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## **Parker Design Architect Barry Lehrman Highlights the Firm's Green History at National Conference**

**Minneapolis, MN, June 15, 2009** – Barry Lehrman of Parker Design International (PDI) was well received as a speaker at the 7<sup>th</sup> annual Green Roofs for Healthy Cities conference in Atlanta on June 4. Mr. Lehrman's subject was "30 Years of Green Roofs in Minnesota" and his talk explored the pioneering work done in this field by The Leonard Parker Associates, which became Parker Design International in 2006.

Mr. Lehrman is PDI's Manager of Sustainable Design since June, 2007. He is a Registered Landscape Architect in Minnesota, and an accredited LEED Professional by the U.S. Green Building Council. He has been professionally designing green roofs since 2001. As a lecturer in the Department of Landscape Architecture at the University of Minnesota, he will be teaching an advanced seminar on green infrastructure this fall. Lehrman also contributed to the 2008 book *Infrastructural Cities: Networked Ecologies in Los Angeles* and wrote a white paper on *The Case Against Building Integrated Wind Turbines* that was issued last year by PDI.

Lehrman's presentation featured three buildings in Minnesota that were among the very first in the United States to feature modern Green Roofs. Green Roofs are also known as a "Vegetated Roofs" because they are planted with a variety of vegetation including sedums, grasses, and other plants in soil ranging from a few inches to several feet. Modern Green Roofs utilize engineered soil mixtures, a drainage layer, and often a water retention layer. The benefits of Green Roofs include energy savings by keeping the building and the environment cooler, retaining rain water to prevent flooding, creating wildlife habitat, and absorbing noise and air pollution.

The GELCO Corporation Headquarters campus (now home to GE Capital) in Eden Prairie, MN, was built in 1976 and expanded in 1981. The original building had over 9,000 square feet of planters installed on terraces and the roof. The 1981 phase II building featured Minnesota prairie grasses on the 22,000 square foot roof. Steve Huh FAIA, now CEO of Parker Design International, was the project architect on these buildings.

In 1978, the Parker firm designed the University of Minnesota Law School and Library (now known as Mondale Hall). This design, incorporated 19,600 square feet of vegetated roof on roofs visible from inside the building. This building is still noteworthy for the advanced energy conservation features that made the Law School the most energy efficient building on campus at that time.

The Humphrey Institute at the University of Minnesota was completed in 1985 with about 18,000 square feet of roof surface planted with evergreen Junipers. The shrubs were succeeded by native prairie vegetation. The Humphrey Institute roof is just as sound and functional today as it was when it was built almost 25 years ago.

Thirty years ago aesthetic considerations were the primary reason to utilize green roofs, rather than the environmental concerns that are so important today. The GELCO roof, for example, is an integral part of an overall organic structure designed to be compatible with its natural surroundings. But energy and environmental impact were not overlooked. The Law School and Library facility uses 20% less energy to heat and 38% less energy to cool than comparable buildings from the late 1970s.

Thirty years ago, Green Roofs and Energy Efficiency were issues that not many people – including architects and builders – thought much about. It makes the pioneering accomplishments of The Leonard Parker Associates even more remarkable in the context of today's focus on energy and the environment. Today Parker Design International continues to advance this commitment to sustainable design in projects around the world, including winning two Green Asia Habitat Awards in 2007.

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