



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**BERKSHIRE BANK GIVES “THANKS” TO THOSE WHO GIVE
*BANK AWARDS \$23,000 TO 23 BERKSHIRE COUNTY FOOD PANTRIES***

PITTSFIELD, MA, November 16, 2011 – Berkshire Bank Foundation and Berkshire Bank Foundation – Legacy Region (formerly the Legacy Banks Foundation) the two charitable arms of Berkshire Bank awarded \$23,000 to 23 local food pantries in Berkshire County as part of its “Giving Thanks to Those Who Give” event held earlier today. The 23 recipients each received a \$1,000 grant award at a reception at the Colonial Theatre in Pittsfield, in recognition of the merger of Berkshire Bank and Legacy Banks, which culminated with a branch conversion this past weekend.

Peter Lafayette, Executive Director of both Foundations said the grant offerings allow the Foundations to give back to the community while also commemorating the recent partnership. “As we celebrate the joining together of Berkshire Bank and Legacy Banks we want to reaffirm our shared commitment to this community where we both have deep roots. Berkshire Bank is proud to provide these deserving organizations with the funds they need to help address the growing problem of hunger. One in eight people in our tri-state market area struggle to put a meal on the table. Tens of thousands of people right in our local communities depend on food assistance from our local food pantries to help make ends meet. We hope that these grants will provide an extra boost as we head into the holiday season.”

The Food Pantries being honored include:

- Salvation Army, Pittsfield, MA
- Christian Center, Pittsfield, MA
- St. Joseph Church, Pittsfield, MA
- St. Agnes Church, Dalton, MA
- People's Pantry, Gt. Barrington, MA
- St. Mark's Church, Pittsfield, MA
- South Congregational Church, Pittsfield, MA
- First Baptist Church, Pittsfield, MA
- Hinsdale Food Pantry, Hinsdale, MA
- Solider On, Pittsfield, MA
- Elizabeth Freeman Center, Pittsfield, MA
- Tuesday's Harvest Pantry, Pittsfield, MA
- Reigning Love Church, Pittsfield, MA
- Christian Assembly, Pittsfield, MA
- Salvation Army, North Adams, MA
- St. Charles Church, Pittsfield, MA
- Friendship Center Food Pantry, North Adams
- Berkshire Food Project, North Adams

- Sheffield Food Assistance, Sheffield, MA
- Williamstown Food Pantry, Williamstown, MA
- VFW Good Pantry, Lanesboro, MA
- St. Stephens Episcopal Church, Pittsfield, MA
- Lee Food Pantry, Lee, MA

These awards to food pantries are just one of many ways Berkshire Bank and Berkshire Bank's Foundations demonstrate their commitment to communities that they serve. The Foundations award approximately \$1.3 million dollars annually to nonprofit organizations focused on education and community/economic development projects as well as providing scholarships to local high school seniors throughout their tri-state footprint. In addition to their annual monetary giving, the foundations also oversee the bank's large employee volunteer program in which over 50% of the bank's employees participated and donated some 17,000 hours of service in 2010. The bank recently completed a company-wide food drive in which it collected over 9,000 pounds of food which was donated to local food pantries.

Background

Berkshire Bank Foundation Inc. and Berkshire Bank Foundation- Legacy Region, Inc. (formerly The Legacy Banks Foundation) are the charitable arms of Berkshire Bank, [America's Most Exciting BankSM](#). and leaders in philanthropy and community involvement. The Foundations missions are to enhance the quality of life in Berkshire Bank's service areas by providing priority funding to education and community/economic development projects. They also funds programs dedicated to the arts, education, and human services. Each year both Foundations provide more than \$1.3 million to important non-profit organizations. For more information, visit www.berkshirebank.com/foundation, "Like" them on www.facebook.com/BerkshireBank or call Peter J. Lafayette, Executive Director at 413-447-1722.

Berkshire Hills Bancorp is the parent of Berkshire Bank, [America's Most Exciting BankSM](#). The company has \$4 billion in assets and 60 full service branch offices in Massachusetts, New York, and Vermont. The company provides personal and business banking, insurance, wealth management, private banking, and asset based lending services. Berkshire Bank provides 100% deposit insurance protection for all deposit accounts, regardless of amount, based on a combination of FDIC insurance and the [Depositors Insurance Fund](#) (DIF). For more information, visit www.berkshirebank.com or call 800-773-5601.

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