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**Beacon Institute Unveils New Sustainable  
Center for Environmental Innovation and Education**

*High-tech education facility in Beacon to house REON initiative, state park visitor center*

BEACON, NY — Beacon Institute for Rivers and Estuaries today announced the opening of its new Center for Environmental Innovation and Education (CEIE), the first facility on its campus at Denning's Point on the Hudson in Beacon, New York.

The new CEIE is Beacon Institute's primary education and outreach facility and the first home to REON (River and Estuary Observatory Network), the Institute's flagship initiative. REON is a joint effort between the Institute, IBM and Clarkson University to create an integrated network of environmental sensors throughout the 315-mile length of the Hudson River to monitor physical, chemical and biological changes in the river in real time.

"Beacon Institute has emerged as an institution that is changing the field of environmental science with REON, its education programs and the strength of its collaborative partnerships," said John Cronin, Beacon Institute Director and Chief Executive Officer. "We are honored to play a lead role in advancing New York State's environmental agenda while we work to understand and protect the mighty Hudson for current and future generations. The new Center for Environmental Innovation and Education is a key to meeting these goals."

"We must not underestimate the critical importance of the Hudson River – and indeed, rivers worldwide – to the quality of life, health and economic vitality of the communities and people who live along its banks. With the multiple environmental challenges we face today, from declining fish populations to the effects of rising sea levels due to climate change, Beacon Institute's mission to advance research, education and public policy as it relates to rivers and estuaries has never been more urgent," said former Governor George E. Pataki, whose visionary leadership eight years ago created the organization that is now known as Beacon Institute for Rivers and Estuaries. "It is imperative that we work to understand this ecosystem, monitor it in real time and disseminate the information obtained broadly. I am deeply gratified to witness the tangible outcomes of the Institute's collaborative efforts in both the REON initiative

and the new Center for Environmental Innovation and Education. It is important work that will inform our future.”

“Beacon Institute is a Hudson Valley treasure – the research and innovation taking place here in our own backyard will translate into tangible benefits that will resound throughout the international community,” said Congressman John Hall. “Water is perhaps our most important natural resource. Beacon Institute is showing us new ways to monitor and protect this precious element, while educating and preparing our youth to choose careers in science, technology and engineering through its innovative SENSE IT education program, funded by the National Science Foundation and many others. The new CEIE facility on Denning’s Point in Beacon will provide an important touchstone and opportunity for people to engage with the Institute’s programs and reconnect with the Hudson River.”

“We had a vision for a world class center for advanced river and estuary research to make its home in Dutchess County. We are thrilled to see that vision become a reality with the opening of the Beacon Institute,” said Dutchess County Executive William R. Steinhaus. “Our investment in the Beacon Institute provides an opportunity for our children to learn more about our environment and how to protect it for generations to come.”

Equipped with surround-sound videoconferencing, broadcasting and simulcasting capabilities, as well as a THX sound system and professional theatrical lighting, the CEIE’s flexible spaces can be reconfigured for multiple uses, including seminars, workshops, exhibits, public forums and cultural and social events. Planned educational programming in the CEIE will support SENSE IT teacher development programs, as well as formal and informal learning opportunities that build on real-time data from the REON initiative. Historical, ecological and cultural programming is enhanced by public access to river and walking trails.

"The opening of the CEIE is a great milestone for the Beacon Institute, and the Dyson Foundation is pleased to have been an early supporter of the organization and this effort," said Diana M. Gurieva, Executive Vice President of the Dyson Foundation. "The educational opportunities that will be available to residents of the Mid-Hudson Valley at the CEIE will be a wonderful asset to the region."

“I would like to offer my heartiest congratulations to the Beacon Institute on the opening of its new Center for Environmental Innovation and Education,” said Senator Steve Saland (Poughkeepsie). “Having secured funding in the State Budget to help implement STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) skill education programs at the Institute, I am delighted this new education center will help the Institute to move forward in its mission of educating the public and providing the research necessary to protect one of our most precious resources – the Hudson River.”

“I am pleased to participate in the opening of the Beacon Institute’s Center for Environmental Innovation and Education (CEIE),” said Senator Vincent Leibell (Putnam). “The CEIE will provide our community with inventive and informative programs that will bring even greater focus to the importance of the Hudson River. Now, more than ever, it is critical for us to study and understand our environment, and this new facility will encourage students and scientists to take an active role in this venture.”

“The announcement of this new center is great news for New York State and our environment. It demonstrates Beacon Institute’s leadership in the field of environmental science and steadfast

commitment to protecting and preserving our majestic Hudson River,” said Assembly Majority Leader Ron Canestrari (Albany). “The health and vitality of this historic waterway is critical to the quality of life of millions of New Yorkers and this new center will better equip Beacon to continue their mission for generations to come.”

“The City of Beacon is proud of the role the Beacon Institute is playing in shaping our world both abroad and right here in the Hudson River Valley. The Institute is leading the way in environmental studies and green building design at a critical time for our planet,” said Beacon Mayor Steve Gold. “At the local community level, the Institute has partnered with us in everything from community building to waterfront development. The opening of the new center will mean greater opportunities for collaboration between the City and the Institute that shares our name.”

The CEIE is also a Visitor Center for Denning’s Point, which is part of New York’s Hudson Highlands State Park. From April 1 to November 30, the Park is open to visitors, who can visit the new CEIE as they walk the hiking trails from the Metro-North Beacon station and around Denning’s Point. In the winter months, Beacon Institute will host numerous public and private events at the CEIE. For more information about CEIE programming and availability, please visit [www.bire.org](http://www.bire.org) or call (845) 838-1600.

## **A Model of Green Design**

Designed by Gensler, a leading global design firm, the CEIE is an adaptive reuse of a late-nineteenth century, 4,000 SF masonry structure at Denning’s Point. Gensler’s design of Beacon Institute’s CEIE was driven by the effort to create a simple yet technologically advanced space that is responsive to process, scale, environment and user. The integration of contemporary sustainable technology connects the building to its surroundings and enables the structure to develop over time as an organic system.

Gensler’s design connects the Institute to the surrounding historical landscape, incorporating a host of sustainable strategies that have set the Institute on track for a high LEED certification.

“Green” technologies and strategies include:

- Redevelopment of a former abandoned industrial site
- Adaptive reuse of an existing building to create a new Park Visitor Center
- Natural ventilation towers
- Solar domestic hot water
- Geothermal energy source for all heating and cooling
- Composting toilets (the building has no sewage connection)
- “Green roof” of indigenous plants to reuse water and reduce heat absorption
- Permeable parking lot to allow rainwater to filter into ground below
- Bio-retention pond to filter additional run-off water before it returns to the watershed
- Research, planning aligned with LEED standards

Gensler participated in the Institute’s strategic planning process in 2001 as part of Governor George E. Pataki’s strategic plan task force. Following a rigorous and comprehensive site

selection process, Beacon, New York, was chosen for the Institute's headquarters. As the first facility constructed for the Institute, the CEIE emerged as a beta-project and design laboratory for transformational sustainable strategies to support implementation of the Institute's mission.

"We wanted the space to be emblematic of a renewed human relationship to the river," said Oliver Schaper, Gensler Design Director. "Utilizing the latest and most innovative technologies in a very natural and somewhat rustic setting created an inspiring juxtaposition, also playing on the notion of a second life and continued use of an old structure with new purpose."

"Gensler engaged in a 'whole building' design approach to integrate the green technologies, which was particularly important given the challenge of the building's modest size and the intricacy of the technologies within," added John Cronin. "We are thrilled with the new CEIE, which has been made possible by the tremendous support of Governor Paterson, the State of New York, Dyson Foundation, Dutchess County Executive William Steinhaus and the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. Of course, we remain grateful to Governor Pataki for his inspiration in creating the Institute."

### **About Beacon Institute**

Beacon Institute for Rivers and Estuaries, with offices in Beacon and Troy, New York, is a not-for-profit environmental research organization engaging scientists, engineers, educators and policy experts in collaborative work focusing on real-time monitoring of river ecosystems. It aims to make the Hudson Valley a global center for scientific and technological innovation that advances research, education and public policy regarding rivers and estuaries. [www.bire.org](http://www.bire.org)

### **About Gensler**

Gensler is a leading global design, planning, and strategic consulting firm, with more than 2,700 people and a network of more than 30 offices. For over 40 years, Gensler has collaborated with clients to create places that enhance organizational performance, achieve measurable business goals, and enrich people and communities. The recipient of three prestigious Business Week/Architectural Record Awards, Gensler is consistently ranked as the leading architecture and interior design firm in industry surveys. For its ongoing commitment to the advancement of sustainable design, Gensler received the Leadership Award from the U.S. Green Building Council in 2005. Gensler is currently completing work on the interiors of The Bank of America Tower at One Bryant Park, slated to become the most environmentally-friendly skyscraper in New York City, and on Plymouth Rock Studios in Massachusetts, which will be the world's first completely green studio complex. [www.gensler.com](http://www.gensler.com)

### **Download instructions for hi-res images of the CEIE**

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