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****DIGITAL COLOR IMAGE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST****

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New Paltz Regional Chamber of Commerce Names New President

(*New Paltz, NY*) **Michael A. Smith** has been named president of the New Paltz Regional Chamber of Commerce, announced Chamber Board Chair Chris Drouin. Mr. Smith fills the position long held by Joyce Minard, who retired as of December 31, 2011.

"This is a very challenging time in the economic history of the region and the state, and strong leadership of the New Paltz Regional Chamber is critical. Michael brings the skills, connections and experience necessary to effectively and ethically serve the Chamber's mission to promote the business, industrial, agricultural and civic interests of the Hudson Valley region," said Drouin. Outgoing president Minard will serve as Director of Special Projects, under Smith's leadership. The Board of Directors enjoyed Minard's full support during the search and transition period; all parties are committed to the preservation of the Chamber's vision and service to its members.

Smith, who holds a BA in Business Administration from Marist College, most recently served as Vice President, Chief Compliance Officer and Foundation Chair of Major Events at Elant, a non-for-profit organization serving 3,500 patients and residents daily in five Hudson Valley counties, employing 1,250 people. Smith was part of the management team responsible for a \$100 million system of ten corporations, including skilled nursing home, assistive living facilities and home care; he led the firm in its corporate compliance program and best practices as well as serving as Foundation Chair for events, including annual Golf and Polo outings that raised a record-setting net amount of over \$108,000 for one year.

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Smith was President of the Holden Home for 13 years, an adult care facility and licensed home care agency in Newburgh, where he was introduced to issues surrounding healthcare. He led the Home in a successful management arrangement with the Culinaricians' Home in New Paltz for over 10 years and also had a very successful newspaper column on healthcare issues.

Smith's background also includes serving as business partner and CEO for the J. & H. Smith Light Corporation in New Windsor, New York, a distributor of electro-mechanical indicator light parts for the Department of Defense and commercial shipbuilders such as Electric Boat, Newport News and Eaton Cutler-Hammer. The products were deemed critical end-use items for the Navy's fleet of submarines, destroyers and other ships. He worked with many government and commercial agencies with product quality, delivery, sales, relationship development and fulfillment of all contract bid and awards for a period of 17 years.

Smith has served on many Hudson Valley community and business boards; is a certified compliance executive (CCE); and an author of over 100 published business articles plus a top ten ranked business golf specialty book on Amazon.com. He and his wife, Ann, are the proud parents of two grown children, Laura and Michael, who live in the Hudson Valley.

The New Paltz Regional Chamber of Commerce, with more than 600 members, is an active and trusted voice in the regional business and residential community, advancing the business, industrial, agricultural and civic interests of the Mid-Hudson Valley Region. Programs and services of the Chamber are made possible, in part, by the support of its Corporate Partners for 2012: **COBESO, Inc.** (Leading Partner); **Central Hudson Gas & Electric Corp.** (Associate Partner); **HealthAlliance of the Hudson Valley**, **Health Quest**, **Hudson Valley Federal Credit Union**, **KIC Chemicals**, **The Law Offices of James Yastion, PLLC**, **M & T Bank**, **Ulster Savings**, **M&T Bank** and **Vanacore**, **DeBenedictus**, **DiGovanni** and **Weddell LLP, CPAs** (Supporting Partners).

Members and visitors are welcome at the Chamber's Visitor Center, located at 257 Main Street in New Paltz. For more information about Chamber programs and Visitor's Center hours of operation, visit www.newpaltzchamber.org or call the Chamber at (845) 255-0243.

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