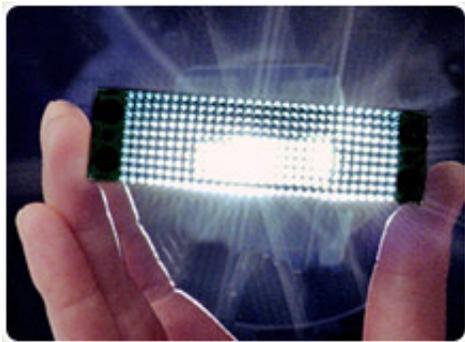


Rensselaer Opens New \$20 Million Center for Future Energy Systems

June 7 2005



Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute today marked the opening of the Center for Future Energy Systems, a New York State Center for Advanced Technology. The new \$20 million research center, in partnership with Cornell University and Brookhaven National Laboratory, seeks to meet the energy challenges of the 21st century by focusing on innovation in and commercialization of energy conservation and renewable energy systems.

“The need for an adequate supply of affordable, accessible, sustainable energy is the overarching issue of the 21st century. Energy security is the ‘space race’ of this millennium,” said Rensselaer President Shirley Ann Jackson. “But we cannot just drill our way to energy security, we must innovate our way to energy security, which is why the research taking

place at the Rensselaer Center for Future Energy Systems is so vital. Our goal is to make New York state a world leader in energy research and a powerful generator of energy-related businesses and jobs. We applaud Governor Pataki, Senator Bruno, the legislature, and NYSTAR for their leadership in providing the spark that will ignite this powerful collaboration among New York state universities, industry, and government.”

Rensselaer President Shirley Ann Jackson was joined by New York State Lieutenant Governor Mary Donohue, State Senate Majority Leader Joseph L. Bruno, New York State Office of Science, Technology and Academic Research (NYSTAR) Executive Director Russell Bessette, Plug Power Chief Operating Officer Greg Silvestri, and Rensselaer Vice President for Research Omkaram “Om” Nalamasu, along with researchers, business partners, and members of the campus community for the kickoff event.

Research at the new Center for Future Energy Systems will focus on renewable energy and energy conservation systems, with an initial emphasis on fuel cells and the hydrogen economy, smart lighting, smart displays, and emerging renewable energy systems. Future research priorities will track new scientific developments and marketplace opportunities.

“Investing in New York’s premiere academic research institutions, such as RPI, to promote their intellectual talents and meet the technological needs of the 21st century, will help secure New York’s role as an international leader in high-tech and biotechnology research,” Lieutenant Governor Donohue said. “I am proud that over the past decade, Governor Pataki has focused on building a stronger and brighter economic future for New York State.”

Senate Majority Leader Joseph L. Bruno said: “With this new Center for

Advanced Technology at Rensselaer, we are continuing our commitment to developing a world-class economy right here in Tech Valley and the Capital Region — an economy that creates endless opportunities for high-tech entrepreneurs to create new jobs and new research investments. The working partnership between state government, higher education, and the private sector is truly making a difference for the Capital Region. I applaud Rensselaer for being on the cutting edge of scientific research and for contributing so much to our local economy.”

Rensselaer has been awarded up to \$10 million in state funds, through NYSTAR, to create the center, in partnership with Cornell University and the Brookhaven National Laboratory. Rensselaer has a goal of matching the state funds with an additional \$10 million or more in industry and federal support for its energy research.

Russell W. Bessette, M.D., executive director of the New York State Office of Science, Technology and Academic Research (NYSTAR), said, “Under Governor Pataki’s leadership, the CAT program has become an extremely important component of the state’s high-technology economic development efforts. The universities that have been awarded a highly coveted CAT designation, including RPI, will be key partners in helping to create a vibrant technology-based economy well into the foreseeable future.”

To speed technology commercialization and to develop a highly skilled workforce, the Center will work with a number of New York based companies along with other global industry leaders, and federal and state entities including the U.S. Department of Energy, the National Science Foundation, NYSTAR, and the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA).

“The opening of the Center for Advanced Technology is very timely with respect to our current energy outlook,” said Greg Silvestri, Plug

Power Chief Operating Officer. “Energy independence and security have never been more important to our country. Plug Power and energy industry partners stand ready to make New York State a leading exporter of clean, reliable energy.”

Today’s opening event included displays by Rensselaer and Brookhaven researchers and students of emerging technologies including: fuel cells and hydrogen research, smart lighting with LEDs (light emitting diodes), and high-tech solar cells that can transform the sun’s light to electricity.

“Combining the strengths of two of New York’s eminent research institutions, Rensselaer and Cornell, with the research capabilities of Brookhaven National Laboratory, this center brings more than 40 world-class researchers together to spur energy innovation and technology commercialization,” said Rensselaer Vice President for Research Omkaram “Om” Nalamasu. “Knowledge creation and technology development are only the beginning. Our mission is to connect the research and technologies in energy to the needs of energy companies in New York state, and beyond to create new marketable energy solutions that can sustain and revitalize the economy.”

“The Future Energy Systems CAT will serve as a focal point to establish and enhance interactions among the numerous universities and New York state companies currently involved in fuel cell research as well as attract new employment-generating industries to New York state,” said Professor Héctor (Tito) Abruña, chair, Department of Chemistry and Chemical Biology, Cornell University, and a 1975 Rensselaer graduate.

“New York can take pride in this exciting collaboration among three of its outstanding academic and scientific institutions,” said Dr. Robert Hwang, director of Brookhaven National Laboratory's Center for Functional Nanomaterials. “The Center will greatly benefit the nation's quest for new and renewable energy technologies by researching

practical alternatives to fossil fuels.”

Citation: Rensselaer Opens New \$20 Million Center for Future Energy Systems (2005, June 7)
retrieved 26 April 2024 from
<https://phys.org/news/2005-06-rensselaer-million-center-future-energy.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.