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Business doings

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Blue Cross invests in eco-friendly building

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina expects the 100,000-square-foot office that it's building in Durham to cost about 3 percent more than traditional construction projects, but that it will recoup the expense through energy savings and conservation.

The five-story building will use 65 percent less energy and half the water per square foot of the health insurer's other offices. The building is expected to house about 550 employees consolidated from separate offices.

The building is expected to open by next summer. The company will join an increasing number of Triangle projects in applying for certification by the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, or LEED, rating system.

It is part of a broader effort by Blue Cross to cut energy consumption by 25 percent and water use by 20 percent by 2010.

Blue Cross "is establishing a new threshold for businesses and governments in North Carolina with regards to energy and water efficiency," said Larry Shirley, director of the state Energy Office, in a prepared statement.