



Building Houses—Building Hope

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For immediate release

UNIONS BUILD – AND KEEP BUILDING - STRONG COMMUNITIES

Wheaton, IL — For nearly 15 years, the electricians' union serving DuPage County has wired homes for DuPage Habitat for Humanity. The National Electrical Contractors Association, known as NECA and IBEW Local 701 have donated their services year in and year out because, "It's the right thing to do," said NECA and IBEW Administrator Mike Zitkus. "Times are tough, and even though many of our members are out of work right now, we still want to give back to our community and freely offer our electrical experience and skills," continued Zitkus.

Like NECA and IBEW, the Painter's District Council No. 30 has donated years of drywall mudding and taping for DuPage Habitat homes. Sarah Brachle, DuPage Habitat's Executive Director, is happy to have the seasoned drywall professionals working on Habitat homes. DuPage Habitat engages volunteers in all non-licensed aspects of residential construction, and volunteers generally hang drywall in all the homes. "If you've ever seen drywall hung by volunteers, you know how much we appreciate the skills of the union tapers," says Brachle.

IBEW and PDC 30 have typically used the Habitat projects as a teaching opportunity for union apprentices, who are supervised by licensed union representatives. In the same way, unskilled Habitat volunteers are supervised by skilled construction leaders. "Habitat for Humanity projects are not only good for the soul, they offer our apprentices and active members opportunities to test and keep their skills sharp in a residential construction environment," says PDC 30 Apprenticeship & Training Coordinator Steve Lefaver, who leads the union's "off-premise" projects.

"We are so grateful for the support of NECA, IBEW and PDC 30 in our homebuilding efforts. These unions provide excellent services to Habitat, and their donation allows us to keep our costs down. In addition, having the unions committed as partners has helped us to engage other donors and sponsors in our work," said Brachle.

In June 2009, DuPage Habitat broke ground on Pioneer Prairie, a three-acre residential subdivision of 11 new energy-efficient detached, single-family homes in West Chicago. The homes incorporate input and design expertise from a team of green experts, and balance Habitat's commitment to cost-conscious development and environmentally conscious design.

"We are incorporating energy efficient electrical systems to help reduce the carbon footprint of our homes and homeowners," continued Brachle. "The NECA and IBEW electricians are bringing their knowledge and experience of these green systems to these Habitat Homes. They're going green with us, and all for no green. These homes are also covered by the Plus 5 Electrical Protection Plan, a free electrical warranty covering all wiring material and workmanship for five years."



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PDC 30's Apprenticeship & Training Program also recently began a green training initiative. "The finishing trades have joined other trades in identifying adaptations of existing tasks and skills, and adoption of new practices to prepare finishing craftspersons for energy efficient and environmentally friendly craftspersonship," says Lefaver, who adds that DuPage Habitat projects offer opportunities to apply such skills in a real situation.

DuPage Habitat for Humanity builds and sells homes to qualified hard-working, limited-income families. Families must earn sufficient income to pay their 30-year mortgages to DuPage Habitat. In addition, homeowners complete 250 "sweat equity" hours by building their own home and their neighbors' homes and participating in finance, budgeting and home repair classes. All Habitat homeowners pay local property taxes and utilities.

DuPage Habitat for Humanity has raised over \$4 million in philanthropic, government, and community support for the 11 Pioneer Prairie homes and additional seven scattered-site rehabbed homes. The donors are not only funding the development of 11 new energy-efficient homes, they are creating a 30-year annuity that continues to help fund affordable home construction in DuPage County for years to come.

The project's leadership donors include: Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, Matrex Exhibits, Ambitech Engineering, American Bankers Association, Tyndale House Publishers, Goldman Sachs, Trinity Lutheran Church in Lisle, Air-Rite Heating and Cooling, ComEd, Mark and Denise Fessler, IBEW-Local 701, Nicor, Painters and Allied Trades Union (District 30), Seyfarth Shaw LLP, Showalter Roofing. The project has also received funding from the DuPage County Department of Community Commission's CDBG and HOME programs.

For further information on, please visit www.dupagehabitat.org or call 630.510.3737.

About DuPage Habitat for Humanity

DuPage Habitat for Humanity is a locally run affiliate of Habitat for Humanity International, a nonprofit, ecumenical Christian housing organization. DuPage Habitat serves DuPage County, Illinois and works in partnership with people in need to build modest and affordable housing by building and renovating houses using donated materials and volunteer labor. These houses are then sold to limited income families needing decent shelter. Those who qualify must demonstrate their commitment to home ownership by investing 250 hours of sweat equity and repaying the cost of their house through a no-interest long-term loan. This "giving a hand up—not a hand out" approach gives families pride in their accomplishment of homeownership.

About NECA-IBEW Local 701

The National Electrical Contractors Association in the DuPage County area and IBEW Local 701 represent electrical contractors and electricians. These organizations actively work together in DuPage County to provide licensed, skilled and experienced electrical contractors and electricians for residential, commercial and municipal electrical projects. Through a national joint apprenticeship training program,



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each member electrician undergoes 5 years of apprentice training on various electrical designs and systems, which includes an extensive “green” curriculum and must undergo 8,000 hours of on-the-job training. The DuPage County electrical contractors and electricians have the knowledge and skilled labor needed today and tomorrow whose quality installations will be done right and work the first time.

About Painter’s District Council No. 30

Based in Aurora, Illinois, Painters District Council No. 30 (PDC 30) is a progressive union dedicated to thoughtful advocacy in partnership with, and on behalf of, finishing trades craftspersons and signatory contractors. Seeking primarily to increase work opportunities, PDC 30 accomplishes its goals through state-of-the-art craftperson safety and skills training, industry-focused political action, aggressive market sector monitoring and job action, diligent joint management of health and pension funds, and implementing profitable growth strategies. A recognized leader in apprenticeship & training in the finishing trades, PDC 30’s Joint Apprenticeship & Training Fund (JATF) readies craftspersons for continued employment in the industry. In pursuit of that objective, PDC 30’s JATF recruits responsible and driven individuals to enter and remain in the trade, focuses on the skills needed in industry sectors that are growing, offers craftspersons customized health and safety training, and regularly contributes to the health and welfare of the community through service.

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