



## DAVID D'HONDT'S REMARKS SEATTLE GREEN BUILDING PLAN EVENT

*April 22, 2010*

Good morning and thank you Doug [Moore – President McKinstry] for showing me your impressive operation. McKinstry has long been an industry leader when it comes to building green. Thanks to this new Innovation Center, countless start ups will soon have an opportunity to develop the next generation of green construction technologies.

Doug and his team understand that building green is as good for business as it is for the environment. Unfortunately, their success is more the exception than the rule these days, both here in Seattle and across the country. As new data we are releasing today makes clear, the construction industry continues to suffer from devastating job losses.

Here in the Seattle metro area more than one out of every five construction jobs – 21 percent – disappeared between March 2009 and 2010. That's 16,000 construction workers that lost jobs over the past twelve months, ranking this area as one of the hardest hit communities in the country. Sadly, Seattle isn't alone.

Each of Washington's eleven major metro areas lost construction jobs last year, with Bellingham losing the largest portion, 25 percent. Nationwide, 310 metro areas lost construction jobs, while only 16 managed to remain stable and just 11 added construction jobs. And while cities like Chicago lost 25,000 construction jobs, the biggest gainer – Eau Claire, Wisconsin – added only 800.

As McKinstry is demonstrating, green construction provides an opportunity for our industry to return to growth. More than that, it holds the promise of delivering some of the most sweeping environmental improvements our country has ever experienced.

While our built environment is key to our quality of life and economic prosperity, it often weighs on our natural environment. But, thanks to new construction technology, more efficient building systems, and smarter ways of designing and operating infrastructure, the impact of our built environment can be substantially lower. For example, researchers estimate that with the right combination of new capacity and better technology, we can cut CO2 emissions from the transportation sector alone by 30 percent.

The reality is that you can't simply wish for a greener future, you have to build it. And while demand for green buildings is growing, we will never realize significant environmental improvements from our built structures without a national, focused and sustained commitment.

That is why the Associated General Contractors of America has crafted a new national plan, "Building a Green Future." This plan outlines the measures public officials, developers, and the construction community must take to lessen the impact of our built environment on our natural environment.

To improve the efficiency of the nation's buildings, the plan identifies a series of pragmatic measures federal, state and local governments can take. This includes nearly doubling existing tax credits for improving the efficiency of commercial buildings; passage of the Building Star program that invests \$6 billion in improving the efficiency of commercial buildings in 2010 alone; as well as expedited reviews and local tax credits for green building projects.

The plan also calls for public building projects to incorporate state of the art environmental solutions and for the federal government to make practical investments in research and technology. It makes it easier to launch new transit projects, shifts cargo traffic to energy efficient barges and accelerates federal approval for new transportation projects in congested corridors. It also calls for making the level of transportation investments virtually every expert agrees are needed to improve capacity and reduce traffic.

The plan also calls for faster approval for new sustainable forms of power generation, including nuclear, wind and geothermal power facilities. It tackles the environmental and health threats posed by aging and leaky clean and waste water systems. And it urges contractors to recycle more building materials and cut waste while making it easier for construction firms and building owners to green their day-to-day operations.

While this plan will clearly lead to major environmental improvements, it also will give a much-needed boost to the hard-hit construction industry. This plan will also aid the kind of designers and manufacturers of green building products that will soon inhabit this Innovation Center.

The idea is simple... make green buildings and reliable infrastructure the rule, instead of exception. And the goal is clear... by next Earth Day make sure that we all can breathe easier, work more and earn a good living.

Now before I open things up for questions, Doug, did you have anything you wanted to add?

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