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For Immediate Release

Survey by Westchester County Association Shows Cost of Health Insurance and Property Tax Reform Are the Main Issues of Business Community

White Plains, New York (January 22, 2010) The cost of health insurance and property tax reform are the main issues of the business community, according to a survey of members of the Westchester County Association (WCA), the area's leading business membership and advocacy group.

The results of the survey were made public at the WCA's recent *13th Annual Breakfast with the County Executive*, attended by more than 500 business leaders, elected and other government officials. At that meeting, County Executive Rob Astorino said he was proposing legislation requiring all non-union managerial county employees to contribute 15% of the overall cost of their health insurance premiums. The legislation would affect more than 400 county employees, generating an annual savings of about \$1.2 million.

Astorino said that the legislation "is a first step toward returning to Westchester the proper and rightful balance between spending and taxes." WCA President William Mooney stated: "We applaud the county executive's action and hope that local municipalities and school districts will follow his lead." He added: "The WCA

has been advocating for the past three years that the public sector compensation model should be changed to reflect today's economic realities.”

Highlights of the survey:

- The cost of health insurance was the most important issue to business owners followed by property tax reform (number two), access to credit (number three) energy costs (number four) and transportation (number five)
- Two-thirds of those surveyed pay at least 50% of their health insurance premiums
- 93% of the members surveyed feel that public sector employees should contribute into their benefit plans
- 84% said consolidating county departments would be an effective means of controlling county property taxes; followed by sharing services with other government entities, 82% surveyed and changing compensation and benefit structure of county employees, 80%.
- 68% believes the county does not do a good job in attracting and retaining businesses.

Full survey results including comments are available at www.westchester.org.

Mr. Mooney stated: “The WCA pledges to remain an independent voice for business and a watchdog over our elected officials. We plan on publishing report cards of the voting records on business related issues of our state and local officials. And we will clearly signal when specific actions by our elected officials harm the economic vitality of our community. The businesses and taxpayers of our county deserve nothing less.”

The Westchester County Association (www.westchester.org) is the preeminent business membership organization in Westchester County. The Association is committed to business advocacy, economic vitality and to providing a strong and

clear voice for the interests of businesses on the regional, national and international levels. Its key objectives are: promoting positive economic development in the region; fostering business development; and providing its members with access and interaction with key public and private sector individuals, agencies and organizations.