



**Upstate Forever**  
Promoting Sensible Growth and  
Protecting Special Places in the Upstate



**EMBARGOED UNTIL PRESS CONFERENCE AT  
UPSTATE FOREVER OFFICE ON  
NOVEMBER 12, 2009 AT 10 A.M.**

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**Upstate Forever Awarded LEED®  
Platinum Green Building  
Certification**

***Nonprofit group's renovated office receives highest  
designation for sustainability, only the second one  
ever awarded in South Carolina***

(Greenville, SC) –Upstate Forever announced today that its renovated main office in Greenville has been awarded LEED® Platinum Certification, the highest designation available for sustainable buildings. Established by the U.S. Green Building Council, LEED, which stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, is the nation's preeminent program for the design, construction and operation of high performance green buildings. It is the first project in the Upstate and only the second one in South Carolina to receive Platinum certification.

“We had two basic goals for this project,” said Brad Wyche, Executive Director of Upstate Forever. “First, we wanted to provide a comfortable and healthy place for our staff, and second, we wanted to demonstrate how to renovate buildings by using green products and features. A big missing piece in the green movement is the poor performance of existing buildings. We’ve tried to do our part in filling that void.”

Upstate Forever's main office achieved LEED Platinum certification by meeting rigorous standards for minimizing energy and water use, reusing and recycling material from the existing building, ensuring healthy indoor air quality, incorporating sustainable and locally produced materials, as well as utilizing a variety of other sustainable strategies. Buildings in the United States are responsible for 39% of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, 40% of energy consumption, 13% water consumption and 15% of GDP per year, making green building a source of significant economic and environmental opportunities. By using less energy and water, LEED certified buildings such as Upstate Forever's office save money for families, businesses and taxpayers; reduce greenhouse gas emissions; and contribute to a healthier environment for residents, workers and the larger community.

"The green building movement offers an unprecedented opportunity to respond to the most important challenges of our time, including global climate change, dependence on non-sustainable and expensive sources of energy, and threats to human health," said Rick Fedrizzi, President, CEO and Founding Chair of U.S. Green Building Council. "The work of innovative building projects such as the Upstate Forever main office is a fundamental driving force in the green building movement."

LEED Certification of Upstate Forever's main office was based on a number of green design and construction features that positively impact the project itself and the broader community. These features include:

- Bricks, flooring, and trim reused from the original structure
- Wood flooring reclaimed from closed Upstate textile mills
- Pine roof shingles, guaranteed to last 50 years, from sustainably-managed forests in South Carolina and Georgia
- Flooring made in North Carolina from recycled shipping pallets
- 100 percent recycled carpet squares, which, when worn out, will be returned to the manufacturer for recycling into new products
- Shelving and cabinetry created from agricultural waste
- Spray-foam insulation
- Large windows, skylights, and sun tunnels to reduce the need for artificial lighting and air conditioning
- Nine rooftop solar panels, meeting 20 percent of the building's electricity needs
- Solar hot water
- Split-system heat pumps with nine individual climate zones and a SEER rating of 19
- Two 350-gallon rain barrels to harvest rainwater
- Vegetated roof
- Native landscaping and porous concrete walkways

"We are honored and humbled to receive this wonderful recognition," Wyche said. "But it would never have happened without the generous support of the donors to our capital campaign and the amazing team of contractors, vendors and designers who worked on the project. We can never thank them enough."

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**Upstate Forever** is a nonprofit, membership-based organization promoting sensible growth and the protection of special places in the Upstate region of South Carolina. Our three program areas are Land Trust, Sustainable Communities, and Clean Air and Water. Founded in 1998, **Upstate Forever** now has over 2,700 members, two offices, and a staff of 22. For more information, see [www.upstateforever.org](http://www.upstateforever.org).

The Washington, D.C.-based **U.S. Green Building Council** is the nation's preeminent green building, membership, policy, standards, influential, education and research organization. With a community comprising 78 local affiliates, more than 20,000 member companies and organizations, and more than 100,000 LEED Accredited Professionals, USGBC is committed to a prosperous and sustainable future for our nation through cost-efficient and energy-saving green buildings through its diverse constituency of builders and environmentalists, corporations and nonprofit organizations, elected officials and concerned citizens, and teachers and students. For more information, visit [www.usgbc.org](http://www.usgbc.org).

The U.S. Green Building Council's **LEED**<sup>®</sup> (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) green building certification system is the foremost program for the design, construction and operation of green buildings. 35,000 projects are currently participating in the LEED system, comprising over 5.6 billion square feet of construction space in all 50 states and 91 countries.