



**Berkshire Bank Foundation Awards \$12,000 to Rome Area Nonprofits
Recipients Selected as Part of Community Choice Grants Giveaway**

Pittsfield, Mass., August 31, 2011 – On Tuesday, August 30, Berkshire Bank, *America's Most Exciting Bank*SM, and its charitable arm, Berkshire Bank Foundation, presented \$12,000 in grant awards to eight nonprofits within the greater Rome and New Hartford area. The awards were the result of the Foundation's Community Choice Grants Giveaway, which invited members of the public to vote for their favorite nonprofit.

The Foundation presented checks to the area organizations at a ceremony at Berkshire Bank on West Dominick Street. The two top vote getters, **The Rome Hospital Foundation** and **The Humane Society of Rome**, received \$3,000 grants from Berkshire Bank Foundation. The six runners up received \$1,000 grants and included: **YMCA of the Greater Tri-Valley**, **Rome Rescue Mission**, **Jervis Public Library**, **The Capitol Theater**, **Rome Art & Community Center** and **Rome Main Street Alliance**

According to Peter J. Lafayette Executive Director of Berkshire Bank Foundation "We were excited to offer the public this opportunity to vote for their favorite nonprofit organization and provide some input as to how we award our grant funds. We are pleased to support these organizations doing important work, and this giveaway allowed us to demonstrate our commitment to the community in Rome."

"On behalf of the Rome Hospital Foundation, I would like to thank Berkshire Bank Foundation for awarding us a \$3,000 grant as part of their Rome Community Choice Grants Giveaway," said Board President Greg Mattacola. "We are very grateful to our community for recognizing the Rome Hospital Foundation as one of their favorite non-profit organizations. Our mission is to raise funds to support Rome Memorial Hospital and, in turn, to support the healthcare needs of those who live and work here. We are extremely appreciative for the tremendous vote of confidence from the many who voted for the Hospital Foundation to receive this grant. We could not fulfill our mission without the support of the community and those like Berkshire Bank." he added.

The giveaway ran from Monday, July 11 to Friday, August 12 and encouraged local community members to select from a list of eight their favorite local nonprofit. Over 1,000 votes were cast during the contest at Berkshire Bank's Rome and New Hartford offices.

This giveaway is just one of many ways Berkshire Bank and Berkshire Bank Foundation show their commitment to communities where they do business. The foundation awards nearly \$1 million dollars annually to nonprofit organizations focused on education and community/economic development projects as well as giving scholarships to local high school seniors throughout their tri-state footprint. In addition to its annual monetary giving the foundation also oversees 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.

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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