



Binational Softwood Lumber Council

## News Release

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### **Binational Softwood Lumber Council sponsors the Empowerhouse Team to create energy efficient homes**

Washington, DC - The Binational Softwood Lumber Council (BSLC) announced today that it is serving as a sponsor of Empowerhouse, a team participating in the 2011 Solar Decathlon Competition this fall. With the Council's support, students will compete to design, build, and operate a solar-powered house that will reduce overall environmental impact and meet the highest energy standards.

BSLC is supporting the Empowerhouse team, which is composed of more than 200 students from a range of disciplines within Parsons The New School for Design, Milano The New School for Management and Urban Policy, and Stevens Institute of Technology. In addition to the competition home, the students will take their project a step further. In partnership with Habitat for Humanity of Washington, D.C. and the Department of Housing and Community Development, the team will build a second home in Deanwood, a neighborhood in Northeast Washington, D.C. At the conclusion of the competition, the two homes will be joined together to provide housing for two local families.

"We are particularly excited to partner with Parsons and the rest of the Empowerhouse Team to profile the benefits of sustainable North American softwood products in modern, energy efficient construction," said Cees de Jager, executive director of the BSLC. "We look forward to working together to innovate and enhance the liveability of our nation's homes."

"Empowerhouse wouldn't be possible without the support of our sponsors like the BSLC," said Laura Briggs, chair of Sustainable Architecture at Parsons The New School of Design and lead faculty on the project.

"Wood in many forms is central to the development of our house, from engineered lumber to reclaimed wood floors. Our home will be a model for affordable, energy-efficiency, net-zero housing that can be replicated around the globe."

The homes will adhere to Passive House principles—today's highest energy standard—and will consume 90 percent less energy for heating and cooling than a typical home, incorporating energy-efficient appliances, maximizing natural light, photovoltaic panels, and micro-mechanical systems.

Empowerhouse is one of 20 teams competing in the Solar Decathlon. The houses are judged and measured in 10 categories: architecture, market appeal, engineering, communications, affordability, comfort zone, hot water, appliances, home entertainment, and energy balance. The winner of the competition is the team that best blends affordability, consumer appeal, and design excellence

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### **About Binational Softwood Lumber Council**

The Binational Softwood Lumber Council, a non-profit organization, was established in 2006 by the Canadian and U.S. Governments. The Council is leading the effort to increase the use of wood products as part of the shift to green building. Sustainably harvested wood products from North America create jobs in rural communities, sequester significant amounts of carbon and help reduce the overall environmental footprint of a home or building. Council's effort includes initiatives that bring together expertise from various disciplines to promote the use of North American wood products in green building. It is an excellent example of the Council's ability to bring together landowners, private businesses and government agencies from Canada and the U.S. to achieve a common goal. For more information, visit [www.softwoodlumber.org](http://www.softwoodlumber.org).

### **About Empowerhouse Partner Organizations**

**Parsons The New School for Design** and **Milano The New School for Management and Urban Policy** are a vital part of The New School, a university with a legacy of progressive ideals, scholarship, and pedagogy. One of world's leading schools of art and design education, Parsons offers undergraduate and graduate degrees in the full spectrum of disciplines, creatively and critically addressing the complexities of life in the 21st century. Milano trains leaders for the nonprofit, public, and private sectors, blending theory with hands-on practice, and progressive thinking with social commitment. For more information visit [www.newschool.edu/solardecathlon](http://www.newschool.edu/solardecathlon).

Founded in 1870, **Stevens Institute of Technology**, The Innovation University™, lives at the intersection of industry, academics and research. The University's students, faculty and partners leverage their collective real-world experience and culture of innovation, research and entrepreneurship to confront global challenges in engineering, science, systems and technology management. Stevens offers baccalaureate, master's, certificates and doctoral degrees in engineering, the sciences and management, in addition to baccalaureate degrees in business and liberal arts. For more information visit [www.stevens.edu](http://www.stevens.edu).

**Habitat for Humanity of Washington, D.C.** believes that everyone deserves a house they want to call home. That's why we work to eliminate poverty housing and homelessness in the nation's capital by building affordable, energy- and resource-efficient homes for people in need. DC Habitat builds and rehabilitates homes in order to sell them to families who are ineligible for conventional financing. For more information visit [www.dchabitat.org](http://www.dchabitat.org).

**Department of Housing and Community Development** creates and preserves opportunities for affordable housing and economic development and to revitalize underserved communities in the District of Columbia. The department fulfills its mission by providing gap financing; increasing first-time homeownership opportunities; providing funding to rehabilitate single-family and multi-family homes; supporting communities through neighborhood based activities; providing funding for homelessness prevention; addressing vacant and abandoned properties; and overseeing the administration of rental housing laws. For more information, visit [www.dhcd.dc.gov](http://www.dhcd.dc.gov).

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