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MERITAGE HOMES AWARDED EPA'S PRESTIGIOUS 2011 ENERGY STAR PARTNER OF THE YEAR

Company Selected for Outstanding Efforts to Help Homeowners Reduce Energy Consumption

PHOENIX, March 23, 2011 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Meritage Homes (NYSE:MTH) has earned the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's coveted ENERGY STAR™ 2011 Partner of the Year Award for leading the industry in reducing energy use in its innovative, high-performance homes.

The company will be honored at an awards ceremony on April 12 in Washington, D.C.

Since January 2010, Meritage has been opening extreme energy-efficient communities that surpass ENERGY STAR guidelines throughout the western and southern United States. It was the first large national homebuilder to earn the EPA's ENERGY STAR seal of approval on every home it has built since then. Homes in these communities integrate advanced technologies into their design and building from the ground up.

Meritage's advanced building technologies range from cutting-edge renewable energy features and a sophisticated water management system to a redesigned "building envelope," with polyurethane spray foam that bonds to wood to create tighter overall construction and improved air quality.

Meritage also uses Low-E coatings on windows that reduce energy loss by as much as 50 percent over regular windows. Together, these technologies can save homeowners up to 80 percent on their home energy use, compared to standard new homes.

"With unprecedented energy savings and reduced emissions of greenhouse gases, Meritage has set a new standard for homes across the country," said Sam Rashkin, national director, ENERGY STAR for Homes at the EPA.

To earn the ENERGY STAR award, a home must meet strict guidelines for energy efficiency set by the EPA and be at least 15 percent more energy-efficient than homes built to the 2004 International Residential Code (IRC). A third-party certified home energy rater must perform an independent audit and verification to ensure that a home meets ENERGY STAR guidelines.

"Meritage Green is part of our company's vision to set a new standard in the way homes in America can and should be built," said Steve Hilton, the company's chairman and chief executive officer. "We want to enrich our customers' lives with sustainable homes that not only save them energy, but also improve their quality of life."

Meritage is among 20,000 organizations that are ENERGY STAR partners committed to improving the energy efficiency of products, homes, buildings and businesses.

Individuals are also doing their part to conserve energy in their daily lives. With help from ENERGY STAR, Americans saved \$18 billion on their utility bills in 2010 and prevented 170 million metric tons of GHG emissions – the equivalent of annual emissions from 34 million vehicles.

To give prospective homeowners an inside look at its extreme energy-efficient features, Meritage has created innovative Building Science Learning Centers within partially deconstructed model homes at many of its communities. These models spotlight six categories of energy-efficient building features to give buyers a better understanding of how these elements work together to reduce home energy use, while also making the home more comfortable, cleaner, safer and quieter for family members.

For more information about Meritage's high-performance homes and extreme energy-efficient communities, visit www.meritagehomes.com.

About Meritage Homes Corporation

Meritage Homes is the 9th-largest homebuilder in the United States based on homes closed. Meritage builds a variety of homes across the Southern and Western states to appeal to a wide range of buyers, including first-time, move-up, luxury and active adults. As of Dec. 31, 2010, the company had 151 actively selling communities in 12

metropolitan areas, including Houston, Dallas/Ft. Worth, Austin, San Antonio, Phoenix/Scottsdale, Tucson, Las Vegas, Denver, Orlando and the East Bay/Central Valley and Southern California.

In 2010, Meritage celebrated its 25th anniversary and launched a new Simply Smart Series™ of homes and a 99-day guaranteed completion program in certain communities, and is the first large national homebuilder to be 100 percent ENERGY STAR® qualified in every home started since Jan. 1, 2010. Meritage has designed and built nearly 70,000 homes in its 25-year history, and has a reputation for its distinctive style, quality construction, and positive customer experience.

The Meritage Homes Corporation logo is available at <https://www.globenewswire.com/newsroom/prs/?pkgid=2624>

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