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**For Immediate Release**

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**Community Realty Helps Homebuyers,  
Strengthens Neighborhoods**

*(Albany, NY)* A new real estate brokerage – considered the first of its kind – is bringing renters into the home-buying mainstream while strengthening city neighborhoods.

Community Realty is a socially-minded enterprise specializing in buyer representation. The brokerage works closely with community revitalization programs in Albany, Schenectady and Troy. “We’re bringing new home buyers in the marketplace while promoting owner-occupied investment in neighborhoods that need it,” says Eric Dahl, the firm’s principal broker.

Community Realty operates throughout Albany, Rensselaer and Schenectady Counties with an emphasis on city neighborhoods. Homebuyer Advisors assist buyers with their home search while linking clients to related resources. Services available through Community Realty’s partner organizations include homebuyer education, credit counseling, home maintenance training, home inspection services, fair home mortgage products and legal representation.

“There are so many programs out there that people sometimes don’t know how to get started,” says Susan Cotner, Executive Director of the Affordable Housing Partnership, an Albany-based organization offering a range of homebuyer programs. “Community Realty is an entry point for renters who want to own their own home.”

By leveraging existing homebuyer resources and expertise, Community Realty hopes to increase the number of renters able to purchase their first home. The emphasis on buyer representation is designed to increase successful outcomes, says Dahl. "First-time buyers need an ally, especially in this competitive market." Single family homes that sold last year in the four county area were on the market a scant 49 days on average, giving buyers five and a half weeks less time to act than in 2000.

Community Realty represents first-time buyers throughout the process of preparing, finding, negotiating, and successfully purchasing a home. "We make sure that you find what you're looking for and get the help you need. We're real estate professionals with a buyer's interest at heart," says Dahl.

A coalition of seven community-based organizations helped form Community Realty in response to the need for better coordination of homeownership services and a desire to better promote affordable ownership in the region's cities. Partners include: the *Affordable Housing Partnership of the Capital Region Inc.*; the *Capital District Community Loan Fund*; the *Albany Community Land Trust*; *Better Neighborhoods Inc.*; *TAP Inc.*; the *TRIP NeighborWorks® Homeownership Center*; and the *Community Land Trust of Schenectady*.

The *Charitable Leadership Foundation* of Clifton Park made an initial investment of startup capital to launch the enterprise. "We are interested in promoting entrepreneurial solutions to housing problems," says William Dessingue, the foundation's housing program director.

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