



USGBC South Florida

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News Release

For Immediate Release

US Green Building Council South Florida Chapter's 2010 Natural Talent Design Competition Awards Local Teams and Students

Lake Worth, FL (June 26, 2010) -- Based on the quality of submissions to the US Green Building Council (USGBC) South Florida Chapter's 2010 Natural Talent Design Competition, the future of our built environment will be in good hands, as local students and emerging professionals exhibited creativity, a passion for the environment, a focus on sustainability, and finely honed architectural skills during the Chapter's fifth annual design competition.

The USGBC's Natural Talent Design Competition provides applied learning experience in the principles of integrated design, sustainability and innovation, all of which are components of the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) green building certification program. Participants compete in local USGBC Chapter competitions across the USA, and the top winner from each Chapter moves on to compete for a national award at the USGBC's annual Greenbuild International Conference & Expo.

The USGBC's 2010 Natural Design Competition, in partnership with the Salvation Army's EnviRenew Initiative, is focused on the rebuilding effort in New Orleans. As is occurring around the country, local South Florida competitors were divided into students and emerging professionals groups, and each designed a LEED for Homes Platinum project priced affordably and functional for elderly occupants. Nationally, up to four designs will be selected from local competition finalists and showcased at Greenbuild 2010. For the first time, winning designers will see their projects built -- in New Orleans' Broadmoor neighborhood. Once the homes are built, they will enter a measurement and verification phase during which they will be graded on energy efficiency, water reuse, and indoor air quality, amongst other categories. The design team whose home performs best during measurement and verification will be awarded the final grand prize.

Locally, the USGBC South Florida Chapter's volunteer Board of Directors, in partnership with its Emerging Professionals Committee, decided this year to up the ante and provide cash prizes to the top three locally judged submissions in each category, as well as provide cash donations to the university/college of the first-place and runner-up submitters in the Student Groups category.

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In the Emerging Professionals (EP) category, first place was awarded to the team of Andrew Gershon, Ramon Sacristan and Alberto Gonzalez, who received a \$1,000 prize and a certificate from the USGBC South Florida Chapter. Second place (\$500 prize) in the EP category was awarded to Giancarlo Mangone, and the third-place award (\$200) went to the team of Edgar Albandoz, Maria Rivera-Cirino and Anwar Morales.

In the Student Groups category, first place was awarded to Katuska Merino (FIU), who received a \$1,000 prize and a certificate from the USGBC South Florida Chapter. Second place (\$500 prize) in the Student Groups category was awarded to Ed Seymour (FIU), and the third-place award (\$200) went to the team of Amir Melloul and Michele Markovits (FIU).

As the first-place and runner-up in the Student Groups category both attend Florida International University (FIU), that school will receive a \$1,000 donation from the USGBC South Florida Chapter, honoring the professors' efforts to encourage sustainable design and research at that learning institution.

"All of the entries were outstanding," stated Kyle Abney, president of the USGBC South Florida Chapter and one of the panel of judges for the competition. "The students and young professionals exhibited impressive technical skills and an overall understanding of green design." In addition to Abney (Abney + Abney Green Solutions), other judges were Steve Mouzon (Mouzon Design/New Urban Guild/The Original Green), Jacob Brillhart (University of Miami/Jacob Brillhart Architect PA), and Ario Lundy (Palmetto Homes of Miami). Miami Event Space donated the Coverings Etc. showroom in Miami for the Wednesday evening, June 23 event, and the just-opened EVOS of Pinecrest provided food for the awards program, which was hosted by the Chapter's Emerging Professionals Committee. More than 60 attendees honored the winning students and emerging professionals.

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The US Green Building Council South Florida Chapter, a nonprofit (501[c][3]) organization, embraces the adoption of innovative building practices that conserve land, energy, water, resources and materials. Its mission is to transform the way buildings and communities are designed, built and operated, enabling an environmentally and socially responsible, healthy and prosperous environment that improves the quality of life. Headquartered in the EcoCentre in Lake Worth, Florida, the Chapter's more than 1,000 passionate members and volunteers provide programs and services to the South Florida community from its Broward, Miami-Dade and the Keys, and Treasure Coast and Palm Beach Branches. To learn more: Lee Cooke, Executive Director, 561-373-7367, lcooke@usgbcfsf.org, www.usgbcfsf.org.

Note to journalists/reporters: A number of photos are available to complement this article. If you are interested in securing a few images, please contact Lee Cooke, Executive Director, 561-373-7367, lcooke@usgbcfsf.org.