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Kripalu CEO Garrett Sarley, Kripalu president Ila Sarley, architect Peter Rose and state Rep. William 'Smitty' Pignatelli, D-Lenox, applaud Monday's opening of the new annex to the Kripalu facilities.

Expanding for health Center for Yoga unveils \$15.3 million annex

By Derek Gentile,
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STOCKBRIDGE — The Kripalu Center for Yoga and Health unveiled its new \$15.3 million annex building before an audience of about 200 employees and guests Monday morning.

The project came in under budget and slightly ahead of schedule, according to architect Peter Rose of Peter Rose and Partners of Cambridge.

The anticipated budget was about \$15.5 million. The construction time estimate was a little over a year, according to Cathy H. Husid, the Kripalu spokeswoman. Work started on the project in March 2008 and was completed in early April.

The 34,000-square-foot annex was constructed as a way to generate more revenue for the nonprofit yoga instruction center. The six-floor annex has 80 rooms, each about 500 square feet.

In addition, there is a 2,800-square-foot program room.

"The new building fills a largely unmet need for private rooms with private baths and supports our efforts to reach out to a broader population," explained Garrett Sarley, Kripalu's chief executive officer.

The location and design of the annex were chosen to offer views of the surrounding countryside and blend in with the land-



Reception was held in the new annex program room.

scape, according to Rose. The slight V-shape of the building ensures that every room has a tree or lake view.

The annex is clad with "rain-screen" siding that is made of small, square strips of untreated raw wood salvaged from the Hurricane Katrina tidal surge. The siding will be allowed to age naturally, gradually taking on the grays of mature wood to blend in with the countryside, said Rose.

According to Jennifer Webster, director of operations, the annex is about 30 percent smaller in volume than a typical building of this type, thus minimizing the area to heat, cool and illuminate. The structure uses a radiant heating and cooling system.

"This building is a jewel," said state Rep. William "Smitty" Pignatelli, D-Lenox. "It's probably the most environmentally friendly building in the Berkshires, and I take my hat off to Kripalu for their work."



Guest room in the new annex building.

Stockbridge Selectman Chairman George Shippey was also at Monday's dedication, and he said he liked what he saw. Several Stockbridge residents, including Shippey, had been initially critical of the first plans in 2006, deeming the original seven-story structure "too intrusive."

But Monday, Shippey conceded that Kripalu officials had answered the concerns of the town, including removing the top floor and building a 49-foot-high structure at the towns' behest, which dropped the height of the annex by 13 feet.

"I think they've done a great job," he said. "All the concerns of the town and building inspector were addressed."

Lenox Selectman Roscoe Sandlin echoed Shippey.

"Kripalu is a very big part of our economy and a good corporate neighbor," he said. "They've done a great job."