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EMPIRE STATE DEVELOPMENT ANNOUNCES MORE THAN \$1.3 MILLION IN FUNDING AWARDED TO ESTABLISH NEW DIGITAL GAMING HUBS ACROSS NEW YORK STATE

Three Universities Receive Funding to Support New York's Growing Digital Sector

Empire State Development (ESD) today announced three new Digital Gaming Hubs in New York State at New York University (NYU), Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI), and Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT). The Digital Gaming Hubs, selected through a Request For Proposals process, will receive \$150,000 each, per year for three years.

“The new Digital Gaming Hubs will encourage students and businesses to create new innovative technologies,” said Empire State Development President, CEO & Commissioner Howard Zemsky. “This funding will also help entrepreneurs and start-ups develop new products and spur economic growth throughout New York State.”

Objectives of the Digital Gaming Hubs are to:

- Create collaborative activities that bring together industry, higher education, non-profit organizations, students, and individuals to foster the creation of new games or companies;
- Provide resources and mentoring to encourage students and entrepreneurs to enter the growing industry;
- Assist existing companies with gaming concepts, technologies and trends;
- Host events focused on assisting the gaming community; and
- Increase the economic impact to New York as a result of fostering innovation.

Funding included in the 2014-2015 executive budget allowed for the creation of three Digital Gaming Hubs. The universities will sustain this designation through May 31, 2018.

“NYU is pleased to have been selected as one of the State's Digital Gaming Hubs. The NYU Game Center will house the Hub in Brooklyn, where it has already established as a focal point of New York's rapidly growing game industry. A core part of the NYU Game Center's mission

has always been to support local game developers, through a longstanding program of professional, public, and community events. We look forward to expanding our game incubator, creating more public programming, and energizing the games industry in New York City by connecting talented developers and industry partners through the Hub,” said NYU Game Center Department Chair Frank Lantz.

“There is tremendous talent and creativity in games, here in the Tech Valley region and throughout New York State, said Ben Chang, associate professor and director of the Games and Simulation Arts and Sciences Program in the School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. “University researchers discovering new ways of using games in education and healthcare, non-profits teaching game design to kids and building creative communities, and game developers of all kinds constantly reinventing the medium. We're honored to be selected as one of three Digital Gaming Hubs, and excited to be working with our partners in the local community and across the state to take game development in New York to the next level.”

“RIT is proud to be recognized as a NY Digital Gaming Hub, and we are looking forward to the ways in which this will facilitate greater regional connections, partnerships, outreach and impact, as well as collaboration with the other hubs throughout New York State,” said Andrew Phelps, director of RIT’s Center for Media, Arts, Games, Interaction and Creativity (MAGIC) and founder of RIT’s School of Interactive Games and Media. “Through our efforts as a hub, we hope to continue our work in helping transform the regional and state economy into a vibrant and thriving ecosystem for digital media development and production.”

“The Digital Gaming Hubs will allow NYU, RPI and RIT to showcase their talented students and to further connect these campuses with industry leaders to develop creative, groundbreaking games. All three institutions are deserving of this innovative grant,” said Laura L. Anglin, president of the Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities (clcu), a statewide association for more than 100 private, not-for-profit colleges and universities in New York State.

Senator Martin J. Golden, New York State Senate Chair of the Select Committee for Science, Innovation, Technology and Entrepreneurship said, “These awards will make New York more competitive in this \$70 billion a year global industry, which includes \$25 billion in the U.S. This industry is larger than movies, music, and other digital downloads, and these three New York universities receiving the awards graduate some of the top designers and computer engineers in the world. Unfortunately, too many of these graduates and the companies they start move to other states, including California, Texas and Washington. This funding should help us grow New York’s \$276 million share of the world market, and exponentially increase the 1,650 very well compensated employees currently employed in this sector. Funding these three hubs will also encourage entrepreneurs who are creating the next generation of games to come or remain, and grow in New York.”

Assembly majority Leader Joseph D. Morelle said, “Thanks to the continued support of Governor Cuomo New York’s high-tech economy is on the move and you can see and feel the many exciting changes taking place all around us. Today’s designation will further equip RIT, RPI and NYU with the resources needed to continue paving the way with groundbreaking digital gaming research and development. Most importantly, these investments will ultimately

strengthen our State's economy, create new jobs and advance New York's position as a national leader in digital media development.”

About Empire State Development

Empire State Development (ESD) is New York's chief economic development agency (www.esd.ny.gov). The mission of ESD is to promote a vigorous and growing economy, encourage the creation of new job and economic opportunities, increase revenues to the State and its municipalities, and achieve stable and diversified local economies. Through the use of loans, grants, tax credits and other forms of financial assistance, ESD strives to enhance private business investment and growth to spur job creation and support prosperous communities across New York State. ESD is also the primary administrative agency overseeing Governor Cuomo's Regional Economic Development Councils and the marketing of "I Love NY," the State's iconic tourism brand. For more information on Regional Councils and Empire State Development, visit www.nyworks.ny.gov and www.esd.ny.gov.

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