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Ulster gets charity base
New foundation models Dutchess
By Ross Weingarten
For the Poughkeepsie Journal

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KINGSTON - Ulster County nonprofit organizations are about to get a major boost.

After months of planning, local business leaders and philanthropists announced at a news conference Friday that the Ulster County Community Foundation is up and running.

The foundation, which will have its offices at the Ulster County Savings Bank in downtown Kingston, will provide financial assistance to nonprofit organizations in the county.

Local business leaders lauded the foundation as the first of its kind in Ulster, saying it will greatly benefit local residents and organizations.

"We want to raise money in Ulster for Ulster, and have Ulster County residents decide where it goes," said Wayne Nussbickel, A Fishkill businessman who is chairman of the Community Foundation of Dutchess County.

Andrea Reynolds, president and CEO of the the Dutchess foundation, which helped start the Ulster foundation, said money will go to a range of nonprofits, including local schools, hospitals, nursing homes and organizations dedicated to the arts.

The Workers Rights Law Center of New York, based in Kingston, is one nonprofit that stands to benefit from the creation of the Ulster foundation.

"It was terrific news, and it was exciting to be there," Tricia Kakalec, executive director of the organization, said of the announcement. "We definitely hope to work with them in the future."

The law center, which provides legal services for underprivileged people in the Hudson Valley, has already received a grant from the Dutchess foundation for new computer technology.

The Ulster foundation is off to a good start.

State Assemblyman Kevin Cahill, D-Kingston, announced he has secured a \$10,000 grant that will go to the community foundation.

Seeking donors

In the near future, the foundation wants to set up meetings with potential donors to raise money and find ways to help the community, said David Ringwood, vice president of development at the organization.

They have a long way to go to match their Dutchess counterparts.

The foundation in Dutchess has helped more than 300 groups and has assets of about \$26 million.

Nationally, there are almost 700 community foundations with assets of about \$35 billion.

Reynolds said community foundations allow people to donate to their favorite charitable causes without having to set up their own nonprofit.

"It's an alternative to people setting up their own foundations," she said.

While the foundation is going to help members of the Ulster community, the Ulster Savings Bank deserves credit for a major assist, organizers said.

The bank donated office space at its main location for the foundation, so it can get down to business immediately.

"The Ulster County Community Foundation does not have to focus on start-up costs, and can move more quickly to establish a presence and build a permanent endowment that will serve nonprofits and donors," Abel Garraghan, president of Heritagenergy, said.

Right now, the Ulster foundation is under the umbrella of the Dutchess group, but Ringwood said they expect it to eventually include its own board and committees.

Now that the foundation has a home and is under way, community leaders are excited about what it can do for local residents.

"This is a great new opportunity for philanthropy in Ulster County," Nussbickel said.

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