



Commonwealth of Kentucky Public Protection Cabinet

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Governor Proclaims May as Building Safety Month *Focus on energy efficiency, and disaster, fire and backyard safety*

FRANKFORT, Ky. (May 2, 2011) –Gov. Steve Beshear today proclaimed May as Building Safety Month in Kentucky. Sponsored by the International Code Council Foundation, the theme, “An International Celebration of Safe and Sensible Structures,” highlights four areas: *energy and green building; disaster safety and mitigation; fire safety and awareness; and backyard safety.*

Across the nation, leaders and communities are promoting the use and understanding of these topics to protect lives and property. “Public safety is our No. 1 concern,” said Jerry Lunsford, commissioner of the Kentucky Department of Housing, Buildings and Construction. “During Building Safety Month and all year long, building safety and fire prevention officials are here to help protect you, your family and our communities.

“The important work we do is often overlooked until a tragedy occurs,” said Lunsford. “When building safety and fire prevention experts inspect buildings during and after construction, we help to ensure that the places where you live, learn, work, worship and play are safe.”

Building safety and fire prevention codes address all aspects of construction, such as structural soundness of buildings, reliability of fire prevention and suppression systems, plumbing and mechanical systems, and energy efficiency and sustainability. To ensure buildings are safe requires the active participation of building safety and fire prevention officials, architects, builders, engineers and others in the construction industry, as well as property owners.

Week one of the awareness month focuses on energy efficiency and green building. Green Building is building with a conscious effort to minimize negative effects and promote positive impacts, on both indoor and outdoor environments. Whether

building from scratch or just looking to increase the energy efficiency of a home, there are a number of things consumers can do to make homes more sustainable and 'green,' such as:

- If you are building a new home, select a building site that is best for you and the environment and position your home on the lot with consideration to the amount of energy it will consume.
- Remember that green homes don't necessarily cost more than other homes. Sustainable building may require more expensive materials and smarter technology than conventional building. But when thinking long-term, green building actually saves money because the materials won't have to be replaced as often. So while initial costs may seem like more, green building offers better value when you consider the long-term costs.
- You can make green improvements to your existing home. Altering your home's structure and operating systems -- foundation, framing, wiring and plumbing -- can be very expensive. But making green improvements doesn't have to be. Using energy-efficient light bulbs, sealing air leaks or installing a programmable thermostat are just a few low-cost ways to go green. Upgrading windows, heating and air equipment and installing more insulation into the walls will make a house even more energy efficient.

For questions relating to construction or renovations, contact the Department of Housing, Buildings and Construction at 502-573-0364.

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