

News Announcement  
For Immediate Release  
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## **The Sturgeon in the Tower**

An 11-foot stainless steel sturgeon will be installed in the tower of ECHO at the Leahy Center for Lake Champlain on Tuesday morning, March 18. The 350-pound stainless sturgeon will be hoisted from ground level by a 60-foot boom lift, then welded and installed in the center of the tower, where it will be visible from land and the Lake.

The sturgeon was chosen by ECHO because it represents the importance of looking at the ecological, cultural and historical factors that impact the quality of Lake Champlain and the opportunities for all of us to be stewards of this precious resource. This ancient species, now endangered in the Lake, is one of the oldest species in the Basin. The sturgeon, with humps on its back, pointed nose and whiskers, still looks much as the species did about 100 million years ago.

Live sturgeon can grow to be more than 6 feet long, weigh as much as 200 pounds and live up to 150 years. The sturgeon population in Lake Champlain has been heavily challenged by over-fishing (sturgeon were prized for meat and for eggs), by dams that prevented them from returning up-river to traditional spawning areas, by silt affecting the feeding habits of bottom-feeding fish, and by impact of human use of the Lake.

ECHO's giant stainless sturgeon was designed by the Center architects, Smith Alvarez Sienkiewicz, and fabricated locally by P.G. Adams in South Burlington.

ECHO at the Leahy Center for Lake Champlain, formerly the Lake Champlain Basin Science Center, has been renamed as well as rebuilt. The new name reflects the Ecology, Culture, History and Oppportunity of the Lake Champlain Basin--the core mission of the new lake aquarium, science center, and community resource--as well as recognizing Senator Patrick Leahy for his longstanding commitment to this project and the stewardship of Lake Champlain and its watershed.

The new world-class attraction will encompass almost 30,000 square feet on the waterfront, presenting 12,000 gallons of aquariums with more than 2200 live fish, amphibians and reptiles surrounded by nearly 100 interactive exhibits in a setting of spectacular views of Lake Champlain. The facility will open in June.

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