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**Northwest Residential Energy Efficiency Groups to Host Roundtables to Address Concerns in the Appraisal of High Efficiency Homes and Energy Efficient Retrofits**

**Portland, OR — March 17, 2011—** Homeowners throughout the Pacific Northwest often get startling news when they have their home appraised, especially if they have undergone energy efficiency retrofits or chosen to purchase a new energy efficient home. Home appraisers and the appraisal process are often unable to take home energy efficiency measures or energy efficiency certifications into account, leaving homeowners, builders, developers, and real estate industry professionals frustrated and confused by the evaluation process.

The Northwest ENERGY STAR® Homes Program is sponsoring a series of roundtable forums to address some of the concerns in the appraisal of high efficiency homes in the region. S.E.E.C LLC, the organization responsible for creating the roundtable agenda and curriculum, is launching the first in a series of roundtable discussions designed to encourage broader discourse and innovative solutions around valuing energy efficiency for new homes and energy retrofits. Along with the roundtables, specific classes are being offered to appraisers in Northwest ENERGY STAR's key markets in Washington, Idaho, and Montana. These roundtables continue the work started under the Green Building Value Initiative that examined the hypothesis of a premium for green and energy efficient homes.

In addition to home appraisers, the roundtables will include industry experts ranging from energy efficiency professionals to state energy and code offices, green certification programs, municipalities, real estate agents, developers, and green builders. "The issues around the valuation of green and energy efficient features are far too interwoven to expect one industry sector to provide the solution," said Fiona Douglas-Hamilton of S.E.E.C. LLC. "The roundtables were conceived as a means to bring the different industry groups together at the local level for frank discussion and to come up with solutions that have broad industry consensus. Outside of the appraisal community there is little understanding of the valuation process, a process that is ultimately determined by homebuyers' choices. There is now evidence that peoples' priorities around what they are looking for in a home are changing – yet there is little agreement how this shift in values should be treated. These meetings are designed to bring all the players to the table and to recognize we all bear an equal responsibility to move energy efficiency forward."

Following up on each roundtable, a minimum of one *free* 7 clock hour continuing education class will be offered to local appraisers. Northwest ENERGY STAR® Homes and Built Green® Washington are co-sponsoring the live classes in Washington, and S.E.E.C. is currently developing an online course that will serve appraisers in Northwest ENERGY STAR's Idaho and Montana markets. The course *Green Home Trends and Appraisal Methodologies* was developed for the Washington market around hard statistical data, trends, and case studies and allows the appraiser to consider, within work study groups, the various approaches to valuation for the types of green and energy efficient homes they will likely encounter in their local practice. "Since appraisals are highly localized professional services, we felt it important that appraisers be able to clearly identify the programs they will encounter in their local markets," says Sam Lai, co-author of the class. "In Washington that's chiefly Built Green® and ENERGY STAR®; although all programs that an appraiser could encounter, such as Earth Advantage®, energy performance scores, and LEED®, are well covered."

The first roundtables will be held in Olympia, WA on March 25 and Seattle on March 31.

### **About S.E.E.C. LLC**

S.E.E.C. LLC is a group of residential green building professionals and appraisers based in the Pacific Northwest who are concerned with the accurate recording of value in areas that have clearly demonstrated a consumer preference for sustainable building.

S.E.E.C. LLC serves appraisers, real estate agents, developers and builders. They collaborate with organizations pursuing market transformation of residential building practices in the Americas by:

- bringing stakeholders together to develop and implement strategies to recognize value for green and energy efficient homes in their region
- developing and instructing market-specific curriculum for residential agents and appraisers
- developing peer reviewed case studies for the valuation community
- disseminating market data and valuation opinions

### **About Northwest ENERGY STAR Homes**

ENERGY STAR qualified homes are designed, built and third-party verified to be at least 15% more energy efficient than homes built to the current state building codes. ENERGY STAR qualified homes in ID, OR, MT and WA are built by home builders participating in the Northwest ENERGY STAR Homes program, which is made possible by the Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance (NEEA).

NEEA is a private non-profit organization funded by Northwest utilities, the Energy Trust of Oregon, and the Bonneville Power Administration. NEEA works in collaboration with its stakeholders and strategic market partners to accelerate the sustained market adoption of energy-efficient products, technologies and practices. NEEA's market transformation efforts address energy efficiency in homes, businesses, and industry. Its mission is to mobilize the Northwest to become increasingly energy efficient for a sustainable future. In 2010, NEEA was awarded the EPA's ENERGY STAR Sustained Excellence award in part due to the implementation of the Northwest ENERGY STAR Homes program. For more information regarding NEEA, visit [www.nwalliance.org](http://www.nwalliance.org). Consumers can learn more about ENERGY STAR qualified homes by visiting [www.northwestENERGYSTAR.com](http://www.northwestENERGYSTAR.com) or calling 1.800.539.9362.

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