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## **Gainesville Attains Green Government Certification** *FGBC Designation Confirms Environmental Stewardship*

(Tallahassee, FL) – The Florida Green Building Coalition (FGBC), a membership-based non-profit organization that administers certification standards and provides education to promote sustainable building, development and business practices, has designated the city of Gainesville a certified Florida Green Local Government after it successfully met the sustainability standards established in the FGBC Green Local Government Certification program. Gainesville achieved 36 percent of its 311 applicable points, earning it a silver-level designation.

Suzanne Cook, FGBC Executive Director, said the designation demonstrates exemplary leadership by Mayor Craig Lowe and other elected officials who provided the framework and support to move forward with the process that helps to better manage the cost of government. “Their leadership in this effort will help protect and conserve the community’s natural resources, enhance the efficiency of government thus reducing the cost to taxpayers, and raise public awareness about the benefits of environmental stewardship,” Cook said. “Our membership applauds the municipality's dedication and commitment to the important ideals outlined in this program.”

In order to achieve the FGBC Green Local Government Certification, Gainesville staff, led by Erik Bredfeldt, Planning and Development Director, undertook an extensive audit of the functions performed by every department within their government. The criteria included evaluations of energy and water usage, air quality, health issues, land use, recycling and waste disposal, maintenance policies, educational programs, purchasing practices, regulatory policies, and many others. From there teams used FGBC’s program tools to identify methods to improve the sustainability of their business practices and operations.

Cook said that there were significant and tangible accomplishments that will benefit taxpayers and the environment. “Through these efforts, there were reductions in operating costs and capital outlays, improvements in departmental communication, cooperation, and risk and asset management, a wealth of environmental benefits including measureable CO<sub>2</sub> reductions, and identification of programs that will improve community involvement and enhance sustainability throughout the city of Gainesville,” Cook noted.

FGBC’s Green Local Government Certification program is the only one of its type in Florida and is endorsed by the Florida Legislature, the Florida League of Cities and the Florida League of Mayors. Cook emphasized that this level of support emanates from the fact that there is a sizeable and compelling return on investment for any municipality that chooses to initiate the process. “Depending upon the population of the community, the cost of this program is between \$2,000 and \$6,000,” she said. “The cost savings and environmental benefits that can be achieved dwarf the initial expenditure.”

In the case of Gainesville, Cook listed just a few of the significant accomplishments that were achieved:

- Included environmental commitment into the city’s mission statement and incorporated the mission statement into the comprehensive plan
- Adopted the FGBC or LEED green standards as the official minimum criteria for new government buildings
- Minimizes heat island effect and stormwater runoff of trees through use of highly reflective or pervious materials
- Offers green power and provides voluntary funding option through customer billing
- Provides alternative commuting incentives for government employees and provides public transportation and alternative commuting route searching via the internet
- Applies Florida Friendly landscaping principles at public amenities and maintains an active Florida Yards & Neighborhood or other landscaping outreach program for homeowners, builders, and developers
- Teaches Environmental Preferred Purchasing and recycling to local businesses
- Offers incentives to residential and commercial building owners for energy efficiency upgrades
- Offers free or discounted green products to the community

- Provides green building and environmental education to the community and operates a website dedicated to the city's green program

Since the FGBC Green Local Government Certification program was launched, 44 Florida local governments have achieved certification, with 14 others registered and in the process of certification. The program is performance based, not prescriptive, and all of the certified governments have found that many of their existing programs and policies contributed to the point total needed for certification. "This program is an opportunity for local governments to establish sustainable practices that can be carried out on a systematic basis, and sets in motion a process that will extend beyond election terms and protect the community for years to come," Cook said.

Presentation of the award to Gainesville officials will be held on December 6, 2012 at 5:45 p.m. during the City Commission meeting in the City Hall Auditorium, 200 E University Ave., Gainesville, Fla.

The Florida Green Building Coalition is an independent non-profit organization that was established in 2000 to promote green building in Florida. FGBC's membership is comprised of individuals and businesses from all areas of the building industry, including research, design, materials, products, construction, inspection, marketing, finance and sales. For more information about the FGBC Green Local Governments designation visit [www.floridagreenbuilding.org](http://www.floridagreenbuilding.org).

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#### Complete List of Green Achievements

- Included environmental commitment into the city's mission statement and incorporated the mission statement into the comprehensive plan
- Monitors and tracks government energy and water use
- Participates in Cities for Climate Protection Campaign
- Purchased alternative fuel vehicle (AFV) and utilizes AFVs for city fleet
- Adopted the FGBC or LEED green standards as the official minimum criteria for new government buildings
- Offers free or discounted green products to the community
- Applies Florida Friendly landscaping principles at public amenities and maintains an active Florida Yards & Neighborhood or other landscaping outreach program for homeowners, builders, and developers

- Developed a student/teacher education program on green building issues related to services provided by the extension services department.
- Offers incentives for FGBC, LEED or Energy Star certified buildings
- Requires mitigation for consumption of natural habitat or resources
- Achieved Florida Main Street designation
- Developed an historic preservation ordinance and funding mechanism
- Uses AFVs or bicycles for patrolling urban and neighborhood areas
- Minimizes police photo-processing waste through use of digital photography or recycling processing chemicals.
- Police trained in crime prevention through environmental design
- Offers green power and provides voluntary funding option through customer billing
- Became an Energy Star ally
- Promotes use of fly ash and blast furnace slag as replacement of Portland cement in concrete
- Enables customers to make online bill payments
- Offers incentives for onsite power (distributed) generation, such as photovoltaics.
- Offers energy audits to community residents and businesses
- Offers incentives to residential and commercial building owners for energy efficiency upgrades
- Provides rate structures based on consumption
- Posts emissions information on city website
- Enables customers to track and analyze their energy usage via the internet
- Trains city staff in green building, energy auditing and distributed generation
- Provides green building and environmental education to the community and operates a website dedicated to the city's green program
- Provides alternative commuting incentives for government employees and provides public transportation and alternative commuting route searching via the internet
- New employee orientation includes city commitment to the environment
- Recycles end-of-life electronic equipment
- Enacted a government policy to ensure all computers and ancillary equipment is off when not in use

- Enacted a government policy requiring all electronic equipment purchased has conservation features
- Created an endangered lands conservation/purchasing program
- Enacted open-burning regulations
- Provides pertinent GIS data and water quality testing reports on city website
- Maintains organic community garden
- Public golf courses are Audubon certified
- Minimizes heat island effect and stormwater runoff of trees through use of highly reflective or pervious materials
- Places information signs or brochures describing the green features of public amenities
- Maintains a bicycle/pedestrian coordinator on staff
- Adopted “healthy street design” as a government policy
- Encourages mixed-use zoning and development
- Makes amends for vehicles to accommodate bicycles
- Analyzes transportation routes to determine connectivity to bicycle and pedestrian network
- Provides street sweeping and routine maintenance plan for storm sewers
- Developed a community stormwater education campaign
- Involves students in green project outside the school
- Became a partner in the EPA waste-wise program
- Provides city-wide chemical and hazardous waste collection
- Developed a disaster waste management plan
- Provides curbside recycling for homes and businesses
- Monitors types and amounts of material entering landfill
- Provides volume-based or special rate for solid waste collection
- Offers mulched yard waste to community
- Teaches Environmental Preferred Purchasing and recycling to local businesses
- Developed an education program for solid waste management
- Sought Florida Department of Environmental Protection plant operations excellence award
- Provided low-flow fixture rebates to the community
- Created an education campaign for water use reduction and wastewater sources