#### NEWS RELEASE

**Contact:** **Chris Watts, Central Indiana Corporate Partnership/Energy Systems Network**

Phone: 317.464-2237, 317.514-3184 (mobile) E-mail: [cwatts@cincorp.com](mailto:cwatts@cincorp.com)

**Charles LaSota, Battery Innovation Center**

Phone: 812.863-2756 Email: [charles.lasota@BICIndiana.com](mailto:charles.lasota@BICIndiana.com)

**Battery Innovation Center wins $1M U.S. Department of Commerce grant as ‘proof of concept’ center supporting commercialization, job creation**

***Planned center for R&D, validation and prototyping of advanced batteries in southwest Indiana earns national recognition through i6 Challenge grant program***

(WASHINGTON DC and CRANE, Ind., September 24, 2012) Just a month after the groundbreaking on its R&D facility in southwest Indiana, the Battery Innovation Center (BIC) is already earning national attention as a model partnership for fostering innovation and promoting economic development. The Obama Administration announced last week that the BIC has earned a $1M grant through the Department of Commerce i6 Challenge initiative, a competitive process designed to support ‘proof of concept’ centers that accelerate the commercialization and deployment of emerging technologies.

Energy Systems Network (ESN), the state’s clean technology initiative, has worked with a range of industry partners and academic intuitions as well as Naval Surface Warfare Center Crane (the Department of Defense center of excellence for power storage technologies) to establish the Battery Innovation Center. The BIC will meet the research and development, rapid prototyping and contract manufacturing needs of industry, academic and military customers. Its physical hub is a 32,000 square foot, $15.6M state-of-the-art research facility under construction at the WestGate @ Crane Technology Park. The BIC also leverages the virtual network of its partners’ labs and research infrastructure.

The BIC’s mission is to provide an array of R&D, testing and prototyping services to military, corporate and university clients – supporting the battery sector while also attracting new investment and business opportunities to Indiana. This charter aligns with the i6 Challenge ‘Proof of Concept Center’ model for advancing innovation, entrepreneurship and economic growth, earning the BIC its grant award along with other winning projects from California, Florida, Missouri, New Mexico, Virginia and Wisconsin.

“In conducting our due diligence for the Battery Innovation Center, we quickly realized that the advanced battery market represents a tremendous opportunity for Indiana,” said Paul Mitchell, President & CEO of the Energy Systems Network. “Our success in the i6 Challenge initiative is another early validation of this effort bringing national – and global – focus and new investment to the state.”

Acting U.S. Secretary of Commerce Rebecca Blank noted in a statement that "The grants being announced…are an example of the Obama administration's commitment to driving U.S. innovation and competitiveness in the decade ahead. The Department of Commerce's i6 Challenge is designed to encourage Americans who want to take risks with game-changing ideas, speed their innovations to marketplace, and thereby empower the next generation of job creators that are so essential for an economy that is built to last."

“Our selection as a Proof of Concept Center through the i6 Challenge is a further testament to the economic potential and market demand for research, validation and production services to commercialize battery breakthroughs,” said Charles LaSota, the BIC’s president. “This grant will help us continue to build a world-class partnership that positions Indiana as the ‘Silicon Valley’ for advanced battery discovery and development.”

The BIC submitted its successful i6 proposal with key support from university partners and local economic development groups. Greg Jones, Director of the Southern Indiana Development Commission (SIDC), stated that, “It has been the teamwork of the Battery Innovation Center, SIDC, Radius Indiana, Purdue University, and Penn State University that this success was made possible.  We thank the U. S. Department of Commerce and the Economic Development Administration for the I6 Challenge Award and for recognition of the BIC as a new Center of Excellence.”

The Department of Commerce announcement further described the aims of the i6 Challenge and the selection process:

*The initiative seeks to accelerate innovative product development, spur the formation of start-ups, and create small businesses by supporting Proof of Concept Centers…Proof of Concept Centers incorporate a range of services, such as technology and market evaluation as well as business planning, that are critical to regional economic growth and job creation. The seven winners announced today will spur sustainable startups, small businesses, and new ventures. Launched in 2010 as a component of the White House's*[*Startup America initiative*](http://www.whitehouse.gov/economy/business/startup-america)*, the i6 Challenge is led by the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration Office of Innovation and Entrepreneurship. The office leads efforts to promote innovation-based, high-growth entrepreneurship, develops policy recommendations, and implements initiatives to commercialize technology developed through university and federally-funded research.*

*Applications for the competition were evaluated by selection committees made up of industry and public sector leaders, and academics. Additionally, EDA's regional offices conducted technical, merit, and investment reviews based on the agency's funding criteria. A panel of experts, in partnership with the National Science Foundation, made recommendations for finalists.*

***About Energy Systems Network:*** *Energy Systems Network (ESN) is a not-for-profit, industry-driven economic initiative focused on the development of Indiana's "clean tech" sector. ESN provides project development and coordination for joint ventures and cooperative partnerships between network members who are seeking to bring new energy technologies, products or applications to market. For more information, visit* [*www.energysystemsnetwork.com*](http://www.energysystemsnetwork.com)*.*

***About the U.S. Economic Development Administration (***[***www.eda.gov***](http://www.eda.gov/)***):*** *The mission of the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) is to lead the federal economic development agenda by promoting competitiveness and preparing the nation's regions for growth and success in the worldwide economy. An agency within the U.S. Department of Commerce, EDA makes investments in economically distressed communities in order to create jobs for U.S. workers, promote American innovation, and accelerate long-term sustainable economic growth.*

***About Naval Surface Warfare Center Crane:*** *NSWC Crane is a Naval laboratory and a field activity of Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA) with focus areas in Special Mission, Strategic Missions and Electronic Warfare/Information Operations. The Warfare Center's research and development efforts support the Warfighter by providing capabilities and resources to advance technologies for the military.*

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