

NEWS RELEASE FROM FIATECH STREAMLINING PROJECT - December 5, 2009

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Guidelines on Replicable Buildings

The FIATECH Streamlining Project is pleased to report a major success in its 2008-09 initiative to develop model regulations that state and local governments can adopt to conduct a single plan review for replicable buildings; buildings, like those of “big box stores,” hotel chains, homebuilders and even Habitat for Humanity that are repetitively built across the nation with little to no variation in their structure, components or configuration.

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Annually, companies like Target, Home Depot, Arby’s, and even Habitat for Humanity, spend hundreds of thousands of unnecessary \$ in time wasted waiting for every building department in a state or region, to review the exact same set of plans for one of their buildings over and over again, each time one of these structures goes up.

Aided by the leadership of Target Corporation’s Thomas Phillips, over the past seven months a 32 member public/private sector FIATECH work group has researched, and submitted to the International Code Council, the writers of the nation’s model building codes, a draft set of technical Guidelines that ICC is considering incorporating into the Appendix of their International Building Code for state and local governments to adopt.

On Tuesday, November 3rd, the International Code Council Board of Directors accepted our submission and approved establishing an ICC Guideline committee to prepare this document for circulation for approval by the ICC membership. Moreover, ICC has turned to FIATECH and Target Corporation which spearheaded this effort and asked us to invite all 32 of our work group members to become members of the ICC Replicable Buildings Guideline Committee. Thus far 18 of the 32 people have notified us of their acceptance of that appointment. You will find a list of our 32 members on pages 9 & 10 of our attached document “Guidelines on Replicable Buildings – A National Streamlining Initiative – A Model Document for Single Statewide Plan Review and Approval Process for Replicable Buildings.”

The Guideline wherever it is adopted will provide both state and local building departments with a mechanism through which they can conduct a single overall plan review of replicable buildings (e.g. Target stores, Arby’s, Marriott hotels, Habitat for Humanity and other housing) and then leave to the jurisdiction where that building is being built, a site review and review of only those technical provisions that the local government has adopted that are different from the state building code or the base

International Building Code document. Target Corporation has already experimented with these provisions within the mid-Atlantic Region and in California. Within the metropolitan Philadelphia region Target was making minor renovations to 36 stores, plan reviews and approvals for these stores would have normally taken 16 ½ weeks, but that was reduced to a total of 4 ½ weeks using this streamlined plan review process.

This not only has immediate benefit to stimulating economic recovery, but in the aftermath of another Katrina sized disaster will rapidly speed reconstruction of communities in the devastated area.

In a Cracker Barrel session at ICC, Tom Phillips and I briefed state and local building officials from across the nation on the Guideline and received overwhelming support for ICC's adoption and incorporation of it into the Appendix of their Building Code. (We also extended invitations to 60 jurisdictions to join FIATECH as jurisdiction members – You may recall earlier this year we succeeded in getting ICC's incoming President and chief building official of Clark County, NV, Ron Lynn, to join)

During a brief informal meeting held at the ICC Annual Conference on Tuesday, November 3rd, nine of the members of the new ICC Replicable Buildings Committee discussed a work process timetable. They also agreed that in addition to developing the Guideline for adoption they would develop a work plan to support Electronic Plan Review, Electronic Signature Acceptance and the ICC Smart Codes initiative (an electronic plan checking tool based on all of the ICC codes). This parallels one of FIATECH's Element 6 Project Proposals for 2010.

The ICC Replicable Building Guideline Committee held its first work session via conference call on Friday, November 13 and a revised draft is being prepared for review and comment during early December. Based upon the work we have already completed, we currently anticipate a streamlined Guideline development process and hope to have the final document out to the ICC Membership for their approval in mid-February, 2010.

Given the state of our nation's economic recovery needs and the decimated building department staffing across the nation, we believe this Guideline is coming at exactly the right time to help both the public and private sectors.

In addition to all of the above actions at ICC's meeting, Thomas Phillips, Target's Codes Compliance Manager and Steve Makredes lead on this FIATECH initiative, and Target were awarded the International Code Council's prestigious 2009 Affiliate Member Award. The award was given in recognition of their work on this very project and other areas of support for ICC and the nation's effective codes development, adoption and enforcement processes. Congratulations Target!

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