

MESSENGER

December 2023



Overall Facility Of The Year

Arizona Self Storage

Tucson Foothills

2023 Facility of the Year
WINNERS



2023 Green Facility Of The Year

Greens Storage Escondido Escondido, Calif.

BY KERRI FIVECOAT-CAMPBELL

California is well-known for its strict environmental regulations, and those regulations can be arduous to navigate. Dr. Rajesh Kadakia, CEO of Greens Global, based in San Clemente, Calif., knows this all too well.

It took over two decades to conceive and develop the 2023 Green Facility of the Year, Greens Storage Escondido. Kadakia purchased the land for development 21 years ago, and many of the delays from concept to development were due to strict environmental regulations that included mitigating lost habitat for native animals and plants, as well as fostering an agreement to maintain 21 acres of bio easement directly behind the property. Those efforts alone cost Greens Global, the parent company, more than \$1 million.

Once development was underway, Kadakia designed and developed a facility with sustainability in mind, living up to part of their mission statement that reads, "Value our earth and support sustainability."

Greens Storage Escondido covers five acres and has 714 units in six buildings with an additional 124 slots for RV parking. The total project cost is more than \$15 million.







About Greens Global

Kadakia's father founded Greens Global in India over 65 years ago. After losing a sister due to inadequate medical care, Kadakia immigrated to the United States, where he attended medical school and later worked as a trauma emergency room physician. As Greens Global grew its real estate portfolio, he later retired full time from medicine to devote more time to Greens Global.

Greens Global is still a family owned and operated company with over \$150 million in assets spread across the U.S. and India. Kadakia primarily owns the company with his brother, Sharad, but many family members work in the business. Kadakia says the company entered the self-storage industry when the company was looking for diversification. "We had a broker who lent us money and we bought and renovated a self-storage facility and began acquiring them," says Kadakia.

From 2005 to 2006, the company acquired Greens Storage Rainbow. Kadakia says Greens Storage Rainbow in Temecula, Calif., was converted into the largest RV storage in Riverside County with 575 units on 9.8 acres.

In 2014, the company acquired the 76,500-square-foot Greens Storage Valley Center in Valley Center, Calif. Greens Global currently has seven self-storage facilities in Texas and California.

Developing Greens Storage Escondido

Kadakia and his team purchased the land for Greens Storage Escondido in early 1999; it took about 21 years (until 2019) to obtain the permits to develop the project. The first hurdle came when Kadakia had to complete a 15-plus-acre mitigation land purchase and apply for a habitat loss permit to remove and relocate native plant species.

The company also agreed to a 21-acre bio easement directly behind the property that mandates the company maintain the creek and help protect wildlife. "We maintain the entire creek and trees on that property," says Kadakia. "We replanted all the trees we had to take down for development and the





creek is free flowing and all the water flowing into the creek is clean.”

To achieve a completely clean water system, Greens Global hired seven engineers to design a drainage system that provides long pipes buried deep underground that ferment wastewater from the project. “Since part of the bio easement is a hilly area behind the property, we wanted to ensure that we could adequately process the runoff water that would come onto the property,” explains Kadakia.

He believes the company built the most advanced stormwater drain system of any facility in California, allowing for the retention of 27,000 gallons of water in the tank. It filters it into the storm drains as clean water. The system uses various grades of crushed rock as well as modular wetland systems and biofiltration.

The system was put to the test in the past year and half when Southern California experienced some of the strongest storms it has seen in over 100 years. “The rain buried us in dirt and mud, but we managed to properly divert water throughout the storms, and we sent clean water into the drains and into the federal blue line that borders the property,” says Kadakia.

The contact system also cleans and stores water for three years, which can be used for irrigation on the property. “It’s all underground and all the drain water is clean, so it doesn’t cause contamination to the creek or, ultimately, the ocean,” says Kadakia.

The plant-based insulated roof on the buildings also has an enclosed rain gutter system that goes into the storm drainage system.

“Shortly after we made it past environmental hurdles and got approved for a major use permit, COVID hit, halting construction for months and later causing labor and supply shortages that took years to partially recover from as an industry,” says Kadakia.

As the world began to come out of the pandemic and recover, development finally began on Greens Storage Escondido. Greens Global performs all its development and construction in house, which allows the company complete control over its projects.

To clear the land for grading and construction, the company had to move 89,000 cubic yards of dirt. “We successfully crushed, filtered, and mixed rock on site to create our five-acre pad for development,” says Kadakia, “so we were able to re-use all the dirt and rock from our own site and not have to have any brought in. We also were able to export some of the crushed rock off site as well.”

Design And Construction

“We wanted to create a warm, modern, yet industrial look, which in many ways sounds like a contradiction,” says Kadakia. “While in the beginning stages of building, our architect retired and didn’t leave a successor in his place. We moved forward with our approved plans, and our team stepped up to the plate to fill in gaps along the way.”

Kadakia credits his team, headed by the company’s construction superintendent, Craig Connelly, for filling in the gaps. “With over 40 years of experience in the industry, Craig was able to help finalize the design of our massive office space and do so in a way that met the design goals of the company,” says Kadakia.

Connelly worked with two structural truss engineers simultaneously, as well as the company’s mechanical engineer to coordinate the external visible trusses with the internal structural needs of the building. “He designed the HVAC system to be visible,” Kadakia explains, “with solid, painted ductwork to create an industrial look that complements the warm wood panels.”

As the project progressed, they soon realized they needed a fully ADA-accessible ramp in front of the office. “We weren’t required to include one because we don’t have a full sidewalk on the street or adjacent to us,” says Kadakia. “We see how Escondido is expanding and growing rapidly. We have a strong commitment to building things correctly the first time and anticipated we would need the ramp in the future. Craig designed a fully compliant ramp and handrail, and we got it approved.”

The commitment to building it right the first time without having to go back and retro fit also played into the



decision to construct the facility as a totally carbon negative facility. Knowing there will be new energy standards required by 2028, Kadakia wanted to build a fully solar facility that not only produces enough energy to power the self-storage facility but also feeds back into the grid. “Our meter runs backwards, he says, “and we produce much more electricity than we use, sending renewable energy back into the grid and offsetting our initial development footprint. We can produce electricity for two miles around us.”

The property also includes EVE chargers available to tenants free of charge and an HVAC system is 16 SEER, the highest energy efficiency rating. The high-energy HVAC system allows the facility to maintain a steady 68-degree temperature, so tenants aren’t hot while loading and unloading their property.

The energy efficient office runs on a total cloud-based system, enabling the office to operate completely paperless. The energy efficiency extends to inside lighting, which automatically turns off when a room or hallways isn’t in use. As well, 36 outdoor lighting fixtures conform to dark standards, allowing the outdoor lighting to function in compliance with the nearby observatory.

A Full-Service Storage Facility

One of the benchmarks of his company is to provide excellent customer service with a variety of on-site amenities.

Greens Storage Escondido offers:

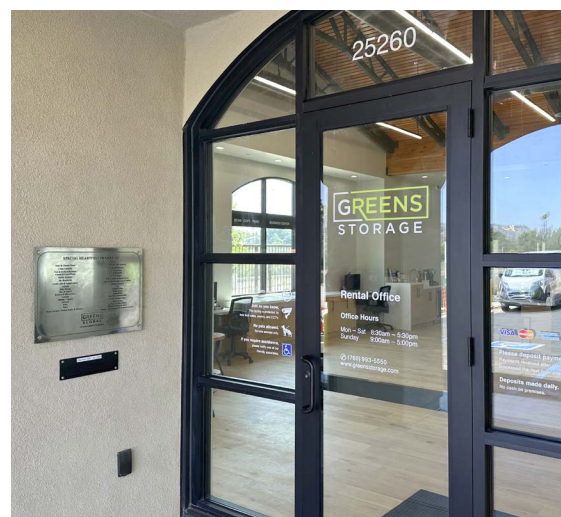
- A 2,300-square-foot lobby that resembles more of a hotel lobby by being inviting and welcoming with refreshments and a friendly, trained staff.
- A full office and business center that includes a state-of-the-art conference room with high-speed WiFi and two 60-inch flat-screen TVs. The conference room allows tenants to easily set up virtual meetings with full-room cameras and microphones.
- The option of using the facility for Amazon and UPS pickups and drop-offs, as well as 77 mailboxes for rent. “This allows

our tenants the option of not having to give out their personal address,” says Kadakia.

- A full retail store that carries all the supplies needed for moving, storage, and RV adventures.
- RV garages with cable television access, individual unit cameras, lighting, wall outlets, and RV charging outlets to anticipate the future of electric RVs. The units are multifunctional, capable of hosting business suites for small trades.
- RV concierge service, including picking up groceries for RV tenants and filling their RVs with gasoline, if requested.
- Fully integrated 24/7 video intercom system, which allows the staff to assist tenants, even when the office is closed.
- Golf carts for facility tours. The property will soon have drone video footage, allowing future tenants to choose their unit online.
- RV tenant services, including a dump station at nearby sister properties, propane and water filling stations, and free usage of an air compressor and vacuums.
- State-of-the-art security with 170 cameras on the property that are monitored live 24/7. The camera system, which was all done in house, includes night vision, license plate readers, and facial recognition. The system also monitors and alerts employees when a tenant isn’t at their own unit, as well as providing remote access to tenants.
- Free U-Haul truck usage for tenants, as well as wire racks for tenants to use in their units. For a fee, the facility will even provide moving assistance.

Marketing Is Paying Off

Greens Storage Escondido opened in September 2023 with reservations made prior to opening. Once the company received its occupancy permit, the facility was at 25 percent occupancy by the end of its first week. “As the owner, builder, and







management company, we can carefully tailor every part of the project to the customer experience and ensure that we deliver the best facility possible," says Kadakia.

Another of the ways Greens Global does this is by ensuring its customers that all their data is owned by the facility. The facility is currently in the process of converting to Tenant's Hummingbird management software system. "Our customers can feel secure that their personal, sensitive data is in good hands and encrypted properly, including video footage, driver's licenses, and payment methods."

Online marketing is a critical piece of marketing for Greens Global Escondido. "We track where our customers get stuck or where they hold off on reservations," says Kadakia. "We match it with our customers who need support most, especially for those less technologically inclined. We apply this to our online marketing strategy as well as to streamline our efforts."

That data is shared monthly with employees and the team focuses on fixes for the problems. "We then use demand data from our own website and local occupancy and pricing data to determine our own pricing," Kadakia says. "We try to stay competitive but also stay as profitable as possible." Other parts of digital marketing include automated emails and social media.

One integral part of Greens Global's commitment is to the communities in which it serves. The company offers discounts to seniors, COVID frontline workers, military, police, fire fighters, first responders, and teachers. "We want to honor people who are the foundation of society," says Kadakia.

Greens Storage Escondido also offers a referral program for existing tenants who refer new tenants to the facility. All these efforts have resulted in occupancy that is running well ahead of schedule. Kadakia says they hope to be at 94 percent physical occupancy by December 2024 and full economic occupancy by 2025.

Greens Global isn't stopping anytime soon. They currently have 17 more facilities in development. Kadakia is hoping at least three of those facilities will also be carbon neutral, following the model of Greens Storage Escondido. ■

Kerri Fivecoat-Campbell is a freelance journalist based in the Ozark Mountains. She is a regular contributor to *Messenger*. Her business articles have also appeared in *Entrepreneur*, *Aol.com*, *MSN.com*, and *The Kansas City Star*.

Quick Facts

Owner: Dr. Rajesh Kadakia

Builder: Greens Global/Greens Storage
Management Company:

Greens Global/Greens Storage

Security Provider: Greens Global/
Greens Storage

Architect: Charles Forte

Management Software: Hummingbird

Roof Provider: Sylvester Roofing

Door Provider: Janus International Group

Interior System Provider:
Janus International Group