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## West Chester, PA Passes ENERGY STAR Ordinance for Private Commercial Construction

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE -- Feb. 28, 2008**

WEST CHESTER, PA—The Borough of West Chester, Pennsylvania, has become the first known municipality in the country where, by law, private commercial buildings must be designed to earn the ENERGY STAR, thanks to a new ordinance passed unanimously by the municipality's Borough Council. According to the new ordinance, a developer who is required to seek a "conditional use" approval for a project must design the building(s) to meet the energy performance goals of the ENERGY STAR program. One year after operation, the building owner must assess energy use and apply for the ENERGY STAR label. In West Chester, conditional use approvals are required for buildings higher than 45 feet.

The ENERGY STAR program all but ensures that these buildings will be among the most energy efficient in the country. To earn the ENERGY STAR label, a building must be in the top 25% of similar buildings nationwide in terms of overall energy efficiency. "Borough Council's unanimous vote demonstrates our commitment to a greener, more sustainable West Chester through a common-sense program that conserves energy. There are no drawbacks to anyone, only positive actions for our economy and our environment," says Councilwoman Carolyn Comitta, who was instrumental in 'greening' West Chester's conditional use criteria.

"This is a win-win situation for our entire community," agrees Brian McFadden, President of The McFadden Group, Inc., a West Chester-based real estate development company. Mr. McFadden volunteered to seek the ENERGY STAR label for his 90-room hotel project, currently planned for the town center, even though his plans were submitted before the ordinance was passed. "With the rising cost of energy and the environmental challenges we face, this is smart from both economic and environmental viewpoints," he said. "Lower utility bills make a hotel more profitable. More and more people seek out 'green' hotels and residences. And the ENERGY STAR rating is an increasingly desirable feature that adds value to commercial real estate."

Improving building design can go a long way toward reducing energy demand and cutting global warming pollution. Data from the US Energy Information Administration show that nearly *half* of all energy consumption and greenhouse gas pollution, and more than *two-thirds* of all electricity consumption, come from buildings. In fact, the American Institute of Architects—with the support of the US Conference of

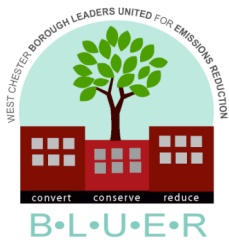
Mayors; US Green Building Council; American Society of Heating, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Engineers; and a host of other groups—has issued a challenge to the architectural and building community to achieve carbon neutrality (no fossil-fuel greenhouse gas emitting energy coming from buildings) by 2030, in order to avoid “catastrophic climate change.”

The ENERGY STAR program offers a vetted, easy-to-understand, nonprescriptive and cost-effective way for building designers to make significant inroads toward this goal. And, the program’s on-line tools and resources are cost-free. “We applaud West Chester Borough's innovative use of the ENERGY STAR program to meet their climate protection and sustainability goals," says Donald S. Welsh, Regional Administrator of EPA's Mid-Atlantic Regional Office.

ENERGY STAR also offers tools and resources to help eliminate energy waste in new and existing homes, and the West Chester community will be evaluating these options, as well. “We need to reduce energy use in all buildings—new and existing, commercial and residential—as a way to bring real change to our community,” concludes Martin Indars, a member of West Chester Borough Leaders United for Emissions Reduction, better known as BLUER. “The ENERGY STAR program simply shows us how.”



**About ENERGY STAR:** EPA introduced Energy Star in 1992 as a voluntary, market-based partnership to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through energy efficiency. Today, the Energy Star label can be found on more than 50 different kinds of products, new homes, and commercial and industrial buildings. Products and buildings that have earned the Energy Star designation prevent greenhouse gas emissions by meeting energy-efficiency specifications set by the government. Last year alone, with the help of Energy Star, Americans saved about \$14 billion on their energy bills while reducing the greenhouse gas emission equivalent of 25 million vehicles. For more information: [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov)



**About BLUER:** BLUER is a West Chester Borough Council-appointed committee that is creating a Climate Action Plan designed to reduce greenhouse gas pollution in West Chester. The group is basing its plan on an inventory of greenhouse gas emissions, following the Cities for Climate Protection Program created by ICLEI—Local Governments for Sustainability (<http://www.iclei.org/index.php?id=800>). BLUER also served in an advisory role to Borough Council for passage of the groundbreaking ENERGY STAR ordinance. *Look for a West Chester-based ENERGY STAR training session for architects, developers and building owners coming to the West Chester University Graduate Business Center on Thursday March 20, 2008.*

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