



# U.S. Department of Energy



Pressed for office space, the U.S. Department of Energy's National Energy Technology Laboratory in Morgantown, West Virginia, built a four-story administrative support facility to house some 200 federal employees. After evaluating competing furniture proposals, the lab elected Herman Miller's Passage desking system for its enclosed offices.

**GOVERNMENT;**  
MORGANTOWN, WEST VIRGINIA

**Topic:**  
*Health*  
*Sustainability*

**Application:**  
*Open Office*  
*Private Office*  
*Conference*

**Project Scope:**  
*200 occupants; 203 workstations;*  
*108,000 square feet*

**Herman Miller Product:**  
*Passage® Desking System*  
*Ethospace® System*  
*Action Office® System*  
*Meridian® Pedestals*  
*Meridian Stackable Lateral Files*  
*Meridian Storage Cases*

**Program/Service:**  
*Easy Options<sup>SM</sup> Capability*  
*Mock-up Program*

**Year Completed:**  
*2008*



Operated by the U.S. Department of Energy, the National Energy Technology Laboratory in Morgantown, West Virginia, is one of five national labs responsible for energy and environmental research.

With hundreds of federal employees and contractors on site, the Morgantown campus has long been pressed for office space. To resolve the issue, the lab opened a four-story Technology Support Facility to consolidate many administrative functions under one roof.

But how to furnish the new facility? Twenty years earlier, another office building on site had been equipped with a mix of Herman Miller furniture, mostly Action Office Series 2 systems that are still in use, so Morgantown was open to new proposals from the same source.

This time around, the nomination went to Passage, a freestanding desking system recommended by Contemporary Galleries, a Herman Miller government dealer in Charleston, West Virginia. After Herman Miller and three other suitors displayed their wares in a weeklong competitive mock-up, Morgantown invited employees to kick the tires and, in true democratic fashion, vote for their favorite. Employees elected Passage by a comfortable majority.

"Passage met all of our criteria," says Deborah Purkey, an administrative support specialist who oversees space planning for the Morgantown campus. "We not only liked the look, but it was also highly functional from an ergonomic standpoint."

#### PRINCIPALLY PASSAGE

Height-adjustable work surfaces were a big part of Passage's ergonomic appeal. Ergonomic specialists at the Morgantown campus place a high priority on height adjustability, knowing from experience that it helps keep employees pain-free and productive.

"The lab also liked the way Passage delivers the feel of systems furniture in a freestanding product," says Lucinda Kowalewski, an account manager for Contemporary Galleries.

The Technology Support Facility in Morgantown uses two Passage typicals in 10 x 12 and 20 x 12 enclosed offices. Each configuration includes marker board and tackable screens. There's also a Meridian four-high lateral file and pedestal, as well as a Freelance® side chair from Herman Miller alliance partner SitOnIt® Seating.

[Left] The freestanding Passage desking system was the clear winner in an employee poll.

[Center] A custom top gives an integrated look to a trio of Meridian storage units.

[Right] Office managers in the Technology Support Facility use Action Office Series 2 systems.

SitOnIt also provided the work chairs used throughout the facility, specifically the versatile TR2™ model. Available in two sizes with multiple adjustment options, TR2 is designed to be an affordable one-stop solution for every workspace need. In the Technology Support Facility, it's used for everything from executive to task applications.

"Our ergonomists liked the way it worked, and we all liked the way it sat," Ms. Purkey says. "TR2 had the ergonomic features we wanted, yet was within our budget. Besides, we have other SitOnIt chairs on the complex and are very comfortable with the brand."

For that matter, the SitOnIt brand is also prominent in the conference rooms of the Technology Support Facility. Contemporary Galleries specified the slender, contoured ReAlign™ model around the conference tables and positioned the lightweight Swirl™ side chair along the walls to handle any overflow.


#### A LEED BENEFIT

Though Passage is by far the predominant workstation in the Technology Support Facility, the building also uses two other Herman Miller systems to a limited extent—a pair of upscale Ethospace frame-and-tile systems for the executive secretaries and about a dozen Action Office Series 2 systems for office managers.

Elsewhere, planners specified Meridian storage cases for common areas on each floor. In each spot, multiple storage cases are joined with a custom top crafted through Herman Miller's Easy Options Capability. The custom top supports printers, copiers, and fax machines.

Throughout the facility, all Herman Miller furniture shares a common benefit—it's certified as low-emitting by the independent GREENGUARD® Environmental Institute. By releasing an unusually low volume of volatile organic compounds, the furniture has minimal impact on indoor air quality. That was important because the Technology Support Facility sought LEED certification from the U.S. Green Building Council for its many environmental features, an effort that was ultimately successful.

"Low-emitting furniture was a big deal for us," Ms. Purkey says. "It was certainly one of the deciding factors because it aligned with everything we wanted to achieve from a LEED standpoint."

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