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EarthCraft Virginia Wins National ENERGY STAR Award for Excellence in Affordable Housing; Certified its 500th Home

RICHMOND, VA – March 25, 2010 – At a lunch ceremony today, EarthCraft Virginia accepted the Department of Energy's national ENERGY STAR® Award for Excellence in Affordable Housing presented by Charlie Famuliner and Mark Brezina of U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Concurrently, EarthCraft Virginia reached a key milestone in the development of sustainable, energy-efficient housing, completing the certification of its 500th EarthCraft home in Virginia.

EarthCraft is an award-winning green building program designed for the unique climate conditions of the Southeast. It addresses the vital need for energy-, water- and resource-efficient buildings and homes that also provide healthy indoor environments, and a high level of occupant comfort.

"Energy efficiency is important in every community but especially in the affordable housing community where energy costs consume much more household income than in higher income households," said Brian Ng, Affordable Housing Coordinator for ENERGY STAR's Residential Branch. "By bringing the benefits of ENERGY STAR qualified homes to lower income families, partners like EarthCraft Virginia are helping these families keep more of their hard-earned income while at the same time protecting the environment."

Remarked KC McGurren, executive director of EarthCraft Virginia, "We are very proud to have certified 245 homes and 1,046 multifamily units in 2009 alone – credit for this strong momentum belongs to our many EarthCraft Virginia builders, and our partners Southface, the Home Builders Association of Virginia, and Habitat for Humanity of Virginia. We are also very appreciative of the invaluable support we receive from the Home Depot Foundation, Dominion Power and Creative Conservation."

Despite challenging economic conditions in the construction industry, EarthCraft Virginia certifications were two-and-a-half times projections for 2009. Launched in 2005, EarthCraft Virginia works with builders and renovators, from affording housing builders and Habitat for Humanity of Virginia to mixed-use developers, to ensure that homes adhere to these sustainable building practices:

- Advanced energy-efficiency capabilities, including ENERGY STAR lighting and appliances, that reduce energy consumption,

- Water conservation capabilities that save potable water,
- Resource-conserving design and materials to minimize impact on landfills,
- Healthy indoor air quality for occupant comfort,
- Good site location and planning for transportation convenience,
- An education program for homeowners to ensure optimum benefit from living in an EarthCraft building.

About EarthCraft

Originally founded in 1999 by nonprofit Southface and the Greater Atlanta Home Builders Association, the EarthCraft green building program serves as a blueprint for energy- and resource-efficient homes built in the Southeast. With growing success and recognition, t EarthCraft Virginia was established in 2005 with assistance from Home Builders Association of Virginia, the Virginia Community Development Corporation and Southface. For more information on EarthCraft or EarthCraft Virginia, please visit www.earthcrafthouse.com and www.earthcraftvirginia.org.

About the Home Builders Association of Virginia

The Home Builders Association of Virginia (HBAV) is a 6,400-member statewide organization of home builders and firms that provide products and services to the home building industry. HBAV dedicates approximately 60% of its annual resources to representing the home building industry before state lawmakers and state regulators. Please visit www.hbav.com for more information.

About the Virginia Community Development Corporation

As a catalyst organization, the Virginia Community Development Corporation (VCDC) creates opportunities for investor and project sponsor partners to revitalize communities through affordable housing and community development. VCDC is a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization that takes a leadership role in providing the experience, services and coordination necessary to make this innovative approach to investing work. Please visit www.vacdc.org for more information.

About Southface

Southface promotes sustainable homes, workplaces and communities through education, research, advocacy and technical assistance. Please visit www.southface.org for more information.

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