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***Environmental Finance Center Merges  
with National Center for Smart Growth***

COLLEGE PARK, Md. (February X, 2007) – In an effort to expand its capabilities beyond land use research and education and to provide technical and outreach assistance to individual communities, the National Center for Smart Growth Research and Education has merged with the Environmental Finance Center, the directors of these two University of Maryland centers recently announced.

The merger, effective February 1, 2007, will allow the combined center to work collaboratively on land use planning, natural resource preservation and urban growth issues.

“The entire staff of the National Center for Smart Growth is pleased to have the opportunity to work closely with the staff of the Environmental Finance Center,” said Gerrit-Jan Knaap, executive director of the National Center for Smart Growth Research and Education. “The expertise the Environmental Finance Center has to offer on water quality and agricultural issues nicely complements the expertise of current Smart Growth Center staff. In addition the extensive experience of the EFC in providing training and technical assistance to local communities greatly enhances the ability of our Center to disseminate research. We look forward to exploiting the synergies that this merger makes possible for years to come.”

Dan Nees, director of the Environmental Finance Center, agreed. “We are very excited about what this merger will mean to communities in the Mid-Atlantic

region,” he said. “By combining the talents of these two centers, we are able to offer a much wider range of services and technical support that will allow communities to effectively deal with important issues related to urban growth and environmental protection.”

The National Center for Smart Growth conducts a broad range of land use research and education locally, statewide, nationally and internationally on issues of land development and redevelopment, resource preservation, and urban growth. The Center currently includes six faculty researchers, as well as many multi-disciplinary affiliate faculty members, several graduate assistants and a supporting staff. It is affiliated with four schools and colleges at the University of Maryland that include the School of Architecture; Planning and Preservation; the School of Public Policy; the School of Engineering; and the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. The merger represents the Center’s first major expansion since it was created in 2000.

The Environmental Finance Center is one of nine university-based centers across the country established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in 1992. The purpose of these centers was to help create innovative financing solutions that assists communities manage the costs associated with environmental protection and improvement. With a staff of seven and a team of advisory consultants, the Environmental Finance Center provides local officials and community leaders with specialized training and education on issues such as rate setting, asset management, financial capacity, and capital improvement. The Center also provides communities with technical assistance in areas related to watershed protection issues such as stormwater management, green infrastructure, source water and wastewater protection, agriculture land preservation, and other environmental issues. The Environmental Finance Center helps to enable communities and their leaders within the Mid-Atlantic region with the tools and information necessary to manage change for a healthy environment and an enhanced the quality of life.

The Environmental Finance Center promotes a comprehensive model of environmental financing where state and federal funding programs are combined with innovative financing techniques to create a sustainable watershed protection

financing strategy. It uses a number of tools to help communities identify the financing strategies that best fit their needs including:

- Technical Assistance and training programs;
- Financing charrettes, seminars, conferences and workshops;
- Handbooks and publications; and,
- Program facilitation, coordination, and management.

Although the two centers are now formally linked, the Environmental Finance Center will function as an independent operating unit within the Center for Smart Growth.

For more information about the National Center for Smart Growth Research and Education, please visit [www.smartgrowth.umd.edu](http://www.smartgrowth.umd.edu) or call 301/405-6788. For more information about the Environmental Finance Center and specific projects, please visit [www.efc.umd.edu](http://www.efc.umd.edu) or call 301/405-5036.

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