



## **Rent.com Finds Most Americans Would Prefer to Live in an Eco-Friendly Home**

86 Percent Would Prefer to Live in a “Green” Home And More Than Half Are Willing to Spend More Money to Obtain One

**Santa Monica, Calif., February 25, 2010** – With the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Earth Day on April 22 quickly approaching, eco-friendly living has increasingly become a popular topic of conversation. In honor of the holiday, Rent.com, the nation’s #1 Internet listing site (ILS) in the rental housing industry, has commissioned a national survey to measure Americans’ attitudes toward green living.

### **Willing to Spend More Green to Be Green**

Nearly 9 in 10 Americans (86 percent) would prefer to live in an eco-friendly space; and more than half (55 percent) of those are willing to pay more in rent to do so. Renters were almost three times as likely as non-renters (11 percent vs. 4 percent) to say living in an environmentally-friendly home is absolutely necessary for them. According to the survey, 42 percent of respondents were willing to pay up to \$100 extra to live in a green apartment, and 13 percent would pay even more than that. Even though respondents are willing to pay more in rent to live in an eco-friendly apartment, two-thirds said that money was the biggest barrier to making eco-friendly choices. This month, environmentally conscious renters can take advantage of Rent.com’s \$100 Reward Program by using the \$100 Visa debit card they receive after signing a lease at a property they found on Rent.com to buy green products for their new home.

Aside from monetary concerns, the survey found that some Americans simply don’t know how to start living in a way that’s healthier for the environment. Additional factors preventing eco-friendly lifestyles include lack of information about how to live green (18 percent), apathy and doubt that one person is able to make a real impact on the environment (6 percent) and lack of time to change one’s ways (5 percent).

### **Dreaming in Green**

When people think of what a green apartment looks like, they picture very different things. More than half (57 percent) envision a space with solar panels, one in five (20 percent) picture a 21<sup>st</sup>-century, avant-garde chic apartment and 14 percent think of a green menagerie filled with fresh plants and produce! It’s often hard to fully picture a living space without also incorporating an idea of who your ideal neighbors would be. Our eco-conscious respondents preferred to surround themselves with like-minded neighbors, who would include hybrid car-driving actress Cameron Diaz (29 percent), former Vice President and green activist Al Gore (22 percent) and environmentalist actor Leonardo DiCaprio (20 percent). Interestingly, “Living with Ed” reality TV star and solar-powered homeowner Ed Begley, Jr., was more than twice as popular with renters (18 percent) as he was with non-renters (8 percent).

### **Eco-Responsibility**

When looking for a new apartment, renters had distinct preferences for “green” features that would most appeal to them. 28 percent of eco-conscious apartment hunters are most impressed with living spaces that offer energy-saving appliances. Furthermore, 29 percent of renters would

prefer a property located close to work in order to minimize car use, and 27 percent would be willing to live in a building that streamlines the recycling process to make it as easy as possible.

Although most Americans like the idea of “going green” and preserving the environment, many are unaware of the choices that they have available right at their fingertips, and opinions differ in terms of where the responsibility to maintain a green home lies. Nearly one-third of respondents claim that it’s their own responsibility, while others said it falls to the property owner (9 percent), community residents (5 percent) or the city government (3 percent). Not surprisingly, renters are nearly twice as likely as non renters (14 percent vs. 8 percent) to believe that it’s the property owner’s responsibility to adhere to eco-friendly practices. The good news is that many Americans are willing to make sacrifices at home, even if it means giving up precious amenities. Nearly half of respondents (45 percent) said they would forgo a dishwasher to be more eco-friendly and one-third (32 percent) said they would get rid of their plasma TV! As if giving up a dishwasher and television set weren’t enough, 15 percent of respondents would prefer to ditch the microwave and 9 percent would be willing to lose their washer and dryer.

Below are a few tips from Rent.com on how to negotiate your way into an eco-friendly apartment:

- **Upgrading the Appliances:** If you notice older appliances in an apartment you’re interested in, ask the landlord to consider replacing them with newer energy efficient models before you sign the lease. The latest dishwashers on the market use significantly less water per load than washing dishes by hand, and replacing an older refrigerator with an Energy Star model could reduce your energy usage by up to 50 percent!
- **Paint Your Home Green:** Landlords will usually repaint the interior of the apartment before you sign the lease. If this is the case, ask your landlord if they’re willing to let you choose the paint. This will allow you to choose both the color of the paint as well as a brand that is safe for the environment. If your landlord refuses to pay for the paint, ask if it’s possible for you to supply it if they pay for the painters.
- **Batten Down the Hatches:** When viewing apartments, make sure to ask whether it is insulated. Many older buildings were not built with insulation, allowing heat to escape in the winter and cool air to escape in the summer. Find out if your landlord is willing to have it installed in the walls, which can help you save on electricity and on your heating and air conditioning costs. If that’s not an option, make sure any gaps around your windows are sealed with foam that you can buy from a hardware store and consider shrink-wrapping your windows in the winter to keep cold air out.

### **Rent.com to the Rescue**

Fortunately, there’s a place to turn to find an apartment that meets each of your eco-friendly needs. With the most online traffic, the largest inventory of contracted property listings, and a free robust search tool, Rent.com helps renters find the home of their dreams. Users are also able to search the site’s detailed rental listings, which include photos, floor plans, and virtual tours – all for free. Rent.com’s search capabilities will help you to locate a property close to work so that you can walk or ride a bike, or one that features a pool or a garden so that you can spend your free time outdoors.

With detailed listings, easy-to-use search capabilities, and the ability to directly contact property managers, finding the rental home of your dreams is as easy as 1-2-3. In addition to helping rental seekers find housing, Rent.com rewards renters with a \$100 prepaid Visa® debit card if they find a home on Rent.com, tell their new landlord they found their apartment on Rent.com and report to Rent.com that they signed a lease with a property that participates in the \$100 Reward Program.

**Survey Methodology**

The survey was conducted among 1,000 nationally representative Americans ages 18+. The interviews were conducted online by Redshift Research between February 5th and 10th 2010 using an email invitation and an online survey. Quotas were set to ensure reliable and accurate representation of the total U.S. population aged 18 or over. Results of any sample are subject to sampling variation. The magnitude of the variation is measurable and is affected by the number of interviews and the level of the percentages expressing the results. In this particular study, the chances are 95 in 100 that a survey result does not vary, plus or minus, by more than 3.1 percentage points from the result that would be obtained if interviews had been conducted with all persons in the universe represented by the sample.

**About Rent.com**

Rent.com is the nation's #1 Internet listing site (ILS) in the rental housing industry enabling renters to find a residential rental property online using a free robust search tool. Rent.com has the most online traffic and the largest inventory of contracted property listings. As the only national ILS with a pay per lease business model, Rent.com allows property managers to cost-effectively fill their vacancies.

Prospective renters can search the site's detailed property listings, including contact information, pricing, photos, floor plans, and virtual tours. With the ability to directly contact property managers, finding the rental housing of your dreams is as easy as 1-2-3.

In addition to providing renters free access to detailed property listings and robust search tools, Rent.com rewards renters with a \$100 prepaid Visa® debit card if they: (1) find their property using the Rent.com website, (2) tell the property owner or manager they found their rental home using Rent.com, and (3) report to Rent.com signing a lease with a property that participates in the \$100 Reward Program. Rent.com is dedicated to giving renters a convenient way to find the perfect place to live.

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