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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**



**THE USGBC LEED® FOR HOMES PROGRAM AWARDS RURAL DEVELOPMENT, INC. A LEED GOLD RATING IN RESIDENTIAL SUSTAINABLE DESIGN**

October 3, 2007 – (Colrain, MA) The U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) has announced that it is extremely pleased to approve the certification of the home at 38 Ed Clark Rd., Colrain, MA built by Rural Development, Inc. of Turners Falls, MA, and supported by the LEED for Homes provider, Center for Ecological Technology of Northampton. On October 1 this project received a "LEED Gold" rating, a very high standard in green building and very unusual in affordable housing. It is the second such in the nation.

This *near zero net energy home* is a prototype for the homes RDI will build in the Wisdom Way Solar Village in Greenfield. Two additional RDI homes on Ed Clark Road have achieved (or will achieve) LEED certification. The house at #32 is LEED silver and the house at #24 is expected to be awarded LEED silver in the next month. The silver rating is also a very high standard, but slightly less prestigious than the gold rating. All three of these Colrain homes will be open to the

public this Saturday, October 6 from 10am to 4pm. as part of the Green Buildings Open House tour sponsored by the Northeast Sustainable Energy Association. See [www.nesea.org](http://www.nesea.org) for more information.

LEED for Homes is a USGBC green homes program that evaluates the environmental features of single and multi-family homes. LEED certified homes are designed to be energy efficient, environmentally sound, resource friendly, and healthy places for its occupants. Rural Development, Inc. is an award winning non-profit builder of affordable green homes in Franklin County and the North Quabbin region.

In the U.S. only 14 single family affordable homes have been certified Gold in the LEED for Homes program to date. LEED provides national consistency in defining what constitutes a green home. Rising energy and water costs concern many homeowners, and LEED certified homes are energy efficient and consume fewer resources than conventional houses.

About LEED:

The LEED® (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Green Building Rating System is a voluntary third party rating system where credits are earned for satisfying specified green building criteria. Projects are evaluated within eight environmental categories: Innovation and Design Process, Location and Linkages, Sustainable Sites, Water Efficiency, Energy and Atmosphere, Materials and Resources, Indoor Environmental Quality, and Homeowner Awareness and Education. Certified, Silver, Gold, and Platinum levels of green building certification are awarded based on the total credits earned. The LEED standard has been adopted nationwide by federal agencies, state and local governments, and interested private companies as the industry standard of measurement for green building.

LEED is a national brand that potential homeowners can look for to readily identify true green homes. LEED certified homes consume less energy, use less water, and are safe and healthy places for their families to live.

A LEED certified home includes high performance features designed to provide improved health, safety, comfort, and lower operating costs. LEED certified homes are also more environmentally friendly, more durable, less polluting, and make substantially better use of resources. In

addition, the net cost of owning a green home may be no more than the net cost of a conventional home.

#### About the U.S. Green Building Council

The U.S. Green Building Council is the nation's leading organization of corporations, builders, universities, Federal and local agencies, and nonprofit organizations working together to promote buildings that are environmentally responsible, profitable and healthy places to live and work. Greenbuild as well as the LEED® (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Green Building Rating System are projects of the USGBC. For more information on the USGBC, visit [www.usgbc.org](http://www.usgbc.org).

For more information about Rural Development, Inc. visit [www.ruraldevelopmentinc.org](http://www.ruraldevelopmentinc.org) or call (413) 863-9781 ext. 149.