2012 ENERGY STAR® National Building Competition

Talking Points / Messages

- EPA's ENERGY STAR program is hosting the 2012 National Building Competition: *Battle of the Buildings* to help improve the energy efficiency of commercial buildings and protect the environment.

- In the spirit of popular weight-loss competitions, teams from nearly 3,300 (3,279) buildings will battle it out to see who can reduce their energy use the most.

- The teams in the 2012 ENERGY STAR National Building Competition represent more than 30 different types of commercial buildings — such as retail stores, schools, hotels, and museums — and hail from all 50 states, two U.S. territories, and the District of Columbia. The competitors range from a Kmart store on the island of St. Thomas and a crime lab in Phoenix, to a Federal office building in Nome, Alaska.

- 82 buildings are 100 or more years old, including the Dolley Madison House and Cambridge Savings Bank, both built in 1820. The smallest building — a superintendent's trailer in Louisville, Kentucky — is just over 500 square feet, while the largest building, Cleveland Clinic's main hospital campus, spans nearly 6.3 million square feet. The average size of buildings in the competition is 173,000 square feet, and combined, all the competitors total more than half a billion (566,742,362) square feet of floor space.

- EPA is making the 2012 battle bigger and better than ever by offering recognition for any building that reduces its energy use by 20 percent or more, as well as top water savers.

- Water use in commercial buildings accounts for up to 17 percent of fresh water use in the United States. By adopting and promoting water-efficient products, services, and practices, commercial and institutional water users can greatly reduce annual water and energy costs, as well as help reduce the stress on natural resources and water infrastructure.

- Energy use in commercial buildings accounts for nearly 20 percent of total U.S. greenhouse gas emissions and energy use at a cost of more than $100 billion per year.

- On average, 30 percent of the energy used in commercial buildings is wasted.

- The energy we use in the buildings where we work, play, and learn most often comes from the burning of fossil fuels at power plants, which contributes to climate change. The less energy we use, the fewer greenhouse gases we produce.

- Improving energy efficiency is the single largest way to eliminate energy waste.

- Everyone can help save energy in the buildings where we work, play, and learn with help from EPA's ENERGY STAR program.

- As consumers, we can do many of the same things we do at home to save energy — like turn off lights and lamps when we leave the room, power down computers when they aren't in use, and unplug the charger from the wall after our cell phone is charged — these small steps can save a lot of energy.

- Engineers can make sure all of the building systems — such as air conditioning, heating, and lighting — are working right, are properly maintained, and upgraded to more efficient technologies when appropriate and cost-effective.

- EPA's ENERGY STAR program has developed a proven approach to assessing, reducing, and comparing the energy use of commercial buildings. The cornerstone of this approach is to begin by objectively measuring the energy use of buildings.

- Competitors will measure and track their building's monthly energy consumption using EPA's ENERGY STAR online energy tracking tool, Portfolio Manager; make improvements to their building's energy performance; and share their progress.

- Previous competitions provided a valuable platform for organizations to test innovative approaches and technologies that can be expanded to entire building portfolios, and they also provided a collection of best practices and public energy performance data that can help inform the commercial building market.

- The competition website www.energystar.gov/BattleOfTheBuildings features a list of competitors as well as tips and links to EPA's existing inventory of ENERGY STAR tools and resources — including a link to EPA's ENERGY STAR Certified Building locator. Finally, the site includes a live Twitter feed and Flikr photo stream through which the competitors can share their progress.

- As competitors track their energy use and improve their energy efficiency, many will work toward earning ENERGY STAR certification for their building, if they have not already done so.

- Buildings that earn EPA's ENERGY STAR certification consume, on average, about 35% less energy than typical buildings and contribute 35% fewer greenhouse gas emissions, while providing the same or better services and comfort.

- ENERGY STAR was started by EPA in 1992 as a market-based partnership to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through energy efficiency. Today, the ENERGY STAR label can be found on more than 60 different kinds of products as well as new homes and commercial and industrial buildings that meet strict energy-efficiency specifications set by EPA. Last year alone, Americans, with the help of ENERGY STAR, saved about $18 billion on their energy bills while reducing greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to 33 million vehicles.

- WaterSense, a partnership program sponsored by EPA, seeks to protect the future of our nation's water supply by offering people a simple way to use less water with water-efficient products, new homes, and services. The WaterSense label can be found on over 4,000 models of water-efficient products nationwide. Since the program's inception in 2006, WaterSense has helped consumers save a cumulative 287 billion gallons of water and $4.7 billion on water and energy bills.

- Follow along with the competition and watch the battle unfold at www.energystar.gov/BattleOfTheBuildings