The Grand Opening of the Richmond Plunge After 10 Years of Restoration Work

The Richmond Plunge, a swimming pool first built in 1926 for area residents has undergone a 10-year, complete facelift and was dedicated on Saturday, August 14 at 11 AM.

Todd Jersey Architecture, highly regarded as a pioneer in the green architecture movement, stepped in and developed and implemented the renovation plan to transform this community icon into the greenest and healthiest pool in the U.S.

**Using solar to heat 324,000 gallons of non-chlorinated saline water in the huge, 60 X 160 foot pool**  
The saline aquifer water for the pool is warmed by 80 Heliodyne Gobi 410 collectors in an Active Closed Loop pool heating system with Delta T Pro.  The technology also includes an Amtrol expansion tank. The solar hot water system was installed by Sun Light & Power based in Berkeley, CA.

**No Chlorine!**

There are 3,500 square feet of solar hot water panels for the pool's 324,000 gallons of water, 30 kilowatts of solar panels for electricity, 300 operable windows, a hyper-efficient boiler and sophisticated pool pumps. And the pool itself doesn't use chlorine. It's a saline pool that uses an ultraviolet disinfectant system. Kids and others will be able to swim without goggles.

**Sustainably Rebuilt for the Future**

The many sustainable features make the Plunge the greenest and healthiest public pool in the U.S. Features include new technology for water conservation, energy efficiency and savings, natural ventilation, a repurposed historic mushroom fountain, and even a victory garden on the large underused west side of the structure for growing food for the community.  Tens of thousands of gallons of water will be saved annually.  Natural ventilation and the reduction of chloramines in the water will make swimming in the Plunge a truly healthy experience.

**A community effort that took many years**

The $7.5 million pool was paid for through city redevelopment money, funds from a regional voter measure, individual grants and also the donations - some as small as $5 - according to Ellen Strauss, president of the Save the Richmond Plunge Trust. The Richmond Plunge Trust raised money and awareness. They paid for a documentary, held garden tours, sold memorabilia and had a classic car show in the process of raising $500,000.

**Bringing Together People of all Races and Backgrounds**

Back in its day and prior to restoration, the Richmond Plunge was so large that people learned scuba diving and kayaking in the pool. There were programs for the disabled and infants - going on simultaneously. ***As the City of Richmond evolved, attracting white, black, Latino and Asian Americans, The Plunge was a place that brought everyone together.***

**The History of the Plunge and Its Restoration**

Citizens of Richmond successfully promoted a bond issue in 1926 to create the Richmond Municipal Natatorium, at that time a "state of the art" two-story building with an indoor warm water swimming pool, a fountain, observation balconies, and an open truss ceiling reminiscent of the Sutro Baths in San Francisco. Richmond's population was about 20,000 at that time, grew to over 200,000 during the "war years" and is now about 80,000.

For all of these 70 years the "Plunge" has been a distinctive asset to the City of Richmond where youth, elders, those with infirmities and illness, have come to swim, exercise, maintain mobility, recuperate and just enjoy family activities. It has been utilized by residents of Contra Costa, Alameda, Solano and Marin Counties. The Plunge has been open to all ages, races, economic status, physical abilities and life status. Through the years the City of Richmond has struggled to keep it open and meet the costs of staffing while faced with the almost crushing urban issues of poverty, unemployment, and violence. The City has endeavored to address the ongoing maintenance of the facility in the face of declining economic conditions. Most major improvements have been deferred and seismic retrofitting has become financially unfeasible. In November 1997, the City Council realized they did not have the funds to retrofit the building and determined they had no option but to close the Plunge permanently.  
  
Richmond Friends of Recreation, organized in 1979 as a non-profit organization with the purpose of supporting community recreation programs, spearheaded a major rehabilitation of the pool equipment and repainting of the structure. Through the years RFR has sponsored recreation-related activities such as swimming instruction at the Plunge for elementary grade students from local public schools. RFR, responding to appeals of Richmond citizens, is now working with the City in a unique Public/Private Partnership to raise the necessary funds to retrofit, upgrade and reopen the Plunge. It has established a "Save the Richmond Plunge Trust" under its tax-exempt status and has raised over $154,000 in cash and in excess of $40,000 in kind donations from local business owners. RFR has committed to an ambitious campaign of appeals to corporations, foundations, and individuals and a calendar of community events to recruit workers and raise funds.

**About the Richmond Plunge**

For information regarding the hours, programs and fees for the routine daily operations of the Richmond Plunge, call the City of Richmond's Recreation Department at 510-620-6793. For background on the Plunge renovation, please visit [www.richmondplunge.org](http://www.richmondplunge.org).

**About Todd Jersey Architecture**

Todd Jersey Architecture was hired to rehabilitate and renovate the historic Richmond Municipal Natatorium-"the Plunge"-in Point Richmond, California. Constructed in 1925, The Plunge is the oldest and largest indoor pool in the San Francisco Bay Area. Once a popular spot for year-round swimming and aquatic therapy, it had been closed since August 2001 because of seismic hazards.

Todd Jersey Architecture, a pioneering green architecture firm in Berkeley, California, has been developing, refining and implementing green building systems and strategies for over twenty years and has designed innovative and cost-effective green architecture projects throughout Northern California. Todd Jersey Architecture's green building projects include mixed-use and creative re-use projects, condominiums, homes, hotels, schools, public buildings, historic renovations, churches, and retail stores.

**About Sun Light & Power**

Sun Light & Power, a certified Alameda County (California) green business is a design/build solar firm based in Berkeley, CA with 34 years of leadership in alternative energy systems and innovative designs for homes and businesses.

The company is committed to creating living environments that serve people's intrinsic needs, supports the human spirit and preserves the planet's resources for future generations.

Founded in 1976 by Gary Gerber (who is the 2008, 2009 and 2010 President of the California Solar Energy Industries Association - CALSEIA), Sun Light & Power is the first renewable energy contractor to be certified by the Alameda County Green Business Program. Gary Gerber, P.E., president and founder, brings over 34 years experience to each commercial and residential project. The company's professional staff includes specialists in engineering, system installation, project management, electrical system design, financing and contract administration. More information at: [www.sunlightandpower.com](http://www.sunlightandpower.com/)

**About Heliodyne**

Established in 1976, Heliodyne has a reputation for engineering and manufacturing quality solar water heating equipment for both residential and commercial applications. With offices and manufacturing facilities in Richmond, California, the company manufactures and assembles a variety of solar water heating products including solar flat plate collectors, control units and heat transfer appliances.