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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New Opportunities for Michigan Builders

Detroit, MI (May 26, 2006)

Things are getting a bit tough in the housing market. Fortunately, homebuilders now have some new resources to help distinguish themselves and give customers solid data on what makes their homes better. One is the Michigan Build! ENERGY STAR Homes program. The other is a new federal tax credit that can provide \$2,000 to the builder for every home that meets its criteria.

The Michigan Build! ENERGY STAR Homes program works with builders to verify that their homes deliver excellent performance, market that improved performance, and educate the homebuyer on the benefits and proper maintenance of those homes. Michigan Build! ENERGY STAR Homes is a voluntary program that identifies a home that will provide comfort, durability, safety, and energy efficiency. A third-party independent consultant works with builders and their crew to make sure the home has met the Michigan Build! standards, verify its performance, and help market the home to buyers. On average, these homes are 30 percent more efficient than homes built to the Michigan Residential Code, and provide additional comfort and safety measures beyond the Environmental Protection Agency's national ENERGY STAR for Homes program standards.

The federal tax credit is part of the federal Energy Policy Act, which was signed into law in August 2005. The Act has provisions encouraging the construction of energy efficient homes and includes a \$2,000 tax credit for each new home, if it meets the program criteria. "This tax credit is a great incentive for builders to check the efficiency of their homes," says Jacob Corvidae, one of the project managers of the Michigan Build! ENERGY STAR Homes program. "This is why consultants from our program are such an important resource. They can tell a builder what they need to tweak to make their homes eligible for the tax credit before construction begins, as well as verify that construction details are handled to meet the credit's criteria. As an added bonus, most homes eligible for the tax credit can also take advantage of the Michigan Build! ENERGY STAR Homes label as well."

Sue Carroll of J.M. Developments in Fenton says, "We were happy to become part of the Michigan Build! program, because it will set our homes apart by providing our homeowners outstanding benefits like energy efficiency and air quality control. It's an exciting opportunity to partner with Michigan Build! and show that J.M. Developments is offering an exceptional product."

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“With energy prices all over the headlines, we see more homebuyers wanting to know that their new homes won’t throw money away on utilities,” says Robert Chapman, Executive Director of WARM Training Center, a Detroit nonprofit that promotes affordable, healthy homes and a project partner in the Michigan Build! ENERGY STAR Homes program.

Builders interested in the federal tax credit or the Michigan Build! ENERGY STAR Homes program are encouraged to attend one of the upcoming free breakfast seminars on Monday, June 19 in Troy, Tuesday June 27 in Detroit and Thursday, July 6 in Utica. More information is available at www.michiganbuild.org or by calling Jacob Corvidae at 313-894-1030.

About Michigan Build! ENERGY STAR Homes:

Michigan Build! supports builders and consumers to create healthy, energy efficient homes. The Michigan Build! ENERGY STAR program is a partnership led by Urban Options in East Lansing and WARM Training Center in Detroit. Qualified homes are on average 30 percent more energy efficient than homes built to the Michigan Residential Code, and provide more healthy home features than the Environmental Protection Agency’s national ENERGY STAR Homes program. More information is available at www.michiganbuild.org.

About WARM Training Center:

WARM Training Center is a nonprofit organization that has been based in Detroit for 25 years. WARM’s mission is to promote affordable, sustainable communities, which it does through providing technical assistance to organization and education to the general public. WARM provides information on home construction and repair, energy efficiency, renewable energy and green building. WARM is one of eight Michigan Energy Demonstration Centers. More information is available at www.warmtraining.org.

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