

A collaborative of:
Natural Resources Defense Council
New York Power Authority
New York Public Interest Research Group
New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
Northeast States Center for a Clean Air Future/
Northeast States for Coordinated Air Use Management
Queens Borough President's Office



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 2005

Media Contact:
Clean Air Communities: Lorna Harris 917-82504959
Balmori Associates: Anne Edgar, 646-336-7230
Silvercup Studios: Cara Marino, 212-889-0808
Earth Pledge: Leslie Hoffman, 212-725-6611, #227

PIONEERING "GREEN" PROJECT TAKES OFF HIGH ABOVE THE STREETS OF LONG ISLAND CITY

New York, NY – Visible from the on/off ramps of the Queens Borough Bridge and elevated subway tracks, a partnership between the public and private sectors is underway in Long Island City that is inching New York City 35,000 square-feet closer to sustainability.

On Thursday, September 29, at 6 pm, Clean Air Communities, a non-profit organization devoted to reducing air pollution and increasing energy efficiency in New York City, unveils the city's largest green roof, a vast vegetated space atop Silvercup Studios (42-22 22nd Street, Long Island City, NY) the television and film production facility famous for "The Sopranos" and "Sex and The City."

The largest green roof ever installed in New York City and the first to monitor scientific data, the Silvercup green roof has been designed by Balmori Associates as the first of a series of green roofs planned for Long Island City over the next decade. The New York-based landscape and urban design firm conceived of and is implementing this plan for the neighborhood, dubbed "Long Island (Green) City."

Expected benefits from the Silvercup green roof—which is equal parts roof garden, insulation system, and sponge—include absorption of air pollutants and carbon dioxide; improved outdoor air quality; increased energy efficiency and storm water run-off reduction (a particular burden to the sewer infrastructure of Long Island City); and, for the first time in New York, the gathering of data to quantify benefits. Earth Pledge, a non-profit organization devoted to identifying and promoting technologies for sustainability, has installed the Silvercup roof research station.

"Long Island City is fertile ground for green roofs," says Diana Balmori. "We have identified an astonishing number of flat-topped manufacturing buildings here that would be ideal for green roofs—in all, 667 acres, an area equal to Prospect Park."

Major funding to the partnership is provided by the New York Power Authority through the Queens Clean Air Project, a venture of Clean Air Communities.

"Promoting technologies that conserve energy, return oxygen to our atmosphere and expand New York's green roof investment is in all our interests," remarked Glenn P. Goldstein, Program Director for Clean Air Communities, "which is why this project is so vital and timely. Now is the time to create incentives and subsidies that make green roofs and other technologies the norm, not the exception, getting us one step closer to a more sustainable tomorrow."

To quantify the value of green roof technology for L.I.C. businesses and the surrounding community, Earth Pledge, a 2004 EPA Environmental Achiever, will monitor the Silvercup building for a year, recording and analyzing the green roof's impact on temperature flux, storm water run-off, and energy consumption.

"We hope this project will demonstrate the benefits to both businesses and the local community in installing green roofs throughout New York City. By monitoring the progress of the green roof through a scientific study, we will have hard evidence of the benefits like reduced energy costs, reduction of storm water run-off and of course cleaner air. We thank Governor Pataki and NYPA for making our environment a priority and making these projects possible," says Stuart Match Suna, president of Silvercup Studios.

"We are glad to promote sensible environmental practices for businesses that make economic sense and add value both for the building owner and the community," said Gayle Baron, President of Long Island City Business Development Corporation. LICBDC, the local development corporation that has been serving the western Queens business community since 1979, recently commenced operations of the Long Island City Business Improvement District.

With the planting of the Silvercup green roof, New York City begins to take its place among other U.S. cities that, as early adopters, have seen green roofs sprout atop residential and commercial buildings: Chicago has one on the roof of its City Hall and Portland, Oregon, has instituted cash incentives for roof plantings.

###

Clean Air Communities is a collaborative initiative of NESCCAF committed to implementing air pollution reduction and energy efficiency strategies in New York City communities that are disproportionately affected by air pollution. CAC is designed to serve as a national model for using market-based mechanisms to inspire and implement community-based clean air initiatives that advance environmental justice.

Balmori Associates is a New York-based landscape design team widely acclaimed for its ability to integrate innovative systems for sustainability into designs that convey a sense of place. In 2004 Green Roofs for Healthy Cities awarded Balmori Associates an Award of Excellence for its design of two green roofs atop The Solaire in Battery Park City. A leading advocate for increased local funding and tax credits for green roofs, Diana Balmori has coined the term "fifth façade" to convey the huge untapped potential these gardens offer to cityscapes.

Silvercup Studios, established in 1983, is the largest independent, full-service film and television production facility in New York City. Today, with its expansion of Silvercup Studios East, Silvercup Studios operates more than 400,000 square feet of space and has 18 studios, on-site production offices and extensive set, prop and wardrobe storage areas. No other studio in the region offers as diverse an offering of facilities.

Earth Pledge is a nonprofit organization devoted to identifying and promoting innovative techniques and technologies that restore the balance between human and natural systems. Through demonstrations, education and research, the nonprofit organization delivers viable modes to government, industry and community for implementing replicable solutions that will inspire and help facilitate a global transition to sustainability. Its Green Roofs Initiative supports the development of green, vegetated rooftops in urban areas to prevent storm water run-off and pollution; lower temperatures in cities; and improve air quality.

Long Island City Business Development Corporation is a not-for-profit economic development organization dedicated to promoting the economic growth and general well being of greater Long Island City, Queens. Close to 90,000 jobs there are found primarily in the industrial, commercial, technical and arts sectors. LICBDC is the managing agency of New York City's largest and most diverse In-Place Industrial Park. It is an ombudsman and advocate for individual firms, providing marketing and promotion for the area, and organizes special educational and networking events. LICBDC has a strong interest in promoting environmentally beneficial practices that bring economic value to the business community.