



Rural Development, Inc.

Home Ownership Program
44 Canal Road
Turners Falls, MA 01376
(413) 863-9781 fax (413) 863-8160

Press Release

For Immediate Release
February 20, 2008

Contact: Anne Perkins
(413) 863-9781 ext. 148
aperkins@fcrhra.org

Rural Development, Inc. Joins U.S. Department of Energy Secretary Bodman to Launch Builders' Challenge in Orlando, FL

National building performance program to feature new E-Scale

On February 14, Rural Development, Inc. (RDI) joined with U.S. Department of Energy Secretary Samuel Bodman to announce a new national energy-saving initiative—the U.S. Department of Energy's Builders Challenge. Rural Development, Inc. was at the Builders Challenge kick-off event held at the International Builders Show in Orlando, Florida.

Rural Development, Inc., a non-profit developer of affordable green homes, has been building high performance homes for eight years in Franklin County and the North Quabbin region. "We look forward to working with the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) to increase consumer awareness about the benefits of high efficiency homes," said Anne Perkins, Director of Home Ownership Programs for RDI.

The EnergySmart Home Scale, or E-Scale, will serve as a tool for marketing energy-efficient homes. The challenge program encourages U.S. home builders to adopt the E-Scale on a voluntary basis, and also to utilize best practices for home design and construction. The initiative seeks to accelerate use of successful whole-house design and construction practices that have been developed and verified through DOE research in its Building America program.

About Rural Development, Inc.

Rural Development, Inc. Home Ownership Program is developing the Wisdom Way Solar Village in Greenfield. Twenty near zero net energy homes will be constructed. These homes are expected to achieve a 21 on the EnergySmart Home Scale meaning they will use 79% less energy than a typical new home built to code. RDI has been working with the DOE Building America Program through the Steven Winter Associates. Learn more at www.ruraldevelopmentinc.org.

About the U.S. Department of Energy's Builders Challenge

The U.S. Department of Energy has posed a challenge to the homebuilding industry – **to build 220,000 high performance homes by 2012**. Homes that qualify for the Builders Challenge must achieve a 70 or better on the EnergySmart Home Scale (E-Scale), meaning that they will use at least 30% less energy than a typical new home built to code. The E-Scale allows homebuyers to understand – at a glance – how the energy performance of a particular home compares with others. Through the Builders Challenge, participating homebuilders will have an easy way to differentiate their best energy-performing homes from other products in the marketplace, and to make the benefits clear to buyers.

Through industry partnerships and existing programs, the Builders Challenge will promote the use of market-tested and cost-effective energy efficiency strategies. The Challenge will support, recognize, and reward builders for achieving higher levels of energy efficiency. DOE's goal is that, by 2030, new home buyers will have the option to buy a cost-effective Net-Zero Energy Home (NZEH) anywhere in the United States. Learn more at: www.buildingamerica.gov/challenge.