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MEDIA ADVISORY

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MINNESOTA GREEN COMMUNITIES ANNOUNCES GREEN BUILDING & DESIGN CONFERENCE FEATURING DISTINGUISHED KEYNOTE SPEAKERS ROBERT F. KENNEDY, JR. AND XAVIER BONNEFOY

WHAT: The second annual Green By Design conference on planning and building healthy, sustainable affordable housing and communities in Minnesota. The two-day conference offers a rich assortment of technical and policy workshops by local and national experts on urban and rural design, green building, health and housing, global warming and an unstable energy future, and more. [View full agenda here.](#)

WHERE: The Depot, 225 South Third Avenue, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401

WHEN: Wednesday, May 16 and Thursday, May 17, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

WHO: The conference is hosted by Minnesota Green Communities, a collaboration of the Greater Minnesota Housing Fund, the Family Housing Fund, and Enterprise. The conference will feature several local and national experts, including keynote addresses by Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. and Xavier Bonnefoy.

Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.

Mr. Kennedy has a national reputation as a resolute defender of the environment. Kennedy serves as senior attorney for the Natural Resources Defense Council and is the author of the New York Times bestseller *Crimes Against Nature*. Kennedy will deliver a passionate defense of the environment and of how continued neglect affects the future of the planet and the health of future generations.

Xavier Bonnefoy, France

With 16 years experience at the World Health Organization, Mr. Bonnefoy delivers an engaging speech on the powerful connections between housing and health. Bonnefoy, backed by a body of evidence, will discuss the many health aspects of green design and building, including connecting the dots between urban sprawl and public health and the health consequences of global climate change.

WHY: Across the state and nation, people are demanding greater attention to renewable energy, environmental protection, and sustainable development. As a result, more community leaders recognize the significant health, environmental, and economic benefits of green building and sustainable land use planning. It is critical that developers, contractors, architects, planners, property managers, and other building industry professionals adopt the use of proven green design and green building methods to meet the housing needs of the community at large, especially our lowest income households.

About Minnesota Green Communities

Minnesota Green Communities fosters the creation of affordable, healthier, and energy-efficient homes throughout Minnesota with the goal of making all new affordable housing green by 2010.

(More)

The initiative supports the production of affordable housing with markedly reduced energy costs, use of materials beneficial to the environment, conservation-minded land use planning, and attention to the creation of healthy environments and lifestyles for individuals, families, children, and communities.

Minnesota Green Communities, launched in 2005, promotes green building practices through demonstration projects, applied research on selected projects, training, and collaboration among public, private, and nonprofit entities with similar interests and concerns. The challenge for Minnesota Green Communities and its partners is to identify methods that can be implemented on a broad scale in the affordable housing industry as standard practice.

The local program is part of Enterprise's national Green Communities initiative. Green Communities is a five-year, \$555 million commitment to build more than 8,500 environmentally responsive affordable homes. Enterprise, together with the Natural Resources Defense Council, and other national experts in the field of green building, created specific Green Communities Criteria. The criteria cover a wide range of building practices, including smart siting, materials and resource conservation, water management, healthy living environment, and energy-efficiency.

The program and the two housing Funds have funded 13 projects (including eight special demonstration projects) throughout the state that meet the Green Communities Criteria. With more than 700 total units of green housing in the works, including 535 *affordable* rental, supportive, or homeownership units, this makes Minnesota Green Communities by far the largest contributor to green building in the state.

"Minnesota Green Communities has set a goal to have all new affordable housing be green by 2010," said Tom Fulton, president, Family Housing Fund. "This initiative, guided by an advisory committee of local experts, offers an excellent vehicle to apply green building techniques specifically to affordable housing, demonstrate them on a larger scale, collect additional findings, and enrich the knowledge base within the state and region in order to reach this ambitious goal by decade's end."

"The Green by Design conference will present some of the best and proven ideas and methods for sustainable development, healthier communities, and environmental stewardship in our cities and towns—as integrated aspects of a whole system," said Warren Hanson, president and CEO, Greater Minnesota Housing Fund. "By adopting the best green building practices for affordable housing and beyond, we will ensure that our children live healthier lives, enjoy a cleaner environment, and reach their full potential because of better planning, design, and building in our communities."

Visit www.greencommunitiesonline.org/minnesota for more information about Minnesota Green Communities, the Green by Design conference, and/or to learn more about green demonstration projects in your community. Project renderings, speaker photos, etc. are also available by request. Please contact Shawna Nelsen at shawna@fhfund.org or 612-375-9644, ext. 13.

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Greater Minnesota Housing Fund (GMHF) works throughout greater Minnesota to promote affordable housing, sustainable land use planning, and open space preservation through its Building Better Neighborhoods program and Growth Corridor Initiative. Founded in 1996, GMHF has helped in the creation of more than 6,000 affordable homes. Visit www.gmlhf.com to learn more.

The Family Housing Fund's mission is to provide safe, affordable, sustainable homes to families and children in the Twin Cities metropolitan area through ongoing partnerships with the public and private sector. Since 1980, the Family Housing Fund has helped create or preserve more than 31,000 affordable homes. Visit www.fhfund.org to learn more.

Enterprise is a leading provider of the development capital and expertise it takes to create decent, affordable homes and rebuild communities. For 25 years, Enterprise has pioneered neighborhood solutions through public-private partnerships with financial institutions, governments, community organizations and others that share our vision. Enterprise has raised and invested more than \$7 billion in equity, grants, and loans and is currently investing in communities a rate of \$1 billion a year. Visit www.enterprisecommunity.org to learn more.