



Date: November 29, 2011

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For immediate release

ROC USA® Names Minnesota Co-op Leader to National Board of Directors

CONCORD, NH – At its November meeting, the ROC USA® Board of Directors appointed Natividad Seefeld of Fridley, Minnesota to its Board of Directors. Ms. Seefeld is the president of the Park Plaza Cooperative, a 90-home resident-owned community.

Ms. Seefeld is the community leader representative on the national Board of Directors, with responsibility for overseeing management and mission for ROC USA. ROC USA is a social venture which helps homeowners become co-op owners of their manufactured and “mobile” home communities.

The services of ROC USA and its local affiliates, including Northcountry Cooperative Foundation in Minnesota and seven other non-profit organizations coast to coast, have helped preserve 27 communities and 1,725 homes in 12 states since its launch in 2008.

In her appointment to the Board, Ms. Seefeld follows Lois Parris, a long-time co-op leader from the Lakes Region Cooperative in Belmont, New Hampshire. Ms. Parris is also the president of the Manufactured Homeowners Association of America, a national consumer rights group which advocates for homeowners in manufactured home communities.

“Lois and Natividad are excellent examples of what exists in mobile home parks all over the country – strong, forward-looking and positive community leaders who know that working together is how real and impactful change happens,” states Paul Bradley, President, ROC USA, LLC. “Natividad is a very special person with respect to how well she communicates through words and deeds the significance of homeownership and the vulnerability of not controlling the land underneath it.”

“I’m very happy to have been asked to serve homeowners nationwide in this way,” notes Seefeld. “I believe in co-op ownership and know what it means for neighborhoods like mine. I’m excited to help other communities around the country through my role on the ROC USA Board.”

Warren Kramer, Executive Director of Northcountry Cooperative Foundation, states, “Natividad will be an excellent addition to the ROC USA Board of Directors. She’s demonstrated her ability to provide effective leadership through her own community’s conversion to resident ownership and will represent well, the community leader perspective on the ROC USA Board.”

The impetus to the creation of ROC USA is 27 years of market-based work by the non-profit NH Community Loan Fund. In New Hampshire today, there are 99 such cooperatives, known as resident-owned communities, in which are sited 5,800 homes.

In rural areas of the United States, 26 percent of homes owned by people with low incomes are manufactured or “mobile” homes. Many of those are located in “mobile home parks” where homeowners lack the essential financial benefits of homeownership. Because the landlord can decide, at any time, to close the park and use the land for a different purpose, their homes are at risk. Homeowners can face excessive rent increases and poor-quality maintenance and infrastructure (like water, sewer and road) failures with few protections.

“Homeowners want basic financial security and control over costs in their community; resident ownership delivers both,” says Bradley.

Ms. Seefeld will join Directors representing a variety of non-profits including such respected organizations as: the Calvert Foundation, NCB Capital Impact, NeighborWorks® America, CFED, the University of New Hampshire, PathStone, and the NH Community Loan Fund.

“When I met Natividad this past summer, I was immediately taken by her energy and enthusiasm,” remarked Andrea Levere, president of CFED and ROC USA’s board chair. “She combines a genuine enthusiasm for neighbors helping neighbors along with a passion for helping change the basic economic dynamic in communities – from owning a home on rented land to owning a home on land which the homeowners control as a democratic co-op. We are very pleased she’ll be sharing her leadership with us at a national level.”

Ms. Seefeld’s first meeting as a Director of ROC USA will take place on January 25, 2012 in Washington, DC.

ROC USA, LLC makes resident ownership possible through a national Network of technical experts and community acquisition financing. ROC USA® is a national scale initiative of the NH Community Loan Fund, CFED, NCB Capital Impact, and NeighborWorks® America, with generous support from the Ford Foundation, The F.B. Heron Foundation, the Cooperative Development Fund, Enterprise Community Partners, Fannie Mae and Bank of America. www.rocusa.org

NCF is a non-profit organization that supports cooperative projects through training, research, education, and development assistance in housing, business, and more. Since its inception in 1999, Northcountry Cooperative Foundation has assisted low-income, low-wealth, and other underserved communities to create and develop community-owned, democratically-governed enterprises. In this way, NCF addresses some of the underlying reasons for poverty and blight such as feelings of powerlessness or a lack of resources. Cooperative ownership leads to empowerment, self-sufficiency, social responsibility, professional development, and economic stability for individuals, families, and entire neighborhoods. www.northcountryfoundation.org

CFED, the Corporation for Enterprise Development is a national nonprofit based in Washington, DC dedicated to expanding economic opportunity for low-income families and communities. CFED uses a “think-do-invest” approach grounded in community practice, public policy and private markets. www.cfed.org