



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**NATIONAL BETTER BUILDINGS DIRECTOR TO SPEAK AT DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT DAY**  
***Maria Vargas Will Help Atlanta Better Buildings Challenge Celebrate a Year of Accomplishment***

ATLANTA, GA – Maria Vargas, Director of the Better Buildings Challenge for the US Department of Energy, will present at the Tenth Annual Downtown Development Day and help the Atlanta Better Buildings Challenge celebrate the accomplishments made during its first year.

Initiated by Mayor Kasim Reed’s Office of Sustainability and Central Atlanta Progress in support of the City’s Power to Change sustainability program, the Atlanta Better Buildings Challenge (Atlanta BBC) is a nation-leading public-private initiative to reduce energy and water consumption 20 percent by 2020 across participating buildings in Atlanta’s central business district. Atlanta, one of the first three cities to join the challenge, formally launched its efforts at Downtown Development Day last year.

“We are thrilled to have Maria join us for this event. She has shown enormous leadership in making the Better Buildings Challenge a national initiative and setting the country on a path to a more efficient and sustainable future,” said Lauren Dufort, Director of Sustainability for Central Atlanta Progress.

Ms. Vargas will speak during the morning general session and present the Atlanta Better Buildings Challenge 2012 Excellence award to a Downtown building that has achieved the greatest reductions in water and energy use, as measured against 2009 levels. She will also moderate a breakout session on the Atlanta BBC during which panelists will discuss perspectives on energy and water efficiency best practices, innovative financing models and case studies from current participating buildings.

To date, some 60 buildings – representing more than 45 million square feet of commercial space – have joined the Atlanta BBC. Assessments on the first 18 buildings to join show a significant opportunity to increase energy and water efficiency, reduce utility bills and free up resources to re-invest in growth. If all the recommended changes are implemented, utility costs would be reduced a combined \$4.7 annually, about 21 percent lower than what they pay today.

**About the Tenth Annual Downtown Development Day**

The Tenth Annual Downtown Development Day will inform and educate attendees about the real estate market Downtown and what is planned for the future- all while providing opportunities for networking and business development. This year, attendees will hear from industry experts in expanded break-out sessions, discuss business opportunities during the Development Expo and discover new and exciting changes happening in Downtown Atlanta.



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Approximately 600 of the City's top developers, retailers, real estate and finance professionals, media, and business and community leaders interested in the growth and vitality of Downtown Atlanta are expected to attend!

**About the Atlanta Better Buildings Challenge**

The Atlanta Better Buildings Challenge (Atlanta BBC) is a nation-leading public/private initiative. The goal of the Atlanta BBC is to reduce energy and water consumption by at least 20 percent in participating buildings across Atlanta by 2020, with a primary focus on a 400-block area in the city's Downtown Improvement District, managed by Central Atlanta Progress, Inc. The Atlanta BBC will utilize substantive energy and water efficiency upgrades of municipal, university, hospitals and commercial buildings as a means of fostering new business opportunities, and creating more sustainable footprints. For more information, visit [www.AtlantaBBC.com](http://www.AtlantaBBC.com).