



phone: (518) 585-2821  
fax: : (518) 585-2210

[fort@fort-ticonderoga.org](mailto:fort@fort-ticonderoga.org)

100 Fort Road  
PO Box 390  
Ticonderoga, NY 12883

## Fort Ticonderoga Press Release

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Marci Hall 518 585-2821  
[mhall@fort-ticonderoga.org](mailto:mhall@fort-ticonderoga.org)

### Mars Center Receives Engineering Award

Fort Ticonderoga and Ryan-Biggs Associates of Troy, NY have been cited by the American Council of Engineering Companies, ACEC, for *Engineering Excellence* in building Deborah Clarke Mars Education Center.

The building assignment was unusual from the beginning: to precisely recreate an 18<sup>th</sup>-century French building that would hold 21<sup>st</sup>-century educational facilities. The *magasin du Roi*, the King's warehouse, was the site of the baking ovens and held all the Fort's supplies, including the gunpowder. It was intentionally blown up in 1759 by the French as they abandoned the Fort to General Burgoyne's advancing forces. The force of the explosion and the ensuing fires destroyed the building.

Confronted with the unusual challenges, and working closely with historians, Tonetti Associates Architects and Buildings Supervisor, Lyle St. Jean at the Fort, Ryan-Biggs engineers devised strategies to surmount the complications. Preservation and environmentally sustainable building practices were cited by the both designers and donors as primary concerns. To that end excavated stone was reused to face the entire building including the South-east Bastion; wells were drilled in the bedrock for the geothermal heating system, and materials with recycled content were used throughout the construction process.

The project initially required three years of archeology to get the site ready for construction to take place. As plans began to develop one of the initial challenges was maximizing the useable interior space by devising a unique alternative to containing the utility systems for the building. The answer was a tunnel under the Parade Ground where the electrical, plumbing and heating systems come into the Mars Center from mechanical rooms in the North *demi-lune*.

Some of the masonry walls of the Fort date back to 1755, while others were reconstructed in the early-twentieth century, using what were then state-of-practice engineering standards and construction techniques. Less than 30 percent of the original eighteenth-century building fabric survives. The foundation and basement level underwent many upgrades over the years as the Fort became an ever-more popular family destination.

Ryan-Biggs has had a long relationship with Fort Ticonderoga providing services for structural evaluation; structural repairs to timber framing; restoration of the Pavilion portico; restoration of King's Garden walls and Tea House; and the emergency stabilization and restoration of the West *demi-lune*, which partially collapsed in 1997. Other projects included restoration of both the Southwest and Northeast Bastions, reconstruction of the East Barracks and East Platform, and the adaptive reuse of the Pavilion.

Fort Ticonderoga begins its 101<sup>st</sup> season on May 20, 2010 with two new exhibits, new tours and new program offerings. The King's Garden opens on June 1<sup>st</sup> and will also feature new tours and programs. Hours for the Fort the King's Garden, the Log House restaurant and the Museum Store are 9:30 AM to 5:00 PM. Admission remains the same at \$15 for adults, \$13.50 for seniors and \$7.50 for children from 7 to 12. Children 6 and under and local residents are always admitted free. For a complete schedule of 2010 programs and events see [www.FortTiconderoga.org](http://www.FortTiconderoga.org).

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