



CONTACT: Amy Allen
The Westchester County Association, Inc.
(914) 948-1168
aallen@westchester.org

For Immediate Release

Westchester County Association Forms Alliance with Albany-Based Government Relations Firm

Empire Strategic Planning Will Monitor Pending Bills And State Legislature Activity That Impact Business Community

WHITE PLAINS, NY (October 2, 2009) – In a major step that will strengthen its position as the area’s leading business advocacy group, The Westchester County Association (WCA) today announced it has formed an alliance with a prominent government relations firm with offices located both here and in Albany.

The alliance with Empire Strategic Planning (ESP) is designed to create an “early warning system” to alert the WCA about pending legislation in Albany that impacts its members and the business community. Former long-time state legislator Nick Spano—founder and President of ESP— and his associates will identify and monitor legislative proposals which will enable the WCA to provide input in the early stages of discussion.

Mr. Spano represented the 35th District in Yonkers and Greenburgh for 28 years, first as an Assemblyman for eight years and then as Senator for 20 years.

William Mooney, WCA President, said: "Empire Strategic Planning is a very respected firm whose principals have an exact understanding of how the legislative process operates. Drawing on this knowledge, the WCA will gain an advantage to provide our members with pertinent information on a very timely basis. By responding early, the WCA will improve the chances of preventing potentially damaging bills from being passed or, conversely, actively supporting legislation that could be beneficial to our members." He added: "Nick Spano and his associates can certainly provide us with this capability."

Citing just two recent examples, Mr. Mooney stated that the rushed manner in which the MTA Payroll Tax and proposed Commercial Assessment Ratio bill had been handled with little time for response dramatically underscored the need for the WCA and its members to become informed earlier.

"Given the dysfunction in Albany, the precarious economy and the continued erosion of New York as a business friendly state, the WCA needs an experienced presence on the ground in Albany to serve as its ears and eyes on issues that matter."

In addition to monitoring bills, Mr. Spano's group will arrange meetings between the WCA and leaders in Albany. They will also provide quarterly newsletters about relevant Albany issues.

Mr. Mooney noted that the Alliance will be linked with the ongoing work of the WCA's Advocacy Committee. It will also become an integral component in the WCA's plans to engage and mobilize members segments such as young professionals and small businesses on issues that matter to them.

Founded in 1950, The Westchester County Association is the preeminent business membership organization in Westchester. It is committed to business advocacy, economic vitality, and to providing a strong and clear voice for the interests of Westchester businesses on a regional, national and international level. Its three major objectives are economic development of the region, business development, and to

provide access and interaction with key public and private sector individuals, agencies and organizations.