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## **Sarasota County Achieves Green Recertification** *FGBC Designation Confirms Sustainability Commitment*

(Tallahassee, FL) – The Florida Green Building Coalition (FGBC) that administers green certification standards in Florida has recertified Sarasota County as a Florida Green Local Government after it successfully met the sustainability standards established in the FGBC Green Local Government 5-year recertification program.

First certified in September 2008 at the gold level with 47 percent of its 351 applicable points, Sarasota County continued to expand its sustainability strategic planning and performance management actions to earn 59 percent of its 399 applicable points, thus qualifying it for a gold-level designation and making it the second highest scoring local government in the state, surpassed only by the city of Dunedin.

The program criteria includes 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.

Suzanne Cook, FGBC Executive Director, said the designation demonstrates exemplary leadership by the Sarasota County Commission and administration 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 Sarasota’s dedication and commitment to the important ideals outlined in this program.”

In order to achieve the FGBC Green Local Government Certification, Sarasota’s “green team” lead by Sustainability Manager Lee Hayes Byron undertook an extensive audit of the functions performed by every department. From there teams used the FGBC’s program tools to identify methods to improve the sustainability of their business practices and operations.

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.

Some of Sarasota County’s green achievements include:

- Incorporated the environmental mission statement into the local government's comprehensive plan
- Monitors and tracks local government energy and water use and developed reduction plans
- Monitors and tracks local government solid waste generation and recycling rates
- Developed an environmentally preferred purchasing (EPP) program for the local government
- Participates in Cities for Climate Protection Campaign
- Purchased alternative fuel vehicles
- Adopted FGBC or LEED green standards as official green standards of the city/county and
- Employs green cleaning and maintenance procedures
- Maintains an office, person, or group to coordinate current and future green activities
- Enact green landscaping ordinance for local government buildings
- Utilizes renewable energy on energy-efficient local government buildings
- Budgets for publicity & education related to the government’s commitment to green
- Provides green building education & materials to local government staff and the community
- Certifies Florida friendly landscapes within the county or city
- Offers free or discounted green products to the public
- Offers education and incentives to create organic farms, or sustainable and water efficient agriculture
- Maintains an active student/teacher education program
- Requires mitigation for consumption of natural habitat or resources
- Enacted and enforces a tree preservation or land-clearing ordinance
- Enacted a septic system replacement ordinance
- Enacted and enforces a Florida Friendly landscaping ordinance for new construction
- Offers classes to industry that detail any green incentives or regulations present
- Offers incentives for local professionals to attend green building classes offered by others
- Teamed with tourism department on eco-tourism campaign and tracks amount of tourism that takes part in eco-related activities

- Achieved Florida Main Street Designation
- Provides incentives for location of green businesses within city/county
- Created or promotes a green business certification program
- Provides incentives for green redevelopment
- Developed a historic preservation ordinance and funding mechanism to aid with historic preservation
- Uses alternative fuel vehicles and/or bicycle patrol for urban/neighborhood areas
- Uses renewable energy as backup / emergency power
- Maintains green fleets
- Firing ranges utilize non-lead bullets or trap and collect fragments
- Fire departments review training operations and conserve water where appropriate
- Offers incentives for disaster mitigation
- Police are trained in crime prevention through environmental design
- Provides alternative commuting incentives for local government employees
- New employee orientation includes count's commitment to environment
- Operates local government computer and equipment reuse center and recycles end-of-life electronic equipment
- Enacted a policy so all computer electronic equipment purchased has conservation features
- Operates a website dedicated to the county's green program
- Developed environmental education content for city/county websites, TV programs, etc.
- Became an Audubon Sustainable Community
- Created an endangered lands conservation and purchasing program
- Developed & implements plans for species removal throughout public lands
- Enacted sea turtle and manatee protection ordinances
- Developed a boat facility siting plan
- Posts air & water quality on website
- Maintains organic community gardens and operates an environmental learning center
- Minimizes heat island effects through the use of trees and highly reflective materials or surfaces
- Public beaches adhere to Blue Wave Campaign criteria
- Implemented recycling stations for plastic, glass, and aluminum containers at all areas
- Implemented energy efficient lighting & controls for outdoor courts, parks and playfields
- Has placed signs or brochures at public amenities explaining green features and their benefits
- Implemented FDOT "12 Steps Towards Walkable Communities" into planning process

- Developed and maintains urban area boundaries
- Takes part in the Florida Clean Marina program and hosts boater education classes
- Implemented advanced stormwater controls and waterfront considerations
- Offers tax incentives for certified green properties
- Offers tax incentives for lands qualifying as historic, high water recharge, greenbelt, etc.
- Makes amends for vehicles to accommodate bicycles
- Implemented and enforces carpool or express bus lanes
- Analyzed transportation routes and improved connectivity to bicycle & pedestrian network
- Provides public transportation route searching via the internet
- Developed a construction project waste management/recycling plan
- Operates a local government material/chemical reuse/redistribution center
- Utilizes integrated pest management
- Operates local government alternative fueling station
- Uses LED traffic lights and solar or other energy efficient streetlights and crosswalk lights
- Became a Tree City USA
- Developed a reward program for employee environmental innovation in public works
- Offers green fleet management training to all applicable departments
- Trains and certifies select staff as certified arborists
- Has a community stormwater education campaign
- Monitors and tracks building energy usage in the school district
- Involves students in green projects within and outside the school
- Operates public reuse store / swap shop
- Maintains a recycling program
- Has mandatory recycling of typical recyclables and construction/demolition debris
- Monitors the types and amounts of material entering landfill
- Implemented landfill gas recovery
- Offers recycling collection services and education program to businesses & multi-family dwellings
- Offers recycled paint back to the community
- Developed a disaster waste management plan
- Offers waste assessments to businesses
- Offers mulched yard waste to community
- Created a reclaimed water infrastructure

- Conducted energy audit of treatment facilities
- Utilizes rate structures based on consumption
- Offers low flow fixture rebates
- Enforces watering restrictions during meter reads
- Adopted policies to encourage alternative onsite wastewater and water reuse technologies
- Adopted Appendix C of the Building Code related to gray water
- Maintains an on-call water quality program
- Enables customers to track and analyze their usage via the internet

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, 74 Florida governments have registered to participate in the program, with 43 of those achieving certification to date.

#### ***About the Florida Green Building Coalition***

*The Florida Green Building Coalition (FGBC) is a 501(C)3 nonprofit Florida corporation founded in 2000 and dedicated to improving the built environment. Its mission is "to lead and promote sustainability with environmental, economic, and social benefits through regional education and certification programs." FGBC certification programs are the only standards developed with climate specific criteria to address issues caused by Florida's hot-humid environment and natural disasters. Currently, FGBC is the leading certifier of green projects 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 public advocates. For more information about the FGBC "Florida Green" certification programs visit [www.floridagreenbuilding.org](http://www.floridagreenbuilding.org).*

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