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## **CAPITAL DISTRICT TOBACCO-FREE COALITION SALUTES OUR COMMUNITY'S TOBACCO-FREE LEADERS**

**Schenectady, NY, November 7, 2007** - The Capital District Tobacco-Free Coalition, along with Reality Check Youth Action and the Tobacco-Free Healthy Schools Program honors tobacco-free leaders in our community at the brand new Gallery at Proctors in Schenectady. The event celebrates organizations, businesses, and municipalities that established a tobacco-free policy, refused tobacco industry sponsorship, or made other significant contributions to promote a healthy and tobacco-free Capital District community.

“Tobacco control efforts in the Capital District are working because people in the Capital District are working,” said Judy Rightmyer, Program Director for the Capital District Tobacco-Free Coalition. “It is individuals in each of these organizations and businesses who make the difference and who are really being honored. They believe that stopping tobacco advertising, refusing tobacco industry money and limiting exposure to cigarette smoke saves lives. Their commitment is the reason why we are ultimately winning the fight against Big Tobacco.”

The Animal Protective Foundation, the City of Troy, Clinton’s Ditch, Curves of Schaghticoke and the Parker Inn are being honored for signing “No Thanks, Big Tobacco” policies refusing tobacco industry contributions or sponsorships. Rosalie Ault, Executive Director of the Animal Protective Foundation, said “We signed a commitment to not accept tobacco industry sponsorship because we are advocates for animals and their best interests. Secondhand smoke is certainly not in their best interests and we have a responsibility to make choices for them that will keep them from harm.”

These organizations join the growing list of more than one thousand statewide organizations and business who have said “No Thanks” to Big Tobacco.

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Honors also go to The Eddy, the YWCA of Schenectady and Maria College who have established strong smoke-free policies. Maria College is the first college in the Capital Region to establish a 100% tobacco-free college campus, which will be implemented in May 2008. “We are a college dedicated to health and education, offering degrees in Nursing, Licensed Practical Nursing, Occupational Therapy Assistant, Early Childhood Education and Research Technologist. It makes perfect sense that we adopt a policy of healthy living,” said Deb Corrigan, Dean of Students at Maria College.

East Greenbush Central School District, Rensselaer City School District and Voorheesville Central School District all receive honors from the Tobacco-Free Healthy Schools Program. “At the East Greenbush Central School District, we are aware of the dangers of tobacco use and we are committed to helping our students who use tobacco to stop because of the medical problems associated with smoking. We want our students to enjoy long happy lives,” said Superintendent, Dr. Rebecca R. Furlong.

Other award recipients include the College of St. Rose, The Sage Colleges, Schenectady County Community College and Union College for their collaboration with the College Student Tobacco Use Survey; the Schenectady City School District for passage of a Tobacco Advertisement-Free Magazine Resolution; and The Daily Gazette for their comprehensive, fair and accurate reporting on tobacco control issues.

“Whether working to undermine the tobacco industry’s relentless marketing to young people or to expand public areas where people can be free from the harmful effects of secondhand smoke, there’s a role in this effort for everyone. This evening’s Honorees demonstrate that. We salute them. And we hope they inspire others to join our coalition because our work is far from done.” said Theresa Zubretsky, Coordinator for the Capital District Tobacco-Free Coalition.

The Capital District Tobacco-Free Coalition, Reality Check Youth Action and the Tobacco-Free Healthy Schools Program are all grant funded programs from the NYS Bureau of Tobacco Use Prevention and Control. The Capital District Tobacco-Free Coalition is a non-profit partnership of people and organizations from Albany, Rensselaer and Schenectady counties working to decrease the social acceptability of tobacco use, eliminate exposure to secondhand smoke, promote cessation and prevent the initiation of tobacco use among youth and young adults. For more information on the Coalition and their programs, go to [www.smokefreecapital.org](http://www.smokefreecapital.org).

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