

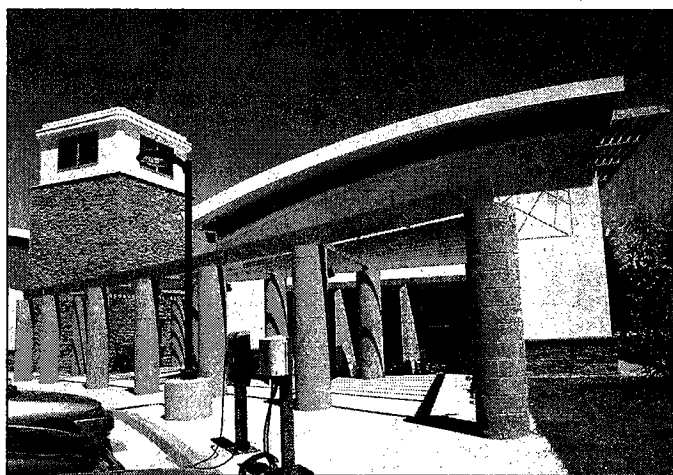
Library Honored for Its 'Green' Design.

From a Times Staff Writer

The Lake View Terrace Branch Library, which uses a combination of methods to make it 40% more energy efficient than state standards, has won an architectural award for its "green" design, it was announced Thursday.

Of the 10 projects honored nationwide, it was the only library chosen this year by the American Institute of Architects and its Committee on the Environment.

Located next to Hansen Dam Recreation Area in the northeast San Fernando Val-



ANNIE WELLS Los Angeles Times

COOL TOUCH: The Lake View Terrace library features a tower that channels cool air to the lobby and courtyard.

ley, the new \$5.5-million, 10,700-square-foot library was built to maximize natural light while employing special sensors on light fixtures that dim or brighten to maintain even

lighting. Indoor heat is absorbed by the building's concrete blocks and is allowed to escape during the night. About 80% of the public spaces are naturally ventilated.

Broken Immigration Policy

The doors of the small bungalow in Watts were chained and the windows covered with metal bars and plywood. Inside, about 110 barefoot and no doubt frightened men, women and children waited for their relatives to deliver ransom money, as much as \$9,000 each, that would free them from the immigrant-smugglers, the coyotes, who held them under guard. The chain of misery was disrupted Wednesday by agents of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, tipped by one immigrant who had got out. Most of the illegal immigrants are in custody. The smugglers got away. Was this an exceptional event, a great scandal? Apparently not.

Commenting on the raid, local law enforcement officials said that, other than the large number of people in the house, there was nothing unusual except that most such houses and human smuggling rings go without federal notice. The neighbors who saw what was happening saw no reason to turn them in.

The victims include not just the people in such houses but cities like Los Angeles, the gateway and often destination for waves of immigrants. It is a problem that can be addressed only by the federal government, which is, as Los Angeles City Council member Janice Hahn put it, "turning a blind eye."

When President Bush took office, he talked about a plan to fix the country's broken immigration policy. The 2001 terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, D.C., sent the idea to the back burner.

Earlier this year, Bush launched a new im-

migration reform proposal, a modest effort to legalize temporary job-related immigration. Then the idea dropped like a rock. No one in Congress has picked it up, and the White House isn't giving it any muscle in an election year.

Local police cannot and should not enforce federal immigration laws. Otherwise, no one fearing deportation would be likely to report or testify against criminal activity, from domestic abuse to gang violence. Local government also can't carry the fiscal burden of enforcing federal immigration law.

Reforms have to extend to the underfunded federal immigration department. A 2003 study by the General Accounting Office said the backlog of applications for residence and citizenship and other matters had reached about 6.2 million, a 59% rise in two years. That translates to long delays and bureaucratic snafus that make contact with the department a nightmare.

Immigration policy must begin to deal realistically with the millions of illegal immigrants who are already in the country. Their powerlessness suppresses not just their own wages and working conditions but those of legal low-wage workers. Reform has to include an accurate measure of the economy's real needs for immigrant labor.

More delays in coming to grips with a failed immigration policy mean more houses in more cities turned into private jails with conditions worse than any U.S. prison and their occupants held for thousands of dollars in ransom. The moral and fiscal cost of ignoring such activities is too high.