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For Immediate Release

City of North Miami Attains Green Government Certification *FGBC Designation Confirms Environmental Stewardship*

North Miami, Florida – The Florida Green Building Coalition (FGBC), a membership-based non-profit organization that promotes sustainable building, development and business practices, has designated the City of North Miami a Florida Green Local Government after it successfully met the sustainability standards established in the FGBC Green Local Government Certification program. The City of North Miami achieved 28 percent, earning them a Silver level designation.

Suzanne Cook, FGBC Executive Director, said the designation demonstrates a strong commitment by the City of North Miami elected officials to embrace the tenants of sustainability, while also helping to manage better the cost of government. “Their leadership in this effort will help protect and conserve our natural resources, enhance the efficiency of government, 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, the City of North Miami staff 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, waste disposal and recycling, maintenance policies, educational programs, purchasing practices, regulatory policies, and many others. From there teams used FGBC’s online 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 the City of North Miami,” 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 the City of North Miami, Cook listed just a few of the significant accomplishments that were achieved:

- Participation in Cities for Climate Protection Campaign
- Use of alternative fuel vehicles
- Adopted green standards as official minimum criteria for new government buildings
- Provides incentives for green certified commercial and institutional buildings
- Provides incentives for green certified land development projects and green redevelopment
- Provide incentives for construction of green affordable housing
- Enacted green landscaping ordinance for local government buildings
- Offered incentives to create organic farms, or sustainable/water efficient agriculture
- Enacted ordinances to promote water conservation and offered rebates on low-flow water fixtures
- Enacted ordinances to protect water quality through septic tank replacements
- Provides incentives for alternative commuting by local government employees
- Provides environmental education to community residents and local government employees
- Maintains community organic gardens
- Implemented community recycling stations

- Implemented energy efficient lighting & controls for outdoor courts, parks, and playfields
- Operates and maintains a green fleet maintenance program and mandates green cleaning practices in green government buildings

Since the FGBC Green Local Government Certification program was launched, 26 Florida counties and municipalities have achieved certification, with 54 others registered and in the process. 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.

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 Green Governments program visit www.floridagreenbuilding.org.

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