



For Immediate Release

Habitat for Humanity Winnipeg to Begin Construction on the Greenest Affordable Housing Development in Canada

Local Not-for-Profit homebuilder and trio of corporate partners setting national milestone for sustainable home construction with plan to build 34 homes.

Winnipeg, MB., February 03, 2009 - Habitat for Humanity Winnipeg (HFHW) has already begun installing underground services on the first 12 of a new 34 -home sustainable housing development, which once completed, will become Canada's greenest affordable housing development. The homes will be built to both the Manitoba Hydro Power Smart Gold Standard and the Green Building Council developed Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED®) Green Building Rating System™. The housing development will be located on the site of the former Sir Sam Steele School and will be HFHWs largest initiative to date.

Confident that energy efficient homes make homeownership more affordable for low-income families, HFHW has been building all of its homes to Manitoba Hydro Power Smart Gold Standards since 2006. The Manitoba Hydro Power Smart Gold standard is a designation given to homes that are built to the highest level of energy efficiency. Manitoba Hydro estimates that building these homes to the Power Smart Gold standard means Habitat homeowners' heating bills will be one-third lower than homes that have been built to meet the current new-home building code.

In 2007, HFHW began to explore the benefits of adopting a more aggressive sustainable construction model and has adopted the US Green Building Council LEED® program for residential homes. We understand that the Canadian Green Building Council will soon have its LEED® program for residential homes available and HFHW will convert this project to the Canadian standards once they have been published. We anticipate that the Sir Sam Steele homes will achieve either the silver or gold accreditation level of the LEED® program.

"Habitat for Humanity Winnipeg believes that sustainable home building is beneficial to not only our Habitat homeowners but the community as a whole. By adjusting only a few of our existing construction methods we are very near the LEED® accreditation level already," said Sandy Hopkins, HFHWs Chief Executive Officer. "We also source local goods and services as much as possible in order to reduce our carbon footprint and to support our local economy. We want to show the country that sustainable building makes sense for every city, every community and every family. The realities of the economic downturn only strengthen our resolve to build to the highest "green" standards."

Corporate support for HFHWs green building program has been significant and Investors Group, Manitoba Hydro, and The Home Depot have signed on with financial support and are eager to see construction begin.

Investors Group was first on board as the program's Founding Partner and feels that HFHWs push for sustainable building fits its corporate goal of supporting environmentally friendly programs.

"Investors Group is very pleased to support Habitat for Humanity in their efforts to build affordable and 'green' housing for families in Winnipeg," said Murray Taylor, President and Chief Executive Officer of Investors Group. "This project is in keeping with our commitment to serve the needs of people in our community while being responsible stewards of the environment. We hope this sets the standard for sustainable housing both in our community and throughout Canada."

Both Manitoba Hydro and The Home Depot also support environmentally responsible programs and have embraced HFHWs willingness to grow their current green homebuilding methods into a sustainable building program.

"Part of the corporate culture and history of Manitoba Hydro is our commitment to serve the communities where we live and work, and to be proactive in protecting the environment," said Gerry Rose, Vice-President, Customer Service and Marketing of Manitoba Hydro. "We believe that all Manitobans should have access to energy efficient alternatives and increased home comfort. It was with the 1993 build with former president Jimmy Carter where Manitoba Hydro first began our commitment to ensure that Habitat homes are built with this belief in mind. Now with homes that meet Power Smart Gold standards, families will enjoy substantially lower monthly energy costs and produce less greenhouse gas emissions."

"The Home Depot is proud to provide funding and volunteer support to Habitat for Humanity Winnipeg to help make this sustainable housing project a reality," said Randy Kelly, Winnipeg District Manager, The Home Depot Canada. "This support is part of The Home Depot's overall commitment to giving back and building affordable housing for families in need. Since 1996, The Home Depot has been the largest supporter of Habitat for Humanity in Canada with current donations exceeding \$3 million in funding and product and thousands of volunteer hours each year."

HFHW is the local affiliate of an international not-for-profit organization and since 1987 has built 164 safe, decent, and affordable homes for low-income working families. Homes are purchased using a no money down, interest free mortgage. For more information on HFHW please visit www.habitat.mb.ca

For more information on the US Green Building Council developed Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System™ please visit <http://www.usgbc.org/Default.aspx>

For more information on the Manitoba Hydro Power Smart Gold Standard please visit www.newhomeprogram.ca

Contact:

Kim Wilson

Director, Fund Development

Habitat for Humanity Winnipeg

(204) 793-0405

kwilson@habitat.mb.ca