EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE: March 8, 2007 – 8:00 a.m.

CONTACT: Jennifer Wylie Faines
Dymun + Company
412-281-2345
jfaines@dymun.com

Linda Topoleski
412-389-0410
ltop@att.net

World's First Green-Designed Passenger Boat Departs Florida for Educational Mission in Pittsburgh

RiverQuest's Explorer *is first-of-its-kind model for river environmental education and green marine technologies*

FREEPORT, FL—March 8, 2007—*Explorer*, RiverQuest's newly constructed boat leaving Freeport, Florida today for its home port in Pittsburgh, is a state-of-the-art environmental classroom, a world benchmark "green" commercial vessel and a tourist attraction that is the first of its kind.

The launch of *Explorer*, the world's first green-engineered floating classroom, marks a new era in marine design for environmental sustainability. Departing from its construction site in Freeport, Fla., the 90-foot, 150-passenger vessel will make a 16-day journey to its permanent home in Pittsburgh, Pa. RiverQuest provides river-based experiential learning about sustainability including ecology, environment science, energy, climate change, green engineering and river history and culture for students, teachers and the community through hands-on activities and technologies.

"*Explorer* represents a truly significant paradigm shift in environmental education. It is a tangible demonstration of our new Sustainability Education Program and it reflects the 'leading edge' nature of our mission," said Karl Thomas, executive director, RiverQuest. "Together with a diverse team of marine and green design experts from industry and academia, we have created an entirely new approach to designing and building marine vessels by applying sustainable design to virtually every aspect of its construction. No one else anywhere does quite what we do; no one has a vessel quite like *Explorer*, which possesses extraordinary onboard technology that supports exploration and learning."

New Standards in Green Marine Design

Because there are no official standards for the design of "green" boats, RiverQuest assembled a unique team of naval architects, marine and electric-drive engineers, and green building experts from Pittsburgh, Pa.; across Florida; Atlanta, Ga.; Houston, Texas; and Germany. The melding of global expertise in boat design, alternative propulsions systems and the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental

Design) design process and standards has resulted in a series of green applications that are completely new to the marine industry.

"We congratulate the engineering, design and green-building teams for an incredible achievement in building a boat that truly is the first of a kind – setting the educational standard for rivers-based science programs and setting a new green standard for marine vessels," said Maxwell King, president of The Heinz Endowments. The foundation, a steady supporter of RiverQuest since its founding in 1991, has contributed more than $1 million toward Explorer's $3.5 million construction cost. Other significant funders are the Richard King Mellon Foundation, The Buhl Foundation, the Hillman Foundation and the state Departments of Environmental Protection and Conservation & Natural Resources.

King said that the development of green certification for watercraft would bring significant health benefits to Allegheny County, where more than a third of its diesel particulate pollution comes from the 28,000 registered recreational watercraft that run on the region's rivers.

The design and construction team assessed some 100 different green technologies and applied the best applicable and feasible to *Explorer*. The hybrid diesel-electric, battery powered boat includes:

- A state-of-the-art, Siemens-furnished hybrid propulsion system and integrated electrical system that is the first commercial implementation in the world.
- The world's first marine application of the LEED™ design and construction standards that includes environmentally friendly coatings and paints, architectural windows, HVAC systems and a hull made of 100 percent certified steel.
- The ability to retrofit the power plant with solar, hydro and fuel cell technologies. RiverQuest will be adding a 1.5kW solar array to Explorer's roof later this year.
- Water conservation technologies including the use of river water and waterless waste systems.

"We are proud to play a leading role in transforming the marine propulsion industry in this period of global concern about carbon emissions and climate change," Reiner Pallmann, Vice President Process Solutions Division, Siemens Energy & Automation, Inc. "The Siemens ELFA™ propulsion system integrates multiple electrical power sources with propulsive and house power needs, while reducing fuel consumption and emissions and providing flexibility for current and future use of alternative sources of electricity. This collaboration with RiverQuest was a great opportunity to bring Siemens green technology to the commercial passenger market."

Floating Environmental Classroom

Explorer's impact on the marine environment will be gentle, but its impact on America's youth will be profound. This unique boat is designed to educate tens of thousands of K-12 students in the Ohio Valley, from western

Pennsylvania to Missouri. All who board the vessel for hands-on learning will be connected with global environmental issues and specific challenges and opportunities such as water quality and quantity, climate change, responsible land use, renewable energy and green design.

Through a unique hands-on curriculum that involves water sampling and quality testing along rivers, public policy discussions and engagement with the boat's green design features, students see firsthand the results of poor land and water use and learn the role that people and industry have in conservation and sustainability.

And students aren't the only ones who will depart on the environmental voyages. RiverQuest will make the boat available to adult tourists and businesses. Explorer's owner, Pittsburgh-based non-profit RiverQuest, has added a new line of adult education programs and charters to its business, which incorporates best practices from the social innovation sector, an industry trend that is growing increasingly important for nonprofits worldwide.

In the future, RiverQuest intends to install additional alternative energy sources, including solar panels later this year and wind and water turbines to the boat and to its expanded dock and landside facility.

For more details about Explore and RiverQuest, including a list of all development partners, technologies and boat facts, visit www.RiverQuest.org.

RiverQuest, formerly Pittsburgh Voyager, is an award-winning not-for-profit education organization offering river-based educational programs for students, teachers, and the community. RiverQuest also provides a range of public programs, including interpretive cruises and private charters for businesses, organizations and the public.

RiverQuest's mission is to impact people's relationships to the world's environment through unique river-based education and adventure experiences. Since launching programs in 1995, RiverQuest has served more than 75,000 individuals through on-board education programming. More than 57,000 elementary, middle and high school students representing 227 schools from 65 school districts in 11 western Pennsylvania counties have participated in standards-based learning programs, with themes ranging from environmental science and regional history to physical science and mathematics. Along with students, more than 2,500 teachers and college students and 15,000 members of the general public have participated in RiverQuest programs.

For more information call 412-231-2712 or visit RiverQuest's website at www.RiverQuest.org.

# # #