



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BERKSHIRE BANK EMPLOYEES TO CONDUCT FOOD DRIVE

Employees Plan to Collect 10,000lbs of Food To Support National Hunger Action Month

PITTSFIELD, MA, September 7, 2011 – In support of National Hunger Action Month this September, Berkshire Bank is conducting its 4th annual company-wide food drive through its Employee Volunteer Program. The drive will run from September 12 through the 23, and the food collected at all bank locations will be given to local food pantries and food banks in the regions served by Berkshire Bank. Last year, approximately 8,000 pounds of non-perishable food items were collected, and this year the goal is 10,000 pounds.

Food collection boxes are set up at each Berkshire Bank location in western Massachusetts, New York and Vermont. Customers and the public are invited to participate in the food drive by donating non-perishable goods to their local Berkshire Bank office. Recommended items include peanut butter and jelly, canned beans, rice, pasta and canned pasta sauce, hearty soups, tuna fish and cereals. A complete list of accepted items can be found at any bank location.

Each Berkshire Bank office has teamed up with a local food pantry or food bank in its community to ensure the food they collect stays and helps those directly affected by hunger in the local area.

According to Peter Lafayette, Executive Director of Berkshire Bank Foundation “One in eight people in our tri-state market area struggle to put a meal on the table or have to choose between paying a bill and feeding their family. Tens of thousands of people right in our local communities depend on food assistance from our local food pantries to get by. It is our hope that by conducting this company-wide food drive we will inspire the public to stop into one of our branch offices, make a donation, and help in the fight against hunger. No person in our communities should ever have to go hungry and Berkshire Bank is pleased to be able to help in this small way,” added Lafayette.

The Food Drive is one of many projects that are part of the bank’s Employee Volunteer Program which carries out community service projects in communities served by the bank. Annually, 50% of the bank’s employees participate in community service volunteer projects and programs and they contributed more than 17,000 hours of service in 2010. The Employee Volunteer Program is another way the bank demonstrates its commitment to the communities in which it does business in addition to the \$1 million dollars it awards annually to nonprofit organizations. .

Background

Berkshire Bank Foundation Inc, the charitable arm of Berkshire Bank, [America's Most Exciting BankSM](#), is a leader in philanthropy and community involvement. The foundation’s mission is to enhance the quality of life in Berkshire Bank’s footprint by providing priority funding to education and community/economic development projects. It also

funds programs dedicated to the arts, education, and human services. Since its inception, the foundation has awarded more than \$15 million to nonprofit organizations in its footprint. 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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