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PRESS RELEASE

Ron Brach has been named the recipient of Cornell's Community and Rural Development Institute's (CaRDI) 2009 David J. Allee and Paul R. Eberts Community and Economic Vitality Award.

Recipients are recognized for innovative research, outreach and extension and/or teaching projects. These awards are intended to honor our colleagues that have made a mark on New York State communities.

This year, the award will be presented to Ron Brach. He is being honored for his work as the Executive Director of the Legislative Commission on Rural Resources. Over the 26 years that Mr. Brach was with the Commission, he worked to preserve NY's farmland, retain the rural character of small towns, and enhance the lives of those living in rural communities.

In 1983, Mr. Brach organized a statewide rural development symposium to define the issues that face rural New York. Over the years, similar symposia and public hearings allowed him to assist lawmakers with a framework for future action that resulted in numerous legislation and actions, including the improvement of broadband access, addressing of the nursing shortage crisis, and a focus on K-12 rural education system. Some 23 years after that 1983 symposium the NYS Legislative Commission on Rural Resources partnered with CaRDI and Cornell Cooperative Extension on a Rural Vision Initiative that covered agriculture and foods systems, economic development, energy, land use, health care, housing and transportation, local and regional governance, and schools and youth, and workforce development.

In addition, under Brach's direction, the Commission initiated a project to modernize the state's antiquated planning and land use statutes and established the Rural Education Advisory Committee, the fruits of which have been research reports and rounds of mini-grants awarded to successful rural education programs. Recent legislation sponsored by the Commission also resulted in the creation by the state Legislature of a Center for Rural Schools at Cornell, which is the first of its kind in the US.

Mr. Brach has served on the National Rural Health Association, the NYS Rural Health Association Board of Directors, the NYS Area Health Education Center Advisory Board, and the NYS Cancer Consortium. All of these groups are working to improve access to health care in rural areas. He was also a member of Cornell's Community and Economic Vitality Program Council and was a long-term partner with Cornell, CaRDI, and Cornell Cooperative Extension. Ron enjoyed a strong collaborative partnership with Paul Eberts, Professor Emeritus, Department of Development Sociology and the delineation of NYS socio-economic trends.

The David J. Allee and Paul R. Eberts Community and Economic Vitality Award will be presented to Mr. Brach at the Rural Learning Network conference on September 30, 2009 at the Watkins Glen Harbor Hotel. The focus of that conference will be engaging partnerships and leveraging opportunities.