

Date: November 7, 2012

For Immediate Release

Contact: Suzanne B. Cook, CAE
PH: 850-894-3422
Email: cooks@nettally.com

Miami-Dade 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 Miami-Dade County a certified Florida Green Local Government after it successfully met the sustainability standards established in the FGBC Green Local Government Certification program. Miami-Dade achieved a gold-level designation by earning 57 percent of its 394 applicable points, the highest score yet accomplished by any local government.

Suzanne Cook, FGBC Executive Director, said the designation demonstrates exemplary leadership by Mayor Carlos Gimenez 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 county’s dedication and commitment to the important ideals outlined in this program.”

In order to achieve the FGBC Green Local Government Certification, Miami-Dade staff, led by Maribel Balbin, Sustainability Program Manager, 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 CO₂ reductions, and identification of programs that will improve community involvement and enhance sustainability throughout Miami-Dade County,” 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 local government 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 Miami-Dade, Cook listed just a few of the significant accomplishments that were achieved: *(A complete list is included at the end of this news release.)*

- Implemented an ISO 14001 Environmental Management System to identify and control the government’s environmental impact and constantly improve its environmental performance
- Monitors and tracks energy and water use and implements conservation measures.
- Employs green landscaping practices on government properties
- Adopted green standards as the official minimum criteria for new and renovated government buildings and
- Developed an Environmental Preferred Purchasing (EPP) program for the local government
- Implemented green cleaning and maintenance procedures
- Offers green building incentives, education, and green products to the community
- Implement the FDOT “12 Steps Towards Walkable Communities” into planning process and maintain a bicycle/pedestrian coordinator on staff
- Construct and renovate green schools

Since the FGBC Green Local Government Certification program was launched, 44 Florida municipalities 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 Miami-Dade officials will be held on December 4, 2012 at 9:30 a.m. during the County Commission meeting in the Stephen P. Clark Government Center located at 111 NW 1st Street, Miami, 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.

#####

Complete List of Green Achievements

- Monitor and track local government energy use and develop an energy reduction plan
- Monitor and track school district energy use
- Monitor and track local government water use and develop a water reduction plan
- Monitor and track local government solid waste generation and recycling rates
- Develop a solid/hazardous waste reduction plan
- Develop an Environmental Preferred Purchasing (EPP) program for the local government
- Participate in Cities for Climate Protection Campaign
- Purchase alternative fuel vehicles (AFV)
- Construct green certified government buildings
- Employ green cleaning and maintenance procedures
- Maintain an office or person to coordinate green activities
- Implement an ISO 14001 Environmental Management System
- Adopt green standards as the official minimum criteria for new and renovated government buildings
- Enact green landscaping ordinance for local government buildings

- Utilize renewable energy on energy-efficient local government buildings
- Budget for education and publicity related to the government's commitment to green and publish case studies on green building
- Organize green building education for local government staff, industry professionals and community residents
- Create an education campaign for water use reduction measures, such as Florida Friendly Landscaping and rainwater harvesting)
- Certify government properties using the Florida Friendly Landscaping Program
- Enact and enforce a Florida Friendly Landscaping ordinance for new construction
- Maintain an active Florida Yards & Neighborhoods (FY&N) program or other landscaping outreach program to builders, developers and homeowners.
- Offer free and discounted green products to the public, including rebates for installation of low flow fixtures
- Offer promotion and education on water conservation within the agricultural sector
- Adopt FGBC or LEED green standards as official standards of the county
- Offer incentives for FGBC, LEED or Energy Star certified commercial and institutional buildings
- Offer incentives for FGBC certified land developments
- Offer incentives for green redevelopment
- Offer incentives for construction of green affordable and location efficient housing
- Develop an historic preservation ordinance and funding mechanism to aid with historic preservation
- Create an endangered lands conservation / purchasing program
- Develop and implement plans for species removal throughout public lands
- Provide incentives for disaster mitigation
- Require mitigation for consumption of natural habitat or resources
- Enact and enforce a tree preservation or land-clearing ordinance
- Enact sea turtle ordinance for coastal areas and a manatee protection plan
- Enact new construction plumbing standards that are more stringent than EPAAct 1992 referencing Water Sense
- Team with tourism department on eco-tourism campaign

- Provide incentives for location of green businesses within the county and provide special promotion for local eco-hotels.
- Create or promote a green business certification program
- Police trained in crime prevention through environmental design
- Use AFV and/or bicycle patrol for urban/neighborhood areas
- Review training operations with fire departments and conserve water where appropriate
- Offer energy audits and incentives to commercial and residential customers for energy conservation
- Enable customers to track and analyze their energy usage via the internet
- Initiate a community-wide energy efficiency challenge
- Provide incentives for alternative commuting to local government employees
- Provide reusable mug/water bottle to all employees
- New employee orientation includes county commitment to the environment
- Recycle end-of-life electronic equipment
- Enact policy so all computers and ancillary equipment purchased has conservation features and that it is turned off when not in use
- Operate a website dedicated to the county's green program and develop environmental education content for the website, TV programs, etc.
- Reduce emissions through the retrofitting of diesel vehicles
- Develop a boat facility siting plan
- Maintain an on-call water quality program
- Publish the air quality index and water quality on the county's website
- Operate an environmental demonstration / learning center and maintain organic community gardens
- Install appropriate bicycle security at all public amenities
- Obtain Audubon certification for public golf courses
- Implement energy efficient lighting and controls for outdoor courts, parks and playfields
- Develop a system of sustainable community indicators related to the local government planning
- Implement the FDOT "12 Steps Towards Walkable Communities" into planning process and maintain a bicycle/pedestrian coordinator on staff
- Adopt healthy street design as an official government policy

- Analyze transportation routes and improve connectivity to bicycle and pedestrian network
- Develop and maintain urban area boundaries
- Encourage mixed-use zoning and development
- Participate in Florida Clean Marina program and offer boater education classes
- Implement advanced stormwater controls and waterfront considerations
- Engage in carpool/vanpool assistance
- Implement carpool or express bus lanes and provide an express bus to the suburban area
- Provide public transportation route search and information on alternative commuting on the website
- Operate a local government material/chemical reuse/redistribution center
- Utilize integrated pest management
- Install LED traffic lights and utilize solar or other energy-efficient streetlights and crosswalk lights
- Develop a reward program for employee environmental innovation in public works
- Train and certify select staff as certified arborists
- Maintain a recycling program
- Construct and renovate green schools
- Involve students in green projects within the school
- Provide incentives for businesses that utilize EPP or other solid waste reduction strategy
- Require mandatory recycling of typical recyclables and C&D debris for homes and businesses
- Utilize volume-based or special rates for solid waste collection
- Offer mulched yard waste to community
- Create a reclaimed water infrastructure
- Provide sanitary sewer overflow abatement
- Require metering of shallow aquifer removal and sub-metering of multi-family housing
- Utilize informative billing on utility statements
- Distribute printed material or create internet content detailing water wastewater source
- Create an education campaign for water use reduction (Florida friendly landscaping, rainwater harvesting, etc.)