



Rural Development, Inc.

Home Ownership Program
44 Canal Road
Turners Falls, MA 01376
(413) 863-9781 fax (413) 863-8160

Contact Information:
Anne Perkins
(413) 863-9781ext. 148

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RURAL DEVELOPMENT, INC. IS FIRST IN NATION

March 23, 2007 – (Wendell, Massachusetts) The U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) has awarded two Wendell homes built by Rural Development, Inc. (RDI) LEED certification under its LEED for Homes pilot program. RDI is the first builder in New England to have an affordable single-family home LEED certified. It is also the first in the nation to attain LEED silver certification, a more advanced level, for an affordable single family home. LEED for Homes is a USGBC green homes pilot 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.

RDI is a national leader in the construction of green affordable homes as evidenced by these certifications. Only 90 homes have been certified in the LEED for Homes pilot to date, almost all of them built for the high-end custom home market. 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. LEED is a national brand that potential homeowners and tenants can look for – to readily identify true green homes. All LEED Homes are third party inspected, performance tested, and certified to be higher performing than conventional homes.

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.

The Rural Development, Inc. Home Ownership Program is a builder of green affordable homes in Franklin County and the North Quabbin region. RDI has a long commitment of building green

homes, advancing over the past seven years from basic Energy Star certified homes to more advanced Energy Star certified homes to the installation of renewable energy systems on homes to LEED certification. At this time RDI is constructing its first *near zero net energy* home in Colrain and plans call for a village of twenty such homes to be built in Greenfield.

Three homes currently under construction in Colrain are also expected to attain LEED certification.

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.

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 six environmental categories: Sustainable Sites, Water Efficiency, Energy and Atmosphere, Materials and Resources, and Indoor Environmental Quality. 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.

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