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## **Dropcopter, Beak & Skiff Partner for First in Nation Pollination Program**

GENIUS NY team uses drone to support pollination of local apple orchard

**Syracuse** – Today, GENIUS NY team Dropcopter and its partner Beak & Skiff Apple Orchard, showcased the first ever autonomous pollination of apples in the country. Dropcopter, which uses a drone to pollinate tree crops, successfully demonstrated its Worker-Bee pollinator at the 800 acre orchard, which is home to more than 350,000 trees, in Lafayette, New York.

Each year 400 hives of bees help pollinate Beak & Skiff's crops. Pollination is essential to food production with one-third of all food crops worldwide relying on pollination. The potential to have drones supplement the pollination performed by bees, offers the ability to distribute precise amounts of pollen 5 to 10' above tree canopy and provide back up support to Mother Nature.

"Beak & Skiff has been proudly growing apples in Central New York for more than 100 years and we owe that longevity to our commitment to deploying innovative technologies that enable us to grow a high-quality product," said Pete Fleckenstein of Beak & Skiff. "We are excited about this new partnership and the opportunity to provide a test-bed for this cutting edge growing technique."

New York state is the second largest apple growing state in the country and Beak & Skiff is one of the most popular producers in Central New York, having been named the #1 orchard in the nation for two consecutive years.

"Dropcopter is excited to partner with Beak & Skiff as this effort brings together the region's legacy industry, agriculture, with the burgeoning drone sector," said Adam Fine, co-founder, Dropcopter. "We know that agriculture is one of the most significant points of entry for the commercial use of drones, and it holds the most opportunity to impact the industry and economy."

Dropcopter is a finalist team that was recently awarded a \$250,000 investment in round two of the year-long GENIUS NY program. The company is from California and is operating from The Tech Garden, in Syracuse, New York. Part of the draw for the company was the opportunity to test its technology in a region that is leading the nation in drone innovation and development.

"We are excited to support the growth of Dropcopter and help provide the company with the necessary resources and tools for it to be successful," said Rick Clonan, vice president of innovation at CenterState CEO. "This region holds many opportunities for the participating companies, including funding, mentors and important industry connections. Central New York is a place where companies in the unmanned aerial systems sector can test their technologies across many landscapes in an ecosystem that is unparalleled."

GENIUS NY, which is funded by Empire State Development invests more than \$3 million in six companies over the course of a year-long program – making it the largest business accelerator competition for the UAS industry in the world. The advancement of the GENIUS NY program builds on the progress of *CNY Rising*, the region’s award-winning strategic plan to generate robust economic growth and community development.

To view and download pictures and video of the pollination please see this link: [https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1jZAq8O7bL\\_smER4yufxQ9f8xRlmsHmiP](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1jZAq8O7bL_smER4yufxQ9f8xRlmsHmiP). Members of the media are welcome to use these images and videos in their reporting; please credit Dropcopter.

#### ***About Beak & Skiff***

Beak & Skiff Apple Orchards was founded in 1911 in Lafayette, New York and has grown to become Upstate New York’s premiere apple orchard and pick your own destination. Beak & Skiff is also a favorite in the retail market for both their apples and fresh cider. With a commitment to quality and innovation, the business has continued to re-invent itself over the years and has been named #1 orchard in the country for two consecutive years in a USA Today readers’ poll. Today, Beak & Skiff is extremely proud of their core values and remains committed to growing the finest apples in New York. For more information visit [beakandskiff.com](http://beakandskiff.com).

#### ***About Dropcopter***

Dropcopter is focused on the automated pollination of orchard crops via unmanned aircraft systems (UAS); farming efficiency, the promotion of new technologies, and healthy crop yield growth. In early 2015, Dropcopter completed its patent pending prototype, and conducted the first ever UAS pollination of orchards crops, boosting crop set by 10%. Dropcopter is partnered with GENIUS NY and The NUAIR Alliance. With their expertise it will bring its patent pending "Worker-Bee" pollinator to market. Its methods guarantee growers crops are pollinated, overcoming environmental factors like wind, cold, and night time that would prevent honeybee activity.

#### ***About GENIUS NY***

GENIUS NY is an in-residence business accelerator program at The Tech Garden in Central New York that goes beyond substantial direct investment. In addition to three grand prizes of up to \$1 million, \$600,000 and \$400,000, the program also offers company stipends, incubator space, resources, programming, and connections, making it among the largest competitions of its kind across the globe.

#### ***About CenterState CEO***

CenterState CEO is an independent and forward thinking economic development strategist, business leadership organization and chamber of commerce; dedicated to the success of its members and the prosperity of the region. We serve as an advocate and resource for smart business, catalyze and facilitate regional growth, and promote community prosperity through results-driven partnerships, planning and problem-solving. [www.centerstateceo.com](http://www.centerstateceo.com)