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Oregon Building Codes Division creates green building blog

Blog highlights energy efficiency, conservation

(Salem) — The Oregon Building Codes Division has launched a new blog focused on green building. The Better Buildings Oregon Blog is now online at <http://betterbuildingsoregon.org/>.

“The blog allows for conversation and an exchange of ideas,” said Pat Allen, acting administrator of the Building Codes Division (BCD). “We hope to engage with our partners in construction and energy conservation on a number of green building topics.”

The blog also provides information and ideas on issues such as energy efficiency, renewable energy, water conservation, and electric vehicle charging stations. BCD, part of the Department of Consumer and Business Services, created the blog to communicate how building codes support green and high-performance construction around the state. Formed in 2008, the division's green building program has focused on implementing Senate Bill 79 (2009), the legislative direction to increase the energy efficiency of buildings by strengthening the state's mandatory energy codes and developing an optional Reach Code to further reduce energy use in both commercial and residential construction.

The American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy's (ACEEE) annual State Energy Efficiency Scorecard recently moved Oregon from second place in 2010 to first place in 2011 in the building energy code category. Oregon shares first place in the State Residential and Commercial building Energy Codes: Stringency and Compliance Efforts Scoring with California, Massachusetts, and Washington. The ACEEE Scorecard is a comprehensive ranking of the states based on an array of metrics that capture best practices and recognize leadership in energy efficiency policy and program implementation. The full energy scorecard is available for download from the council's website at <http://www.aceee.org/research-report/e115>.

This summer, BCD also received a national honor for its work in energy efficiency. The U.S. Department of Energy recognized the division with the Jeffrey A. Johnson Award for “Excellence in the Advancement of Building Energy Codes and Performance.”

In 2010, the division's green building program developed the nation's first statewide solar code. Given Oregon's position as an early adopter market for electric vehicles, the green building program has also worked to streamline the permit process for installing electric vehicle charging stations in homes and businesses.

BCD provides ongoing training to local building department staff and the design and construction industry on innovative technology as well as guidance to home owners on topics of interest such as rainwater harvesting and graywater use for flushing toilets. To learn more about BCD's green building initiatives, go to www.bcd.oregon.gov.

The Department of Consumer and Business Services is Oregon's largest business regulatory and consumer protection agency. For more information, visit www.dcbs.oregon.gov.