northern Way near the VCC-Clark Skytrain station, was built to the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Platinum standard, which is the highest level possible in that U.S. Green Building Council-operated program.

Some sustainable aspects of the four-storey building include that:

- rainwater is stored, reused and then captured in gardens;
- heat is drawn from underground geo-thermal wells; and,
- sensors monitor sunlight to automatically lower and raise blinds and switch lights on and off.

"For more than two decades MEC has been developing and operating some of Canada's most advanced green retail buildings," said CFO Sandy Treagus.

MEC bought the four-acre site in 2008, just before the global economy tanked.

Albion Fisheries, which formerly operated on the site, [moved to an expanded headquarters of its own in 2012](http://www.biv.com/article/2012/2/albion-fisheries-expands-to-larger-headquarters/) (<http://www.biv.com/article/2012/2/albion-fisheries-expands-to-larger-headquarters/>).

Once the economy normalized, the outdoor equipment and clothing retailer forged ahead with its plans to move.

Proscenium Architecture applied with the City of Vancouver to rezone MEC's Great Northern Way site to increase the amount of office space allowed and MEC submitted a detailed development proposal.

All the while, hundreds of MEC staff worked out of a 43,000-square-foot site on West Fourth Avenue, where cubicles were piled high, hallways were narrow and obstacles hindered movement.

"We're really cramped for space," MEC CEO David Labistour [told Business in Vancouver in 2011](http://www.biv.com/article/2011/9/david-labistour-peak-performer/) (<http://www.biv.com/article/2011/9/david-labistour-peak-performer/>) during a tour of that office.

MEC ranked No. 29 on BIV's list of largest private companies in 2014 with nearly \$320.9 million in 2013 revenue. The company has 17 stores and 3.75 members. Shoppers are required to buy a membership in order to buy items.

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