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SCHENECTADY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RE: Upper Union Street Poised For Further Growth

SCHENECTADY, NY --- Schenectady's Upper Union Street Business District is often pointed to as a model for small urban business communities, because of its stability over the years, its reputation for sustaining business longevity, and its old fashioned "main street" appeal. Residents of the nearby upscale neighborhoods enjoy walking or driving short distances to patronize a unique, mix of one of a kind independently owned shops, service businesses and a wide variety of restaurant and take out food options. The area's location between Schenectady's arts and entertainment district, Niskayuna's upscale neighborhoods and the Union College campus makes the street a destination for residents, professionals, students and visitors.

"We're responding to a trend toward a more urban lifestyle through a very active business recruitment committee," said Guy Sementilli, Chair of the Upper Union Street Business Improvement District (BID). "We want to talk with retail, restaurant and business-to-business entrepreneurs about their plans for starting, relocating, or expanding a present business to a subsequent location here on Upper Union Street. Upper Union Street is poised to further capitalize on the success it has known for decades."

Upper Union Street is surrounded by neighborhoods with fine homes and upscale demographics. Nine out of the Capital Region's twenty wealthiest zip codes are contiguous to the Upper union Street area. Niskayuna, Rexford, Alplaus, Clifton Park, Burnt Hills, Guilderland, Latham, Scotia, Colonie and Rotterdam all share boundaries with Upper Union Street.

Talking statistics, 327,000 people live within ten miles of Upper Union Street, a figure that represents more than one third of the Capital Region's entire population. The 2008 Market Analysis of the Upper Union Street area showed the 1 mile, 5 mile and 10 mile areas around Upper Union Street as having growing populations with projections to continue growing through 2013. All three areas also have higher incomes than both the Capital Region and New York State. In fact, over 55% of households in the 1 and 10 mile areas and 50% of households in the 5 mile area have annual incomes of \$50,000 or more, and about 18% of households in the 1 and 5 mile and 23% in the 10 mile area have annual incomes of \$100,000 or more.

Upper Union Street gets a great lunch crowd from the many nearby businesses. Knolls Atomic Power Laboratory (KAPL), General Electric and its expanding Global Research Center, Union College, Ellis Hospital (including the Bellevue and McClellan facilities), Sunnyview Hospital, MVP Health Care, the planned new Golub Corporation Headquarters and the exciting Proctors Theatre complex are a stone's throw from Upper Union Street. Five out of the Capital Region's ten highest earning private employers are within ten miles of the Upper Union Street Business District (according to the Business Review's 2008 book of lists).

Union Street carried 10,600 cars per day as of the most recent traffic count. This is almost as much traffic as the much larger, and less pedestrian friendly State Street/Route 5 carried in 2005. So in addition to a walkable "Main Street" environment, businesses also benefit from terrific visibility from Union Street traffic.

Several Times Union and Metroland "Best Of" businesses make their homes on Union Street including **Northeastern Fine Jewelry**, **Scotti's Restaurant**, and **Gershon's Deli**, perennial winner of the Best Deli category in both the Times Union and Metroland. Another neighbor, **Michael's Shoe Service**, has been the Chamber of Schenectady County's Small Business of the Year. Two Upper Union businesses -- **Northeastern Fine Jewelry** and **Pai's Tae Kwon Do** -- have staged regional expansions from their original Upper Union Street headquarters.

Nearby Union College adds a collegiate component to the street, while several public and private schools, churches and temples make adjacent areas true neighborhoods. Schenectady's charming and bustling Central Park, with its famed tennis facilities, concert stage, playing fields and rose gardens, is only two blocks away. Four challenging golf courses are within three miles. Three Mohawk River marinas and the Schenectady Yacht Club are all within five miles.

A successful matching grant façade improvement program and other financial incentives for business owners are available through the Schenectady Metroplex Development Authority and the Upper Union Street Business Improvement District (BID). Upper Union Street is on several CDTA bus routes, making it easy to access for both employees and customers.

The Upper Union Street BID works proactively to advance the Upper Union Street area, through marketing, maintenance, and advocacy. For example, the BID organizes successful annual events and sponsors a seasonal farmers' market all of which draw customers to the street. The BID organizes co-operative and group advertising to give businesses cost effective advertising opportunities. The BID also works with elected and city officials and applies for public funds. This has resulted in a very successful façade program and city and state funds for streetscape improvements on the street.

A survey addressing how customers and potential customers feel about the Upper Union Street area with particular emphasis on what sorts of additional businesses they would support has just been concluded by the Siena College Research Foundation. The results of that survey will be announced at the Upper Union Street BID's annual meeting at 6pm on Wednesday, October 15 at the City Squire, Keyes Ave., Schenectady. Union College students are participating in a similar survey through an on-campus computer hook up. "We want hard data to show our prospective businesses that the area can support them, the demographics and traffic counts speak for themselves, public opinion is harder to pin down, but the data will be powerful," said Sementilli.

Members of the Upper Union Street Business Recruitment Committee include Christopher DiCocco, CPA, DiCocco & Associates; Kim Mastroianni, Mike's Shoe Service; Peter Musler, Musler's Fine Women's Wear; Rosemary Prock, Sow's Ear Studio; Paul Sartoris, Union Aquarium; Joanne DeVoe, DeVoe Associates; and Guy Sementilli, chef / owner of Scotti's Restaurant. Business Recruitment Meetings are facilitated by Anne Savage, River Street Planning & Development.

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Media Contact: Joanne DeVoe 518 573-0773

Interviews are welcomed. Statistics can be supplied upon request.