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Argenta CDC earns Gold LEED-H® for its affordable housing initiative Building Green

(North Little Rock, Ark.) – The U.S. Green Building Council announced today that Argenta Community Development Corporation has been awarded a Gold LEED-H® (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design for Homes) certification rating for four green homes in its affordable housing construction initiative Building Green. This will be the first residential structure in Arkansas to earn a LEED® designation.

Launched as a pilot program in 2005, LEED-H® is a green home ratings system with rankings from certified to platinum that assures residents that their homes are designed and built to be energy and resource efficient and healthy. According to the U.S.G.B.C., at press time, there are 174 projects across the U.S. involved in LEED-H®. Of these projects, 21 have earned gold status while 19 have garnered platinum.

The four more are scheduled to be developed and certified this year.

“Building Green is a highly successful development that represents a new era in our construction practices, integrating affordable housing with environmental sustainability,” said Brad Williams, Argenta CDC executive director. “Coupled with providing quality homeownership opportunities for low-to-moderate income families, we have designed homes that can ease our buyers’ utility burden. We understand that energy costs take an even greater percentage of the monthly budget for many families that we serve. The CDC feels it is part of our mission to build homes that will be affordable to buy and affordable to live in.”

All Building Green homes meet the rigorous Energy Star® US Environmental Protection Agency guidelines for energy efficiency and are at least 30% more efficient than traditionally built homes. Some of the energy saving amenities are gap-proof insulation, tight air and duct sealing and higher efficiency heating and cooling unit. The insulation, called structural insulation panels, ensures more even temperatures throughout the house and results in a quieter, more comfortable home. Additionally, the tight construction helps reduce the stress on the central heating and air system, helps prevent drafts, moisture, dust, pollen, pests and to ensure better indoor air quality. The use of compact fluorescent bulbs in lighting fixtures, energy efficient windows, ventilation fans and low flow faucets will also contribute to reduced utility bills.

Additionally, LEED-H® requires that residents are trained on how to maintain their homes. Argenta CDC has written and will provide all new green homeowners with a manual that offers maintenance tips and resources along with a “green” basket of sustainable household products and other resources.

The Building Green homes are 1300 square feet with three bedrooms, two bathrooms, a living room/dining room combo, a fully equipped kitchen, laundry room and a privacy fence. They are located east of Pike Avenue in North Little Rock's Holt Neighborhood, an area where the organization has invested over \$2 million since 2001 in revitalization efforts that include rehabilitations and new constructions. The homes are priced at \$96,500 and have subsidies for qualified borrowers.

Also this year, Argenta CDC will expand its sustainable construction practices in to market rate condominiums. Located on Sixth and Orange Streets in the historic Argenta district, the CDC will develop two condominiums that will have several sustainable amenities that will meet Energy Star guidelines. Each home will be 2647 square feet and feature four bedrooms, two and a half bathrooms, garage, dining room, great room, loft, game room and kitchen. The units start at \$225,000. The homes will be located within two miles of many entertainment venues, restaurants, downtowns, trolley lines, businesses, police and fire stations and libraries.

For more information about the homes or the Building Green initiative, please contact Brad Williams at 501-374-0622 or bwilliams@argentacdc.org.

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About Argenta Community Development Corporation

Argenta Community Development Corporation is a private non-profit 501(c)(3) organization in Arkansas with a mission to improve the economic vitality, quality of life and sense of community in targeted neighborhoods through the development of quality housing, the promotion of homeownership and the stimulation of economic growth. Since 1993, Argenta CDC had invested more than \$13 million revitalizing neighborhoods in the Argenta and Mid City Neighborhoods of North Little Rock; and have rehabbed and built over 160 residential and commercial properties. Argenta CDC is also operates a full service NeighborWorks® HomeOwnership Center that assists Central Arkansas residents with home pre and post purchase counseling, down payment assistance and home repair loans. Argenta CDC is an affiliate of NeighborWorks® America. Visit the organization online at www.argentacdc.org.

About U.S. Green Building Council

The U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) is the nation's foremost coalition of leaders from across the building industry working to advance buildings that are environmentally responsible, profitable and healthy places to live and work. Driving its mission to transform the built environment is the Council's LEED® (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Green Building Rating System™, which is accessible on-line and supported by a robust LEED Workshop program and the LEED Professional Accreditation program. USGBC supports a rich education and research agenda, including Greenbuild - the largest international conference & expo focused on green building. The Council also supports an aggressive education and advocacy program delivered at the local level through 70 chapters across the U.S. Since its founding in 1993, USGBC has been focused on fulfilling the building and construction industry's vision for its own transformation to high-performance green building. Today, it includes 8,957 member companies and organizations. In testament to its leadership, in the past five years alone, USGBC's membership has quadrupled and over 1 billion square feet of building space are involved with the LEED program.

About Building Green

Building Green is a partnership between Argenta Community Development Corporation and the Arkansas Chapter of the U.S. Green Building Council that began in 2007. This initiative is a shared vision between both organizations to design and construct affordable, energy efficient homes for the health and well being of low to moderate income families.