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U.S. Department of Energy Launches Commercial High Performance Buildings Project

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NORWALK, CT Secretary of Energy Bill Richardson has announced that the Department of Energy (DOE) is creating a Commercial High Performance Buildings project to increase the energy efficiency of commercial buildings. The effort, a joint partnership between the private sector and the Department, will also focus on improving the utility, comfort, quality, and cost-effectiveness of commercial buildings. The project is being managed by Steven Winter Associates, Inc., an architectural research and consulting firm with offices in Norwalk, Connecticut and Washington, D.C.

“Thirty-two percent of the electricity generated in the United States goes to heat, cool, ventilate, and light commercial buildings,” said Secretary Richardson. “The actions we are taking to decrease building energy use will save businesses money and reduce the impact of energy generation on global climate change and the environment.”

The project will identify and publicize innovative ‘whole building’ approaches that increase the quality and efficiency of commercial buildings. Architects who subscribe to the whole building approach consider the structure as a complete system, rather than as a collection of independent components. This can have significant effects on design and construction, resulting, for example, in a smaller, more efficient, and less costly heating and cooling system.



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The joint venture is part of DOE's Commercial Whole Buildings Roadmap initiative, which is bringing together diverse groups involved in the design and construction of commercial buildings as a means of accelerating the adoption of new energy efficient building technologies. DOE and its partners are inviting participation by building industry representatives and allied groups on a national basis, including:

- ~ Building owners, developers, and managers;
- ~ Builders and construction managers;
- ~ Architects, engineers, and allied design professionals;
- ~ Heating, ventilating, and air conditioning systems, controls, and equipment manufacturers;
- ~ Lighting and communications system producers and specialists;
- ~ Wall and insulation material producers; and
- ~ Interior environment producers and specialists.

Information on high performance commercial buildings is available on the website: www.eren.doe.gov/buildings/highperformance/.

The first phase of Commercial High Performance Buildings project activities will demonstrate and publicize innovative whole building approaches that increase the quality and efficiency of commercial buildings while reducing their costs and impact on the environment. The focus will be on raising awareness among building industry professionals and the public of noteworthy commercial buildings that save energy and are environmentally sustainable. Commercial buildings that exemplify the desired attributes of energy efficiency, sustainability, superior quality, and cost effectiveness will be identified and promoted. Candidate projects for inclusion in the outreach program should be commercial buildings completed within the past few years, or those which are currently in design or under construction. Submissions may be sent to Steven Winter Associates, Inc., 50 Washington Street, Norwalk, CT 06854 to the attention of Jose Higgins, and should include a brief description of building type and location, square footage, material specifications, and energy efficiency and sustainability features. Firms and others interested in participating are also encouraged to contact SWA.

Future project activities will include demonstration projects that evince high-performance qualities in site assessment and design, programming, building design, commissioning, and post-occupancy evaluation of new buildings throughout the country. The project will consult directly with architects and developers to design and construct high-performance buildings. Architects, engineers, developers, and others in the building industry who contemplate initiating design of a commercial project within the next year are invited to contact SWA to determine eligibility as a demonstration project.

More information about the Commercial High Performance Buildings project can be obtained from Michael J. Crosbie at Steven Winter Associates, 50 Washington Street, Norwalk, CT 06854, 203-857-0200 ext. 210, mcrosbie@swinter.com or through the project website: www.eren.doe.gov/buildings/highperformance/. To learn more about the Department of Energy's Commercial Whole-Buildings Roadmap initiative, visit: www.eren.doe.gov/buildings/technology_roadmaps/commercial_whole_buildings/.