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ECHO and WPTZ Celebrate Lake Champlain

(April 28, 2003, COLCHESTER) Few people know Champlain Valley weather like NewsChannel 5 Chief Meteorologist Tom Messner. But he never dreamed he would bring that knowledge and experience to a new, world-class lake aquarium and science center on Burlington's waterfront.

In a perfect union of **E**cology, **C**ulture, **H**istory, **O**pportunity and media technology, **ECHO at the Leahy Center for Lake Champlain** has announced a partnership with local NBC affiliate WPTZ NewsChannel 5 and the Lake Champlain Basin Program. ECHO has named Messner as their "Official Meteorologist", where he will forecast the weather live in some newscasts. "The combined technology of our station and ECHO ...plus a fantastic view of Lake Champlain – what more could a meteorologist ask for?" asked Messner. ECHO will also have a weather station on site that will display live wind, temperature, and other readings. "Weather and climate are such a huge influence on the lake," said Phelan Fretz, Executive Director of ECHO, "who could bring that home better than Tom Messner? We're thrilled to have him on board."

Fretz says *Champlain 2000* television programs will be available for researchers and curious visitors in ECHO's Lake Champlain Resource Room, which is run by the Lake Champlain Basin Program. An award-winning project pioneered by WPTZ, the Lake Champlain Basin Program and KeyBank, *Champlain 2000* explores a variety of issues surrounding the lake's future, from eliminating invasive

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species, to preserving sunken boats. *Champlain 2000* news reports, previously broadcast, will be available on DVD in the Lake Champlain Resource Room. WPTZ is the official sponsor of the spectacular Awesome Forces Theater, a visually explosive display of the geologic, glacial and ecological forces that created the Lake Champlain Basin.

ECHO at the Leahy Center for Lake Champlain is the new lake aquarium and science center being built on the Burlington Waterfront. The name reflects the Ecology, Culture, History and Oppportunity of the Lake Champlain Basin--the core of this 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. ECHO will open its doors on Saturday, May 31st! This extraordinary two-story building is approximately 30,000 square feet and displays 20 aquatic habitats with more than 2,200 live fish, amphibians and reptiles surrounded by 100 hands-on interactive exhibits! The facility will also feature changing exhibits, a café, gift shop and a multi-media object theater.

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