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Morgan Woods nominated for Award of Excellence by Urban Land Institute

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Twenty-five outstanding developments from the Americas have been selected as finalists in the Urban Land Institute's (ULI) Awards for Excellence: The Americas competition, widely recognized as the land use industry's most prestigious recognition program. The winners of the competition will be announced April 24th at ULI's Spring Council Forum in Atlanta.

The competition is part of the Institute's Awards for Excellence program, established in 1979, which is based on ULI's guiding principle that the achievement of excellence in land use practice should be recognized and rewarded. ULI's Awards for Excellence recognize the full development process of a project, not just its architecture or design. The criteria for the awards include leadership, contribution to the community, innovations, public/private partnership, environmental protection and enhancement, response to societal needs, and financial viability.

Over the years, the Awards for Excellence program has evolved from recognition of one development in North America to an international competition with multiple winners. The ULI Awards for Excellence: Europe was added in 2004, followed by the ULI Awards for Excellence: Asia Pacific and the Global Awards in 2005. Throughout the program's history, all types of projects have been recognized for their excellence, including office, residential, recreational, urban/mixed-use, industrial/office park, commercial/retail, new community, rehabilitation, and public projects and programs.

The 2009 finalists were selected from more than 140 entries. The jury was challenged by the large number of applications and the high quality of the projects, which struck the judges as particularly significant in the current economic environment.

According to jury chairman Utter, the awards finalists illustrate that well-designed, well-built projects can thrive even in dark economic times.

One local finalist for the awards is Morgan Woods, in Edgartown, Mass. The developer is The Community Builders. Located in the high-cost community of Martha's Vineyard, Morgan Woods creates 60 units of affordable housing options for the island's permanent workforce, utilizing modular construction and a disguised-density design to limit construction costs.

Other finalists include:

*The Buckingham, Chicago, Illinois (Buckingham Development Associates, LLC) In the heart of the Chicago Loop, the Buckingham adapts and restores an abandoned, historic office building for a new use as a 129-unit, 456-bed student housing center.

*California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco, California (The California Academy of Sciences)

The world's largest LEED-Platinum building, the \$488 million California Academy of Sciences houses an aquarium, planetarium, natural history museum, and four-story rain forest.

*Canal Street Apartments, Houston, Texas (New Hope Housing, Inc.) The product of extensive community collaboration, this single room occupancy (SRO) development provides 133 housing units for very low-income individuals in a distressed Houston neighborhood.

*Comcast Center, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (Liberty Property Trust) Comcast Center is a 58-story, 1.25-million-square-foot office tower with an underground connection to Philadelphia's commuter rail station. The transit-oriented development replaces a long vacant parcel in the center of the downtown business district.

*The Cork Factory Loft Apartments, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (McCaffery Interests, Inc.) Vacant for more than three decades, the Cork Factory Loft Apartmentsâ€”a 297-unit structure with over 43,000 square feet of retail spaceâ€”has led a residential resurgence in Pittsburgh's Strip District.

*DC USA, Washington, DC (Grid Properties, Inc.; Gotham Organization, Inc.; Development Corporation of Columbia Heights) The cornerstone of the revitalization of Columbia Heightsâ€”a Washington, D.C. neighborhood that was devastated by the 1968 riotsâ€”DC USA brings 890,000 square feet of retail space and over 1,000 jobs to a rapidly regenerating area.

*Devries Place Senior Apartments, Milpitas, California (Mid-Peninsula Housing Coalition) Devries Place provides 103 affordable rental homes to low- and very low-income seniors. Located on an underutilized site in downtown, the transit-oriented development is within walking distance of a new library and medical center.

*The Flats and Warehouses at Union Row, Washington, DC (PN Hoffman) Part new construction, part historic preservation, the nine-story Flats and Warehouses at Union Row comprises 208 residential units, with ground-floor retail situated on a full city block.

*Heifer International World Headquarters, Little Rock, Arkansas (Heifer International) Arkansas's largest brownfield reclamation, the LEED-Platinum Heifer International World Headquarters is surrounded by reconstructed wetlands and uses 52 percent less energy than a comparable office building.

*Kansas City Power and Light District, Kansas City, Missouri (The Cordish Company) The Kansas City Power and Light District is the culmination of a forty-year effort to transform an area of urban blight into a vibrant downtown core. The \$850 million, 9-city block mixed-use district encompasses over 1.6 million square feet of retail and office space, civic uses, hotels, and sports venues, welcoming over 8 million visitors annually.

*Kierland Commons, Scottsdale, Arizona (Woodbine Southwest Corporation) This 38-acre mixed-use town center features a mix of shops, residences, and offices configured along narrow landscaped streets, providing a pedestrian-friendly outdoor shopping environment in Scottsdale,

Arizona.

*Los Molinos Centro Comercial, Medell'n, Colombia, (Inmuebles Comerciales S.A.; Muros Y Techos S.A.; Viviendas Y Proyectos S.A) Adapting the existing factory buildings of a textile plant, Los Molinos Centro Comercial, a 24,000-square-meter shopping center, brings 1,300 new jobs and supplants a polluting factory in central Medell'n, Colombia.

*The Maltman Bungalows, Los Angeles, California (Civic Enterprise Development, LLC) Utilizing Los Angeles's new Small Lot Ordinance (SLO), the developer of Maltman Bungalows subdivided and restored a 1920s-era bungalow court, delivering moderate-priced housing to the market without the use of public subsidies.

*North Beach Place, San Francisco, California (BRIDGE Housing; The John Stewart Company; Em Johnson Interest, Inc.) Replacing a distressed 1950s public housing project, North Beach Place provides 341 affordable apartments for families and seniors, along with courtyards, a childcare center, a teen center, and 20,000 square feet of retail space.

*NorthWest Crossing, Bend, Oregon (West Bend Property Company) NorthWest Crossing is a 486-acre master planned community designed according to smart growth principles, with over 450 homes and 140,000 square feet of office and retail space connected by 35 acres of community parks and open space.

*Parkview Tower West, Chicago, Illinois (MCL Companies) Located in the River East neighborhood of Chicago, Parkview Tower West features 268 residential units in a slender, angular tower, anchoring one corner of a modern public park.

*The RISE, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada (Grosvenor Americas) The RISE, a mid-rise building adjacent to a rapid transit station, successfully mixes large-format retail uses, locally-focused stores, and 92 rooftop live/work units that surround a 20,000 square foot green roof.

*Riverfront Park, Denver, Colorado (East West Partners) Integrated into the downtown grid of Denver and built on the site of a former rail yard, Riverfront Park is a master-planned community with over 1,400 residential units and 62,000 square feet of retail space.

*Schermerhorn Symphony Center, Nashville, Tennessee (Nashville Symphony) Occupying an entire city block, the Schermerhorn Symphony Center represents a modern interpretation of classic architecture; raises the profile of the Nashville Symphony and arts community; and anchors the southeastern corner of the city's downtown arts district.

*The Shops at Waterloo Town Square, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada (First Gulf Development Corporation) The Shops at Waterloo Town Square has turned a 1960s-era enclosed mall "inside-out"â€"a new, storefront-lined street bifurcates the two-block site and two mixed-use buildings replace the existing shopping center, returning vibrancy to downtown Waterloo. Â

*UniverCity, Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada (SFU Community Trust) Adjacent to Simon Fraser University, UniverCity is a sustainable, 161-acre master-planned community that features ecologically-sound residences for over 2,500 individualsâ€”including affordable housing options for university faculty and staff.

*The Village of Hope, Tustin, California (HomeAid Orange County) Located on a five-acre site on a closed military base, the Village of Hopeâ€”a 150,000 square foot development that includes two restored barracksâ€”provides housing and services for 192 homeless men, women, and children.

*West Chelsea/High Line Rezoning Plan, New York, New York (City of New York, Department of Planning) Using an innovative transfer of development rights (TDR) scheme, this plan has spurred the development of over 1,000 residential units and 2 million square feet of commercial space in West Chelsea. The defining feature of the special district is High Line Park---formerly an abandoned elevated rail line---which will become a 22-block-long linear park running through the district.

*Westfield San Francisco Centre, San Francisco, California (Forest City Enterprises; Westfield, LLC) After an eight-year development process, Westfield San Francisco Centre has restored the city's historic Emporium building, boasting 1.5-million-square-feet of commercial space and attracting an estimated 25 million visitors to this once-distressed area of San Francisco.

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