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Industry Accountability & Clarity in Consumer Marketing Needed in Residential Green Building

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Portland, OR - Responding to the rising number of industry standards emerging to claim a piece of the green building phenomenon, Portland-area custom home builder Prairie View Homes, LLC has announced its move to exclusively adopt the US Green Building Council's LEED for Homes residential green building standard.

Prairie View Homes was a member of the select national pilot to launch the LEED for Homes® program. They have also built new homes certified by the federal ENERGY STAR® program, as well as the regional Earth Advantage program predominant in the Pacific Northwest.

The Portland green builder sees the move to streamline support for a single national standards body as key to improving builder-to-consumer accountability and clarity with green home marketing.

"As an industry, we need unification behind a central standards body," expressed Jack Wagon, Managing Director of Prairie View Homes and member of the Portland Metropolitan and National Association of Home Builders. "The prospective green home buyer is confused by the myriad of options regarding green standards," he pointed out.

"The consumer clearly is questioning who is selling them the 'real' green home," said Wagon.

"Third party checks and balances are essential for developing and maintaining consumer confidence in high-performance, green homes," continued Wagon. "The industry standard for defining and measuring green construction should be left to a third-party – one at arm's length from potential or perceived undue influence by an organization whose members are responsible for implementing the standard."

Prairie View Homes sees the LEED for Homes program as the only balanced national standards to offer builder-conscious criteria that are environmentally vigilant and meet stringent building science criteria. Building science is a methodology that combines building physics and systems design concepts for the construction of green, high-performance homes.

"We feel the US Green Building Council has the necessary continuing education, training and compliance monitoring resources to deliver a balanced program of the highest integrity," said Wagon. "They have done an excellent job developing consensus and partnership with federal and regional program partners like ENERGY STAR® and our local Earth Advantage organization to achieve critical mass behind the LEED for Homes certification."

To obtain third-party LEED for Homes certification, Prairie View Homes works with the local program provider, Earth Advantage, Inc, to ensure the highest standard for energy efficiency, indoor air quality, resource efficiency, water conservation and environmental responsibility is integrated into the construction of the home. Final performance testing and inspections are conducted by Earth Advantage, Inc. before a LEED for Homes certificate is issued.

According to the Regional Multiple Listing Service (RMLS) in Portland, three percent of all new homes sold in the Portland Metropolitan Area over the past year carried a sustainable or "green" certification brand. These homes earned more in the market than non-certified homes, selling for an average price of \$223 per square foot, versus \$185 per square foot for non-certified, traditionally built homes.

“True, our product is gaining market share, but consumer adoption of green building could be accelerated if we as an industry streamline awareness and education for the green value proposition under one cohesive message,” expressed Wagnon. “This will bolster consumer confidence in builder-to-consumer accountability and provide a single source of measure for consumers to grade the quality of high-performance, new green homes.”

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Prairie View Homes, LLC is a craft home builder that designs and builds original custom homes for the sustainable lifestyle. We exclusively utilize high performance, green construction based on the building science methodology. A green Prairie View Home uses less energy, water and natural resources; creates less waste; and is healthier and more comfortable for the occupants. For additional company information, please visit www.PrairieViewHomes.net.

LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) is a voluntary, consensus-based national rating system for developing high-performance, sustainable buildings that emphasizes state-of-the-art strategies for sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials and resources selection, and indoor environmental quality. For additional company information, please visit the US Green Building Council’s website at www.usgbc.org.

Earth Advantage, Inc., a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation is a leading green building authority in the Pacific Northwest and the largest third-party testing program in the country. The organization is the Pacific Northwest official Program Provider for the US Green Building Council’s LEED for Homes® certification. For more information, visit www.earthadvantage.org.