

Skä•noñh Great Law of Peace Center Ready to Exhibit Haudenosaunee History and Culture

By [SCOTT WILLIS](#) • NOV 20, 2015

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We start our photo tour of the center at the entrance.

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The exhibits are in place and stories are ready to be told at the Skä•noñh Great Law of Peace Center. Grand opening weekend kicks off Saturday, after more than three months of construction. The former Saint Marie

among the Iroquois Museum on Onondaga Lake Parkway has been undergoing a \$1 million transformation ...from telling the story of the Haudenosaunee from the French perspective...to now sharing that history though the eyes of the Iroquois. Until recently, center general manager Daniel Connors says most of us were probably taught through a Euro-centric model.



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"This center is going to tell a different story that many people aren't going to be aware of, and that's the story of the Haudenosaunee. It's been better in recent years, school districts now are more aware and teaching more about the Haudenosaunee, but a lot of people growing up 10-20 years ago probably didn't have this material. So, this is going to be an eye-opening experience for a lot of people."

Connors says the setting is no accident.

"We talk about the great law of peace, which is the formation of the confederacy of the five nations coming together on the shores of Onondaga Lake, which is another reason why this site is so significant."

Connors says each exhibit touches on a different theme in history, including the creation narrative about mother earth, the native's first encounters with settlers, and the Haudenosaunee's influence on the American way of life. Most Central New Yorkers might take for granted the notion of a completely sovereign nation so close by. But Connors says the accessible history has grabbed the interest of those overseas.

"I know the Native American story, and the Haudenosaunee in particular, is very big over in Europe and Asia, so hopefully we'll attract some of those sorts of tourists as well. The story is growing and becoming more popular, and people are very interested in learning about this culture that many of them had not heard about in this way before."



Some of the items for sale in the gift shop.
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Saturday's grand opening runs from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and admission is free. Renowned Onondaga Nation lacrosse stick maker Alf Jacques, stone carvers, wood workers, native craft vendors, artists, food, and dancing are all part of the celebration. More information is at skanohcenter.org.