

**Kenneth D. Wade**  
**Go Green Now! Symposium**  
**February 27, 2008**  
**Luncheon Remarks: Think Green, Act Green: NeighborWorks America's**  
**Healthy, Sustainable Communities Agenda**

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Good afternoon! I'm delighted to see that so many of you were able to join us for this important symposium—Go Green Now! I hope the title of this symposium tipped you off to where NeighborWorks is heading.

As you have been hearing, the idea is to get on board with whatever shade of green (or non-green) you have and focus on deepening your shade of green. Deepening across all of your operations – from the building you do, to the properties you manage, to the organizations you lead, to the communities you serve.

And so, today, in the spirit of showing our colors, I am going public with a commitment to green NeighborWorks America--we will Think Green, Act Green and hold ourselves accountable to ambitious green goals that holistically advance the Corporation across all segments of what we do - across our operations, our programs, and our outreach. Goals that we believe will help advance the green agenda of the community development industry.

We are going public with a green agenda because we feel a stronger chorus for this movement will bring more attention on delivering the benefits of green to low- and moderate-income families and communities. Families and communities that usually get the benefits of movements long after they have become mainstream. Yet, the benefits of green – healthy homes, cost benefit of energy efficiency and water conservation, and better living environments – are all elements that have a substantial impact on the lives of low- and moderate-income families

And, the green agenda sits square on our mission and our values to create stronger, vibrant, sustainable communities that all are proud to call home. We cannot risk doing the same things we have done in the past. The planet cannot support it and the people we serve cannot afford it.

The community development field has been making great strides, and we felt that NeighborWorks America could add a significant contribution by leveraging our talents and resources to quicken the advance of green across the industry.

NeighborWorks America has a great foundation from which to build. The practices of many members of our network have been green for some time; many have been doing this for decades in weatherization programs. And,

you've heard about some of their most recent, leading-edge work already today. Like the Solara project that Mary Jane described earlier this morning. That development is a strong testament to what the nonprofit sector can accomplish in the green space if we challenge ourselves. And you will hear from other representatives from the network throughout the symposium.

And, NeighborWorks clearly has the **scale** to make an important contribution to the field.

The NeighborWorks network is comprised of more than 230 nonprofit organizations working in all 50 states. Over the last five years our network has provided homeownership counseling to more than half a million families, has assisted nearly 150,000 families of modest means to become homeowners, and they own more than 65,000 units of quality affordable rental housing. In addition, our Training Institutes are the premier forum for professional development for the community development field. In 2007 we provided more than 12,000 training certificates to community development professionals from more than 2,500 organizations and local governments from around the country.

With this in mind, our green agenda focuses on being a leader in promoting equitable, greener, sustainable practices that result in healthier, more affordable places. We will deliver on this by achieving results in three areas:

**First:** as an organization, we will reduce waste, improve efficiencies and leverage our resources. We have estimated our corporate carbon footprint and we are setting a goal to reduce this footprint by 10% in the next 2 years. This is the equivalent of getting 75 of our employees, or 25% of our workforce, to **never** use their cars again.

We will also work with our network in this area to see what improvements they can accomplish.

**Second:** as a service provider, we will conduct our training, education, and technical assistance in the most green manner. Many of you might have noticed that we are already pursuing improvement in this area. At this Institute we have introduced new course binders made from recycled corrugated cardboard—the vinyl binders are gone. We've also instituted a host of practices to make these events greener.

And, for this achievement, we will support our network to advance green results in the counseling, building, and property management activities that they conduct.

Through all of this, we are setting a target to reach 100,000 low- and moderate-income families around green practices through education, counseling, and home building. This is 100,000 families who will attain some sustainability benefit from our work, bringing the mainstream to working families.

And **Third:** As a community player, we will promote green practices in the communities we serve to instill awareness and action for green. We are setting a target to engage 50 communities across the country in a dialogue about healthier neighborhoods in conjunction with our Community Building and Organizing initiative .

All of this effort needs support.

As we go green we will adapt our existing tools and we will create new programs and services to fill gaps across the field. We will develop methods to support greening of organizations; to build greener product, to improve the properties we manage; and to foster greener neighborhoods. Our programs will create models and best practices to share with others; thereby helping to further advance the industry's progress toward deeper green.

Yet, we are not creating a standalone green initiative. Rather, we will embed green practices within all we do at NeighborWorks America. We will Think Green. We will Act Green. We will deepen our shade of green. We will hold ourselves accountable for results. And in time it will be the nature of what we do.

Our job is made easier by those organizations that have already demonstrated leadership on this issue: Enterprise Community Partners, Global Green, the National Center for Healthy Housing, SouthFace, the U.S. Green Building Council and many others who are here with us today.

And, of course, The Home Depot Foundation. The Home Depot Foundation's leadership on this issue has been instrumental in shaping the way many of us see our role as stewards and developers of affordable housing. Early on they challenged NeighborWorks to integrate green into our work. And with their support we made some progress—we developed green building courses and we gave grants to support green building. They also challenged us to think bigger—they encouraged us to Think Green and Act Green.

And they led by example—since its formation in 2002 The Home Depot Foundation has granted nearly \$30 million to support the building and preservation of more than 40,000 affordable, healthy homes and to help plant and preserve more than one million community trees. In 2007, in honor of their 5-year anniversary, the Foundation announced a 10-year, \$100 million commitment to support efforts to make communities healthier and more stable.

We appreciate the guidance and direction The Home Depot Foundation has provided to NeighborWorks America over the past 5 years. Fred and Kelly have generously shared their time and their expertise. I especially want to acknowledge Fred's contributions to the symposium planning team, which helped us craft an informative and challenging program for today.

And we are especially grateful for their financial support of our work. Their sponsorship for this symposium helped make it affordable so all of you could join us today. We look forward to working with them as we roll-out our green agenda.

We know the challenge before us is great, but we know we can rise to the challenge. NeighborWorks America will Think Green and Act Green. We hope those of you who are already green will help us along the way. And we hope those of you who haven't yet begun to go green, will start thinking about the small steps that you can take to make a difference.

Now I will turn it over to Kelly Caffarelli, President of The Home Depot Foundation to say a few words as the sponsor of today's symposium.