



Media Contact:
Tracy Shirer (tshirer@ctsciencecenter.org)
O: 860.520.2116, C: 860.817.1373
Connecticut Science Center | 250 Columbus Blvd | Hartford, CT 06103

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Connecticut Science Center's Rooftop Garden Opens for the 2012 Season

The Rooftop Garden opens seasonally and gives visitors scenic views of the Connecticut River and downtown Hartford area

Hartford, CT- May 22, 2012- The Connecticut Science Center has opened its "green" Rooftop Garden for the 2012 season. Thanks to sponsor Northeast Utilities, the Rooftop Garden is the perfect space for visitors to experience native plants and green rooftop architecture or simply enjoy the sweeping views of the Hartford area and the Connecticut River.

Northeast Utilities Executive Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer, David McHale, and Director of Environmental & Property Management, Srividya Madhusudhan were on hand at the Science Center today to present a \$25,000 gift in support of the green space. The generous contribution will allow enhancements to the garden and ensure that its amenities, beauty and green attributes will be showcased to more than 100,000 expected visitors this summer and fall.

"We are excited to partner again with the Connecticut Science Center on an innovative, new learning environment," said Northeast Utilities Executive Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer David McHale. "This incredible transformation of a rooftop space into a serene and scenic garden well represents Northeast Utilities' commitment to our communities and the environment we share."

Planned enhancements this season include a new water feature, seating, the creation of a Rooftop Garden Map & Guide, and enhanced signage. Using high-powered binoculars, visitors can get a new outlook on the area surrounding Hartford, including the Connecticut River. This provides a perfect tie to the "River of Life" gallery, located on the same floor. Visitors can discover the creatures that live in the waterways, study the way that the water shapes the landscape, and then head outside to view the scenery for themselves.

With an inspiring vista over the Connecticut River on one side and downtown Hartford on the other, the garden brings together ecology and green architecture in a unique, serene environment.

Staff Scientist Thomas McKenna has recently added more than 350 plants to the Rooftop Garden, ensuring that there will be flowers in bloom constantly from spring through the fall. "The thinking behind the design of the Rooftop Garden is to see it as an extension of our galleries; an 'outdoor gallery.' It features a unique set of growing conditions that allow for many different types of plants to all grow within one garden," said McKenna. "Because of these conditions, we are able to incorporate many different zones in the garden - a shade garden, an alpine garden, a children's sensory garden and even a section that uses xeriscaping to reduce the need for additional watering."

The Science Center is a green LEED-Gold certified building. Having this healthy ground cover on the roof insulates the building, making it more energy efficient. The rooftop deck has been planted with grasses native to the Connecticut area. Because the garden uses local flora, it allows the plants to thrive while also reducing the irrigation needed by 50%.

One of the more emotive aspects of the rooftop area is known as “Michaela’s Garden,” in the North plot of the space. The Petit Family Foundation planted Four O-Clock flowers, which are offspring from flowers originally planted in Dr. William A. Petit Jr. and his youngest daughter Michaela’s garden at their home. The seeds that fall from these flowers, which visitors pick up and place in a repository sculpture in the garden, are then re-packaged and sold to raise funds for the Petit Family Foundation. Among other endeavors the foundation pursues, it encourages girls to pursue careers in science fields.

The Rooftop Garden is open during regular operating hours, weather permitting, and is included with the purchase of General Admission or membership to the Connecticut Science Center. For more information about the Connecticut Science Center, visit: <http://www.ctsciencecenter.org/>.

###

About the Connecticut Science Center The LEED-Gold certified Connecticut Science Center, located in downtown Hartford, sparks creative imagination and an appreciation for science by immersing visitors in fun and educational hands-on, minds-on interactive experiences while maintaining an environmentally conscious presence. Visitors experience over 150 exhibits in ten galleries and a range of topics, including space and earth sciences, physical sciences, biology, the Connecticut River watershed, alternative energy sources, Connecticut inventors and innovations, a children’s gallery, and much more. Other features include four educational labs, a 200-seat 3D digital theater, function room, gift store and café, and ongoing events for all ages. The Science Center is a non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing science education throughout the state of Connecticut and New England, providing learning opportunities for students and adults of all ages, and engaging the community in scientific exploration. More information: www.CTScienceCenter.org or 860.SCIENCE.