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GREEN BUILDING RECEIVES HIGH PERFORMANCE

May 10, 2011 (Spring Valley, Texas) – Green Built Gulf Coast (GBGC) announced the certification of its first certified “Silver” home under the commended National Green Building Standard (NGBS).

The homebuilder, Mealy Company Builders, achieved the Silver level of performance in each of the six point-system rating categories. Green Built Gulf Coast is a “green” building program recently released by the Greater Houston Builders (GHB). The program is geared specifically for the unique environmental conditions that define the Texas Gulf Coast area including heat and humidity.

The National Standard provides an accredited criterion for rating the environmental impact of design and construction practices to achieve conformance with specified performance levels of green residential buildings.

The six points required for a Silver level of performance include: Lot Design, Preparation and Development; Resource Efficiency; Energy Efficiency; Water Efficiency; Indoor Environmental Quality and Operation; Maintenance, and Building Owner Education.

The following outlines some of the key components applied in each category. To see the full list of “green” application features per category visit www.greenbuiltgulfcoast.org.

A key factor in the construction process was the use of structurally insulated panels (SIP) that create an envelope around the home which leads to fewer drafts and results in energy cost savings. Points in multiple categories of the Standard were awarded for the use of SIP panels ranging from everything from the walls to roof assemblies. Overall, SIPs provide a reduction of material costs and material wastes, reduced on-site cuts and waste, prefabrication of components, resource efficiency, improved air tightness, and achievement of the Standard's highest insulation grade.

In the second category, open web trusses, which provide direct support for the roof and transfer the load imposed on the structural frame, reduced the joist material requirement over that of

dimensional lumber. Envelope durability and maintenance were improved utilizing the overhangs.

The third category was met through not only the already mentioned SIP envelope construction, but also from the argon gas insulated windows with low thermal conductivity and solar heat gain installations. Zoned air conditioning systems are 16 SEER and Energy Star appliances and fans were also incorporated.

Category four was achieved utilizing low-flow plumbing, washing machine and insulated hot water re-circulating systems and a water conserving lawn sprinkler design.

In Category five, selected construction materials such as the carpet and pad were installed that offer the benefit of low or zero out gassing. A Gulf Coast feature installed was the energy recovery ventilator (ERV) in the mechanical system of the house that provides fresh air exchanges. A whole house dehumidifier manages humidity during all seasons, and deep pleated air filters control air particulates.

Under Category six, educating the homeowner is essential to ensure that the home reaches its full "Green" potential. The homebuyers were given thorough demonstrations on the use of their programmable thermostats, water heater settings, ERV controls and whole house dehumidifier settings.

"I welcome the GBGC Building Standard because it lets us mix a green commitment with common sense," said Chip Mealy, Mealy Company Builders. "In the Houston area, we are building in a hot, humid gulf coast climate. The flexibility in this Standard, even though it's a National Standard, allows us to plan for, and score credit for those things that make the most sense for our locale."

**Under GBGC, the GHBA has adopted the National Green Building Standard™ ICC 700-2008. The National Green Building Standard™ allows for flexibility allowing for regionally appropriate green building practices. This Standard™ is the first American National Standards Institute (ANSI)-approved residential green building program in the nation and requires strict compliance including third party verification procedures.*

"Green" design touches a little of everything. The Mealy home in Spring Valley is a prime example of that. For more information about the GBGC program visit the GHBA website at www.ghba.org or go to www.greenbuiltgulfcoast.org.

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