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Southwest Florida Delegation Participates in National Climate Prosperity Project

FORT MYERS, FL – (February 26, 2009) – The Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council (SWFRPC) announced today that ten area government, business, and industry leaders represented the Southwest Florida region at the National Climate Prosperity Project Leadership Meeting held in San Jose, California (Silicon Valley), on February 20-21, 2009. Southwest Florida is one of seven pilot regions selected to work with Climate Prosperity Project (CCP) to help generate sustainable urban development. CCP is an economic development partnership that works to promote energy independence, reduce the impacts of climate change, and protect the environment. CCP promotes the view that protecting the environment need not come at the expense of economic growth. “Climate Prosperity” argues that climate change is an opportunity to build innovative industry, create new jobs, and grow the economy while addressing one of our most pressing problems, climate change. Participants in this summit meeting exchanged information and ideas on strategies, policies, and projects that can stimulate long term sustainable economic development in our communities.

The local delegation was led by Fort Myers Mayor Jim Humphrey and Sanibel Mayor Mick Denham, who respectively serve as Chair and Vice Chair of the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council (SWFRPC). The group included Ken Heatherington, SWFRPC Executive Director; David Hutchinson, SWFRPC Planning Director; James Paulmann, FAICP, Senior Vice President and Principal of WilsonMiller, Inc. and member of Florida’s Century Commission for a Sustainable Florida; Thomas Danahy, President, Babcock Ranch/Kitson & Partners Communities; Henry Rodriguez, President, SDC Communities and Board member of Enterprise Florida; Ray Rodriguez, Vice President, SDC Communities; and Tony Milner and Dell Jones of Regenes Power.

Southwest Florida’s delegation is a group of government and business leaders who continuously demonstrate a strong commitment to sustainable urban growth. Their dedication ranges from developing new communities as models for the future, building alternative energy power plants, and advancing green planning and design principles to serving as expert advisors on regional and statewide commissions and advocating land development policies that will enable implementation.

In addition to Southwest Florida and Silicon Valley, delegations represented the following areas of the country—Montgomery County, Maryland; King County/Seattle, Washington; Denver, Colorado; the State of Delaware; and St. Louis, Missouri. Participants discussed their areas’ Climate Prosperity Strategies, dispensing the misconception that environmental values are inconsistent with economic growth. The Southwest Florida strategy focuses on a public/private, regional approach that covers six counties—Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry, Lee, and Sarasota. With common economic, environmental, political, and social issues, the region can benefit from larger scale achievements by working across jurisdictional boundaries. Integrating and strengthening shared assets, resources, and talents presents a myriad of opportunities for smart growth, energy efficiency, and “green” practices that will contribute to a sustainable future for Southwest Florida.