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For more information, please contact:

David Perkes, (228) 435-7180, dperkes@gccds.msstate.edu

Gulf Coast Community Design Studio

Gulf Coast Renaissance Enhances Guild Standards

- Revisions offer improved standards for affordable workforce housing development in South Mississippi

GULFPORT, Miss — Officials with the Gulf Coast Renaissance Corp. announced today that the nonprofit organization, which is focused on closing South Mississippi's affordable workforce-housing gap, has revised its Renaissance Builder & Development Guild standards.

The Renaissance Builder & Development Guild was launched in August 2008 by Renaissance in cooperation with Mississippi State University's Gulf Coast Community Design Studio, which serves as the technical advisor for the program. The Guild was conceptualized as a means to cultivate the highest level of housing redevelopment during the Gulf Coast's rebuilding process following Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

The Guild's mission specifically focuses on redevelopment of communities as environmentally, economically and socially sustainable through responsible land use practices, with a particular focus on mixed-use and mixed-income communities.

"The Renaissance Builder & Development Guild was designed to give very clear guidelines that would ensure each Renaissance project was created with an unquestionable focus on superior construction and sustainability," said Kimberly LaRosa, president and CEO of the Gulf Coast Renaissance Corp.

"The recent revisions to our Guild standards reflect the flexibility in application while maintaining the guidelines that reflect the most current best practices in the building industry. At the end of the day, we want our Guild endorsement to always stand for quality," LaRosa added.

The Guild's standards include five categories: project location, program, site design, building design and building systems. Each category contains criteria serving as standards on which a builder or developer's project will be reviewed during consideration for the Guild's endorsement.

Since the Renaissance Builder & Development Standards Guild was established, reviews of six projects, which total 942 housing units, have been completed and three projects have received the Guild's endorsement.

For more information on the Gulf Coast Renaissance Corp. and to obtain a full copy of the updated standards guide, please visit www.msgcrc.com, or call (228) 896-3386.

About the Gulf Coast Renaissance Corp.

Gulf Coast Renaissance Corporation, founded in 2006 by several South Mississippi business leaders in the wake of Hurricane Katrina's devastation, is a nonprofit organization focused on creating affordable housing solutions to Pearl River, Hancock, Harrison, Jackson, George and Stone counties. For more information about the Gulf Coast Renaissance Corporation, please go to www.msgcrc.com or call (228) 896-3386.

Renaissance Guild guiding principles:

1. Create a range of housing types and affordable price levels.
2. Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place.
3. Encourage developments that strengthen existing communities.
4. Mix land uses.
5. Create "walkable" neighborhoods.
6. Encourage public and private collaborations shaped by community and stakeholder participation.
7. Make development decisions predictable, fair, sustainable and cost effective.
8. Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty and critical environmental areas.
9. Consider transportation needs and encourage a variety of transportation options.
10. Take advantage of compact building design.
11. Create development sites with low environmental impact.
12. Create energy efficient buildings incorporating Energy Star or greater standards.
13. Create healthy living spaces.