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Omega Center for Sustainable Living Receives AIA/COTE 2010 Top Ten Green Projects Award

Landmark Achievement in Green Building Recognized with Industry's Highest Award for Sustainable Design Excellence

RHINEBECK, NY – Omega Institute announced today that its most ambitious project to date, the Omega Center for Sustainable Living (OCSL), a water reclamation facility and environmental education center, was selected for the American Institute of Architects Committee on the Environment (AIA/COTE) Top 10 Green Projects Award for 2010. BNIM was the architect for the project and worked with John Todd Ecological Design to integrate the Eco-Machine™ technology central to the project's function. This is the sixth BNIM building to receive the AIA/COTE Top Ten Award, given annually on Earth Day.

"We are thrilled about this award, which recognizes the integration of leading-edge green technology and the Earth's natural processes in architecture. For Omega, the OCSL represents our deep commitment to understanding our own environmental impact and models some of the best ways forward," said Skip Backus, chief executive officer at Omega and general project manager for the OCSL. "Inherent to any solution to our environment's problems has to be the understanding of the essential interconnection between ourselves, nature and each other," concluded Backus.

"The Omega Center for Sustainable Living is a model for water stewardship and regenerative architectural design," said Laura Lesniewski, project principal at BNIM. "BNIM commends the vision of the client team for their intensive collaboration and willingness to take this project into a realm of unparalleled leadership and performance. The OCSL has much to teach all of us about the potential for sustainable design."

The OCSL supplies all of its own energy needs and its operation is carbon neutral. The self-sustaining building is heated and cooled using geothermal systems, and utilizes photovoltaic power. Other features include a design that is a balance of passive (daylight, passive solar heating, natural ventilation) and mechanical (geo thermal, fans, electric lighting) comfort systems. It serves as the heart of Omega's ongoing environmental initiatives and includes a greenhouse, an Eco-Machine™, constructed wetlands, and a classroom. The OCSL is open year-round for tours and educational events.

The core of the center is a 4,500-square-foot greenhouse containing a water filtration system called the Eco-Machine™. This living system uses plants, bacteria, algae, snails, and fungi to recycle Omega's wastewater (approximately 5 million gallons per year) into clean water that is used to restore the aquifer. John Todd, winner of the 2008

Buckminster Fuller Challenge award, and his son Jonathan Todd, are the founders of John Todd Ecological Design, Inc., which is responsible for the design of the Eco Machine™.

The OCSL is on target to achieve both LEED® Platinum and Living Building Challenge™ certification this year. The OCSL first received national design recognition at the Greenbuild 2007 conference, where it was the sole winner of the Living Building Challenge "On the Boards Award" for a building in the design process that had achieved the highest level of environmental performance. The OCSL was also a topic of panel discussions at subsequent Greenbuild conferences.

The OCSL and other AIA/COTE winning projects will be honored at the AIA 2010 National Convention and Design Exposition in Miami.

For further information about the Omega Center for Sustainable Living, please visit eOmega.org/ocsl.

About Omega Institute for Holistic Studies

Founded in 1977, Omega Institute for Holistic Studies is the nation's most trusted source for wellness and personal growth. As a nonprofit organization, Omega offers diverse and innovative educational experiences that inspire an integrated approach to personal and social change. Located on 195 acres in the beautiful Hudson Valley, Omega welcomes more than 23,000 people to its workshops, conferences, and retreats in Rhinebeck, New York and at exceptional locations around the world. eOmega.org

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