



HOUSING DEVELOPMENT RECEIVES ENERGY STAR CERTIFICATION

Energy efficient homes are now available in Hazelwood

(PITTSBURGH) July 29 – A partnership of the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA), Pittsburgh Housing Development Corporation, and Hazelwood Initiative has been working to expand the housing opportunities in the Hazelwood neighborhood of the City of Pittsburgh, as well as create an energy efficient alternative for home buyers.

The Hazelwood Homes development provides affordable, energy efficient homeownership opportunities to low and moderate income families, and will increase the number of owner occupied homes in the neighborhood. The \$1.5 million development consists of four newly constructed townhomes and two single-family homes along Sylan & Monongahela streets and Hazelwood Avenue. Units are currently available for purchase.

“As we demolish dangerous vacant structures in this neighborhood, we are investing in greening and smart housing strategies that link affordability to quality,” Mayor Luke Ravenstahl said. “We are hopeful that this project, coupled with our greening strategies will serve as a catalyst toward future investment.”

The Hazelwood Homes development is the first development completed by the Pittsburgh Housing Development Corporation to receive Energy Star Certification. A new policy was put in place at the beginning of this year requiring any housing project that receives URA financing to become Energy Star Certified. Certification was awarded by West Penn Energy Audits.

“We have always encouraged developers to build as efficiently as possible, but this project was a pilot of our new policy requiring Energy Star certification in order to receive URA financing,” Matt Smuts, Sustainable Design Coordinator, URA said. “This new policy is the first step in challenging the way we and our partners build.”

In order to earn Energy Star Certification, a home must meet guidelines for energy efficiency set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the U.S. Department of Energy, and be audited by a third-party. These homes are at least 15% more energy efficient than homes built to the 2004 International Residential Code (IRC), and include additional energy-saving features that typically make them 20-30% more efficient than standard homes. Preliminary testing has determined that the townhouse units are likely to be 27% more efficient than homes built to the IRC code.

Energy efficient features include effective insulation, high-performance windows, airtight construction and ducts, efficient heating and cooling systems, and use of energy efficient products such as lighting fixtures, ventilation equipment, and appliances. Energy Star homes typically save the homeowner \$200 - \$400 a year in energy costs. Cost savings aside, energy efficient homes benefit the homeowner by providing increased comfort, improved indoor air quality and greater durability, making them a smart investment.

The Hazelwood Homes are priced between \$129,000 and \$135,500, with deferred mortgages available to those that qualify. Each unit has three bedrooms, with 2 ½ baths in the single family homes, and 1 ½ baths in the townhome units. The single family homes have attached parking, and the townhomes have integral garages. The units are also located in a residential tax abatement area, which provides a break on city and school district taxes for a period of 10 years.

“The energy star rating for these homes will be of tremendous value to the buyer,” Tim Smith, Hazelwood Initiative Chairman said. “With today’s skyrocketing oil prices, our homes will provide the benefit of lower utility bills due to reduced consumption. The homeowner then will be able to use the savings for a number of other purposes including investment, living expenses or luxury items.”

National City Community Development Corporation played an important role in the financing of the project, investing almost \$600,000. Additional financing was provided through a combination of URA grants and loans, and private grant funding. Design work was completed by Hanson Design Group, Ltd., and the homes were constructed by Waller Corporation.

Interested buyers should contact Judith Hanley at The Hanley Agency, 412.722.7900 or Sheryl Bennett at Howard Hanna Real Estate, 412.421.9120.

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The Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh (URA) is the City of Pittsburgh’s economic development agency, committed to creating jobs, expanding the City’s tax base and improving the vitality of businesses and neighborhoods. The URA achieves this mission by assembling, preparing and conveying sites for major mixed-use developments; and by providing a portfolio of programs that include financing for business location, relocation and expansion, housing construction and rehabilitation, and home purchases and improvements.