



MR. RONALD D. WINTHERS – Chairman
DR. LAWRENCE A. NESPOLI – President

News Release

Contact: Jacob C. Farbman, APR, 609-392-3434, 609-802-7814 or jfarbman@njccc.org

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For Immediate Release

NJ Labor Commissioner Honored with Community College Spirit Award

TRENTON, N.J.— Yesterday, during its annual Trustee Conference, the New Jersey Council of County Colleges presented the 2011 Community College Spirit Award to New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development Commissioner Harold Wirths for his exemplary support of New Jersey’s community colleges.

“Since its inauguration in 1993, the Community College Spirit Award has been an honor bestowed to those who embody the community college spirit – perseverance, dedication and excellence,” said NJCCC Chairman Ronald Winthers.

Wirths was recognized for his leadership in partnering the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development with the New Jersey Business and Industry Association (NJBIA) and the New Jersey Community College Consortium for Workforce and Economic Development to provide workforce training to companies throughout the state through the NJBIA Basic Skills Workforce Training Program.

“I’m very honored and humbled to receive this treasured award,” Wirths said. “I’m a strong believer in the importance of community colleges, and I was a strong supporter well

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before I came to the Department of Labor and Workforce Development. During my nearly 10 years as a Sussex County Freeholder, I supported our own Sussex County Community College, including the construction of two major additions. I was proud afterwards to watch the enrollment grow.”

In its fourth year of existence, the NJBIA Workforce Training Program has conducted 921 classes and provided training to 10,174 employees at 577 New Jersey businesses.

The Workforce Consortium, established in 2004, is a central one-stop contact that develops and delivers education and training programs to New Jersey businesses, agencies and organizations.

“The Workforce Consortium is one of our greatest successes,” Winthers said. “It is because of Commissioner Wirths’ support that our Consortium has trained nearly 50,000 employees at over 2,100 New Jersey businesses since its inception,” Winthers added.

Commissioner Wirths also said that he looks forward to continuing the Department’s “great partnership” with the NJBIA, the Workforce Consortium and others to provide workforce training to businesses throughout the state.

Governor Chris Christie named Harold “Hal” J. Wirths to be Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development in 2010.

Wirths has gained a broad array of leadership experience in the private sector as a business owner and as one of the organizers establishing a new community bank. Wirths also has been a leader in government where he served the people of Sussex County as a freeholder for nearly a decade.

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For nearly 20 years, Wirths owned and managed two furniture stores before selling the successful business. He also helped establish Noble Community Bank, which today is part of Highlands State Bank. Wirths served on the Highlands Bank board of directors.

Elected in 2000, Wirths served on the Sussex County Board of Chosen Freeholders including terms as freeholder director and deputy director. Wirths served as chairman of the budget committee and on the capital projects committee helping improve efficiency and reduce costs for county residents.

Wirths lives in Wantage with his wife and two daughters.

The New Jersey Council of County Colleges is the state association representing New Jersey's 19 community colleges. As an independent, trustee-headed organization that joins the leadership of trustees and presidents, the Council is the voice of the community college sector before the state legislature and other branches of government. The Council is also the state coordinating organization for all community colleges in New Jersey.