

Date: June 30, 2016

For Immediate Release

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

Orange 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 Orange 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 February 2008 at the gold level with 42 percent of its 350 applicable points, Orange County continued to expand its strategic planning and performance management actions to earn 59 percent of its applicable points, thus qualifying it for another GOLD-level designation.

Orange County is in a 3-way tie with the city of Palm Coast and Sarasota County as the second highest scoring local government statewide.

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 Mayor Teresa Jacobs, the Commission, and county administration who provided the framework and support to move forward with the process that helps to better manage the cost of government. This is a reflection of more than a decade of commitments by county leadership and strong support by members of the community.

“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, Orange County’s “green team” led by Lori Cunniff, Deputy Director of Environmental & Development Division, 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 Orange County's green achievements include:

- Included the County's environmental commitment into its mission statement and comprehensive plan
- Developed an energy reduction plan and tracks its energy use
- It also created a database to track energy use and green certifications of community buildings and issued a community-wide efficiency challenge
- Created a reclaimed water infrastructure
- Developed a solid waste reduction plan and monitors solid waste generation and recycling
- Developed an environmentally preferred purchasing program
- Employs green cleaning & maintenance
- Implemented an ISO 14001 Environmental Management system to conform with its established environmental policy and requirements.
- Encourages the use of a green certification standard for new government buildings
- Offers incentives for green certified commercial buildings and land developments within the community
- Enacted a green landscaping ordinance
- Utilizes renewable energy on government buildings
- Offers free and discounted green products to the community
- Uses alternative fuel vehicles and operates a green fleet
- Reduced emissions by retrofitting diesel vehicles and enacting an opening burning ordinance
- Implemented the Florida Dept of Transportation's "12 Steps Towards Walkable Communities" into the County's planning process
- Instituted a bicycle commuter assistance program

- Provides incentives for environmental training of teachers and involves students in green building educational activities
- Offers recycling services to businesses and multi-family projects

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, 87 Florida governments have registered to participate in the program, with 63 of those achieving certification to date.

About the Florida Green Building Coalition

The Florida Green Building Coalition is the leading certifier of green projects in Florida. To date it has 13,700 residential, over 26 million s.f. of commercial and high-rise, 53 land developments, and 87 local governments participating in its 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.

The Florida Green Building Coalition (FGBC) is a nonprofit 501(C)3 Florida corporation founded in 2000 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." For more information about the FGBC "Florida Green" certification programs visit www.floridagreenbuilding.org.

#####