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For Immediate Release

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**Manatee County Achieves Gold Designation**  
***FGBC Designation Confirms Sustainability Commitment***

(Tallahassee, FL) – Manatee County has advanced to the Florida Green Local Government gold-level designation for environmental stewardship after it successfully met the sustainability standards established in the FGBC Green Local Government Certification program.

First certified in April 2011 at the silver level with 28 percent of its 362 applicable points, Manatee County continued to expand its strategic planning and performance management actions to earn 44.2 percent of its applicable points, thus qualifying it for the GOLD-level designation. Manatee County is the fifth local government to complete the upgrade process.

The program 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.

One goal of the Florida Green Local Government Standard is for the local government to “lead by example” and to encourage the private sector to apply the same principles through the creation of green homes, green commercial buildings, and green land developments. Bringing together community businesses and residents with common objectives and overlapping interests can lead to integrated environmental solutions to local issues.

Manatee County’s gold -level green achievements include:

- Rewrite its mission statement to include environmental commitment
- Monitor and track local government energy and water use
- Employ green cleaning and maintenance procedures
- Organize green building training for local government staff and the community
- Provide green building or green local government education materials
- Received certification for Florida Friendly landscapes

- Offer incentives to create organic farms or sustainable, water-efficient agriculture
- Offer water conservation materials and promotion within the agricultural sector
- Maintain an active Florida Yards & Neighborhood (FYN) program or other outreach program to homeowners, builders, and developers
- Maintain an active student/teacher education program
- Require mitigation for consumption of natural habitat or resources
- Require key staff to complete approved course in green building on a bi-annual basis
- Offer classes to industry that detail any green incentives or regulations in effect
- Offer incentives for local professionals to attend green building classes offered by others
- Generate case studies and publicity on local green building.
- Team with tourism department on eco-tourism campaign and track amount of eco-tourism that takes place
- Employ green fleet maintenance
- Utilize alternative fuels for fleet
- Create an education campaign for disaster mitigation
- Police trained in crime prevention through environmental design
- Mandate green construction for affordable housing built by county and other parties
- Offer incentives for construction of green affordable housing and location-efficient affordable housing
- Offer orientation classes for residents of affordable housing or refer to existing courses
- Provide alternative commuting incentives for local government employees
- Provide reusable mug to water bottles to all employees
- New employee orientation includes information on county commitment to the environment
- Become an Audubon Sustainable Community
- Develop and implement a plan for invasive species removal throughout public lands in the county
- Become a member of FLERA (Florida Local Environmental Resource Agencies)
- Enact sea turtle ordinance in coastal areas
- Enact water conservation best management requirements for car washes and fountains/water features
- Provide environmental data on air and water quality via an internet-based GIS

- Public beaches adhere to Blue Wave Campaign criteria
- Place signs and/or brochures highlighting green features and benefits at public amenities
- Maintain a bicycle / pedestrian coordinator on staff
- Develop urban area boundaries
- Encouraged mixed-use zoning and development
- Implement advanced stormwater controls and waterfront considerations
- Host boater education classes
- Make amends for vehicles to accommodate bicycles
- Analyze transportation routes to determine connectivity to bicycle & pedestrian network
- Provide public transportation route searching via the internet
- Develop a construction project waste management and recycling plan
- Operate a local government material and chemical reuse/redistribution center
- Operate local government alternative fueling station
- Use LED traffic lights
- Become a Tree City USA
- Train and certify select staff as certified arborists
- Develop a community stormwater education campaign
- Maintain a recycling program
- Create a specialized equipment reuse or swap program for the school system
- Become a partner in the EPA Waste-Wise program
- Offer county-wide chemical and hazardous waste collection
- Institute separation of reusable items from C&D for recycling at landfill
- Institute gas recovery at landfills and utilize for heat or power.
- Develop a disaster waste management plan
- Offer recycling collection and education to businesses and multi-family buildings
- Monitor types and amounts of material entering landfill and develop programs to identify areas where minimization improvements are needed
- Properly manage closed landfills so that the land can be used as a community amenity, such as a park
- Offer waste assessments to businesses
- Provide incentives for local businesses that utilize Environmentally Preferred Purchasing (EPP) or other solid waste reduction strategies

- Require recycling at all local government buildings
- Teach EPP and recycling to local businesses
- Offer educational materials to increase recycling program participation
- Reduce sanitary sewer wet and dry weather overflows into surface waters
- Develop a cogeneration system to create electricity from gas generated at wastewater treatment facilities
- Offer rebates to the community for installation of low-flow plumbing fixtures
- Enforce water restrictions during meter reads
- Develop informative billing to education customers about water use reduction
- Maintain an on-call program that answers questions and conducts field investigations in response to citizen concern of water pollution incidents

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.

Since the FGBC Green Local Government Certification program was launched, 72 Florida municipalities have registered for participation and 45 have achieved certification.

Presentation of the award to Manatee County officials will be held on May 20, 2014 at 9 a.m. during the County Commission meeting in the Manatee County Administration Building, 1112 Manatee Avenue West, Bradenton, FL.

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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