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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Non-Profit Organizations to Receive Design Assistance at 25th Annual Search For Shelter Design Charrette, February 11-13



MINNEAPOLIS, MN -- The American Institute of Architects Minnesota (AIA Minnesota) Housing Advocacy Committee, which focuses on affordable housing, will be hosting its annual Search For Shelter Design Charrette February 11-13, 2011. On average, six to eight projects are chosen each year and over 50 volunteers participate.

The purpose of this weekend event is to give preliminary design assistance to nonprofit organizations within our community that address affordable housing and homelessness issues. Building projects submitted by these organizations, who would normally lack the funds to hire an architect, are given a weekend of intense planning and development by volunteer multi-disciplinary design teams. The teams are comprised of architects, interior designers, landscape architects and students in these disciplines who work throughout the weekend to create graphic viable solutions and plans, which then become visual tools for the non-profit organization to use to acquire funding, educate others about their cause, or serve as preliminary building plans.

The three-day charrette will be held Friday through Sunday in Rapson Hall, home of the College of Design at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities campus. The Friday evening opening program will begin with a panel of experts who will be discussing current homelessness issues within the Twin Cities. After the panel, this year's projects will be introduced and followed by group meetings between project representatives and their respective design team. On Saturday morning the design teams usually visit their project sites and then spend the full day designing, often working late into the night. Sunday at noon everyone reconvenes for a concluding program where the design teams present their finished project designs to the non-profit organizations. The public is welcome and encouraged to attend the final program.

The media and public are welcome to attend the opening and concluding programs. The media is also welcome to observe on Saturday, with an RSVP to Judith VanDyne, AIA Minnesota Housing Advocacy Committee liaison at info@aia-mn.org, 612-338-6763.

The French word for cart, *charrette* refers to an architecture or art event with a timed deadline for finishing a project. The term is said to originate from the École des Beaux Arts in Paris during the 19th century, where instructors would walk around with a cart, or "charrette," to collect final drawings as students scrambled to complete their work.

The American Institute of Architects Minnesota, founded in 1892, is dedicated to strengthening our communities, improving our built environment and providing exceptional design. For more information on the organization and Minnesota architectural firms, reference our Web site at www.aia-mn.org and pick up a copy of Architecture Minnesota, the award-winning architectural magazine of the Midwest.