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Nevada Energy Star partners concludes its 2008 campaign with new alliances

Nevada Energy Star partners, a voluntary coalition of Southern Nevada home builders, developers, retailers, mortgage providers, energy consultants and local utilities promoting energy conservation, has concluded its 2008 Energy Star campaign: Energy Star — Your Green Foundation."

According to Nevada Energy Star Partners President Annette Bubak, highlights of the 2008 campaign include the formation of alliances with other environmental organizations in the community.

"One of our primary goals this year was to work in concert with other environmental groups to create a synergistic message," she said. "Green consciousness among consumers is on the rise and it makes sense to partner with organizations with similar agendas to spread the word about energy conservation."

To date, Nevada Energy Star Partners has formed official alliances with Southern Nevada Green Building Partners as well as the Las Vegas High Rise Condominium Association and EcoBrand, a green business network and eco-marketing forum. According to Bubak, Nevada Energy Star partners is engaged in ongoing discussion with the U.S. Green Building Council, Southern Nevada Water Authority and the city of Las Vegas to form future alliances.

"We expect that when we launch our campaign next year, Nevada Energy Star Partners will have many more alliances formalized."

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, energy conservation should constitute approximately 40 percent of any multi-resources conservation initiative because of the demand it places on our resources.

"Energy Star is dedicated to promoting energy conservation through the purchase and use of products that are specially designed to use less energy — including homes, appliances and even mortgages that offer advantages and benefits to Energy Star homeowners," Bubak said. "We recognize that energy conservation is an important first step to living a green lifestyle, yet in order to become truly green, we must also conserve water, protect air quality, recycle and take other measures to reduce our carbon footprint on the planet."

Other 2008 campaign highlights include the involvement of the high-rise development community. According to Bubak, Nevada Energy Star partners is one of three partnerships nationwide to be part of pilot program for high-rise development.

"There is considerable interest in Energy Star from the local high-rise development community," Bubak said. "Our goal is to create a blueprint of guidelines for high-rise development in our desert climate. To accomplish this, we are revising and evaluating high-rise Energy Star guidelines initially created for a northern climate."

According to Bubak, the Boca Raton condominium development on the south end of Las Vegas Boulevard is the project guinea pig.

"Boca Raton developer, Palm Desert Resorts Condominiums LLC, gave Energy Star access to the property to conduct on-site testing and evaluation of its energy systems," Bubak said.

Initial tests showed that Boca Raton units performed at an Energy Star standard. More testing is now underway to determine an actual energy HERS rating.

"This is just the beginning of our effort to create an Energy Star blueprint for multi-family and high-rise development throughout Southern Nevada, allowing these projects to brand themselves as Energy Star developments — a label sought by today's energy-conscious consumers."

Energy Inspectors, the leading Energy Star and residential energy-efficiency certification company in the western United States, is overseeing all testing and evaluation at Boca Raton as part of the pilot program. A report of recommendations is forthcoming and is expected by year-end.

"Thanks to the commitment of many companies, builders and public utilities in Southern Nevada, Energy Star has become a household word over the last decade," Bubak said. "Consumer awareness of Energy Star is more than 90 percent and more than 67 percent of all new homes are built to meet or exceed Energy Star standards," Bubak said.

The number of Energy Star homes in Southern Nevada has grown exponentially from fewer than 100 in 1998 to more than 76,600 in 2007. According to the EPA, homes built to Energy Star specifications use 15 percent less energy than homes built to standard codes.

"The environmental benefits of these 76,600-plus homes is the equivalent of eliminating emissions from more than 37,000 vehicles, saving more than 227 million pounds of coal, planting more than 62,000 trees or saving more than 445 million pounds of carbon monoxide each year," Bubak said.

Energy Star, the national U.S. government symbol for energy efficiency, was created by the EPA originally for

energy-conserving computers in 1992 and is now jointly implemented with the U.S. Department of Energy. Since its origin, the program has been expanded to include more than 40 product categories that conserve energy and protect the environment, from appliances, electronics, lighting, windows

and office products to homes and mortgages. Energy Star products use less energy and that reduces consumption of fossil fuels and resulting air pollution.

Now in its eighth year, Nevada Energy Star Partners includes partners representing utility companies, builders

and developers and manufacturers of energy-saving products. The partnership was recognized in April by the EPA at a ceremony in Washington, D.C. with its Sustained Excellence Award. This is the sixth consecutive year Nevada Energy Star Partners has received this award — a feat

accomplished by no other Energy Star partnership in the country.

For more information, visit thinkenergystar.com. Nevada Energy Star Partners encourages consumers and businesses to share how they are making a difference. Submit your story or tip on the Web site.