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## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **Mayor Kasim Reed Calls on Business, Development Community to join Atlanta Better Buildings Challenge**

*City joins national effort to make Atlanta buildings 20 percent more energy efficient by 2020*

**ATLANTA** --- In front of more than 1,000 business leaders this morning, Mayor Kasim Reed, together with Michelle Moore of the White House Council on Environmental Quality, A.J. Robinson, President of Central Atlanta Progress (CAP), and other leading business and community organizations, kicked off the Atlanta Better Buildings Challenge at CAP's annual Downtown Development Day. The goal of the challenge is to reduce energy and water consumption by at least 20 percent in participating buildings across Atlanta by 2020 with a primary focus on the city's downtown business district.

"By saving energy and water, we will not only save taxpayer dollars, but we will empower businesses to grow, invest in new technology and create well-paying jobs for Atlantans," said Mayor Reed. "But we cannot do it without the leadership of the business and development community."

The Better Buildings Challenge is part of an initiative that President Barack Obama launched in February to encourage private sector investment in commercial building upgrades and innovative clean energy technologies that save money and improve productivity. Michelle Moore of the White House Council on Environmental Quality provided the keynote address for the event.

The initiative will save approximately \$40 billion annually in energy costs, according to the U. S. Department of Energy. In July, the City of Atlanta was chosen by the Obama administration as one of the first major metropolitan areas to assume this challenge, along with Seattle and Los Angeles.

“Through substantive energy and water efficiency upgrades, the Atlanta Better Buildings Challenge intends to free up business capital to stimulate growth, foster new business opportunities and create more sustainable footprints in our community,” said A.J. Robinson, president of Central Atlanta Progress.

The Atlanta Better Buildings Challenge complements the City of Atlanta’s “Power to Change” sustainability plan, which is aimed at making Atlanta a Top 10 city in the nation for sustainability practices.

“Many aggressive energy and water conservation goals will be realized with the help of the Better Buildings Challenge,” said Aaron Bastian, Communications Manager for the Atlanta Mayor’s Office of Sustainability.

The Atlanta Better Buildings Challenge is already underway with a benchmarking initiative for Atlanta’s 220-block Downtown Improvement District, which includes City Hall, the Civic Center and other municipal facilities. The Civic Center has an estimated \$228,000 payback annually after the upgrades have been completed on the 380,000-square-foot building.

#### **About the Better Buildings Challenge**

The energy to operate office buildings, schools, shopping centers and other structures costs the United States approximately \$400 billion annually. On average, 30 percent of this energy is wasted. Through its goal, the Better Buildings Challenge will ultimately be a catalyst for economic growth as the nation’s dependence on foreign oil will be reduced while protecting the environment and saving billions of dollars in energy costs. For more information on the Atlanta Better Buildings Challenge, please visit [atlantabbcc.com](http://atlantabbcc.com).

#### **About the City of Atlanta Mayor’s Office of Sustainability**

The Mayor’s Office of Sustainability is focused on instituting environmental protection practices into Atlanta city government. It aims to do so by improving the city’s environmental programs and policies such as water and energy conservation, solid waste and emissions reduction and recycling. To fully expand its commitment to sustainability, Mayor Kasim Reed has pledged that the City of Atlanta will become one of the top 10 most sustainable cities in the United States. To that end, the Mayor’s Office of Sustainability utilizes Recovery Act funding across 16 different programs. These programs are designed to motivate and support community efforts that aim to enhance environmental quality, while supporting jobs and long-term economic growth. For more information about Atlanta’s efforts to create a more sustainable city, please visit the Office of Sustainability’s page within the Mayor’s Office tab at [www.atlantaga.gov](http://www.atlantaga.gov).

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For more information about the City of Atlanta, visit [www.atlantaga.gov](http://www.atlantaga.gov) or watch City Channel 26.