

COACHELLA VALLEY HOUSING COALITION

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Press Release

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EPA Recognizes The Coachella Valley Housing Coalition as a National Leader in Affordable Housing

Indio, Calif. – The Coachella Valley Housing Coalition (CVHC) today announced that it has been recognized by the U.S. Environmental Project Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Department of Energy with the 2011 ENERGY STAR Award for Excellence in Affordable Housing. CVHC will be presented with this distinguished national honor at an awards ceremony April 12th at the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel in Washington DC.

“More than 3,000 low and very low income families in Riverside and Imperial counties enjoy the benefits of energy-efficient and ENERGY STAR-certified homes developed by CVHC,” said John Mealey, Executive Director of CVHC. “By incorporating ENERGY STAR standards into the Mutual Self Help homes and rental units we build, CVHC promotes energy efficiency and sustainable construction practices to benefit our families and our planet.”

“Partners like The Coachella Valley Housing Coalition are bringing the benefits of ENERGY STAR homes to Americans from all walks of life,” said Elizabeth Craig, Acting Director of EPA’s Office of Atmospheric Programs. “Residents of ENERGY STAR qualified homes not only see lower energy bills, but also enjoy increased comfort and reduced maintenance costs. We look to these partners to continue helping Americans afford the comfort and energy efficiency that comes with a home that has earned the ENERGY STAR. ”

As a nonprofit home builder based in Southern California, CVHC has built more than 3,800 units of affordable housing. CVHC is one of the most successful developers of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development (USDA-RD) Section 523 Mutual Self Help Housing Program.

In the program 10-15 families work together for up to twelve months to build their home and that of their neighbors. No families move in until all the families move in. CVHC secures the program funding through USDA-RD, which provides program operations funds and also provides each family with a low-interest mortgage under the Section 502 Direct Loan Program. The USDA loans carry a 1 percent to market rate interest rate depending on family size and financial need. Families also qualify for mortgage subsidies from other federal, state and local agencies. The act of building the homes or “sweat equity” becomes each family’s down payment. Self Help homes feature many innovative energy efficient amenities, including ENERGY STAR-rated appliances, HV/AC systems and light fixtures, as well as steel framing, swamp coolers, and

dual-pane windows all incorporated to ensure homes exceed California's Title 24 energy code by more than 15 percent.

"CVHC accepts this honor on behalf of the hardworking families that not only invest their time to improve the lives and futures of their families, but utilize sustainable building practices to efficiently build their homes and their community," John Mealey added. "We are honored to be a part of the select few chosen this year by the EPA and the Department of Energy to receive this award."

CVHC also builds rental housing, including its Gold and Silver LEED certified Wolff Waters Place Apartments in the City of La Quinta, which in 2010 was named the "Best Affordable Project" by the Green Builder Magazine Green Home of the Year Awards Program.

"Coachella Valley Housing Coalition's efforts to deliver and promote energy efficiency in affordable housing are an outstanding example for others to follow," said Dale Hoffmeyer, EPA Energy Star program representative in the award letter. "Your efforts have contributed to significant energy savings for residents, and reduced emissions of greenhouse gases that are related to energy conservation."

Americans, with the help of ENERGY STAR, prevented 170 million metric tons of GHG emissions in 2010 alone – equivalent to the annual emissions from 34 million vehicles – and saved \$18 billion on their utility bills. Products, homes and buildings that have earned the ENERGY STAR prevent emissions by meeting strict energy-efficiency specifications set by EPA.

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About CVHC

Located in Indio, California, about one hundred miles east of Los Angeles, the Coachella Valley Housing Coalition (CVHC) is a non-profit housing development corporation dedicated to helping low and very-low income families improve their living conditions through advocacy, research, construction, and operation of housing and community development projects. CVHC has constructed more than 3,800 homes and apartments for low income households in Riverside and Imperial Counties. In addition, CVHC has developed childcare centers, after-school programs, and two medical clinics. It operates various services for its tenants and others including mariachi classes, English as a Second Language and Citizenship classes, an art program, and tennis and recreational programs. For more information, visit www.cvhc.org

About ENERGY STAR

ENERGY STAR was introduced by EPA in 1992 as a voluntary, market-based partnership to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other pollutants associated with energy use. Today, the ENERGY STAR label can be found on more than 60 kinds of products as well as new homes and buildings. Last year alone, Americans, with the help of ENERGY STAR, saved \$18 billion on their utility bills and prevented greenhouse gas equivalent to those of 34 million cars. Products, homes and buildings that have earned the ENERGY STAR prevent emissions by meeting strict energy-efficiency specifications set by the EPA. For more information, go to energystar.gov