

January 26, 2011

**EDITORS:** The following information is for immediate release. If you have any questions, please contact Karen Costello, program and marketing coordinator of the Chester County Economic Development Council, at 610 458-5700.

## **Chester County Economic Development Council receives award from Commonwealth of Pennsylvania**

**EXTON** \_ The Chester County Economic Development Council received an award from the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture in honor of their long-term dedication to opening access to economic development programs for the agriculture industry.

The award was presented at a luncheon on January 13 at the Pennsylvania Farm Show by Agriculture Secretary Russell C. Redding. Redding recognized the Economic Development Council for its commitment to providing local farmers with the capital needed to grow.

“Agriculture is an important business in Chester County,” said Gary Smith, President and Chief Executive Officer, of the Economic Development Council. “Providing financing to grow and maintain farms is essential to the vitality of the industry. We have a number of financing programs available.”

The Council has provided loans to both new and existing farmers. Existing farms have been assisted with funding to purchase additional land, construct new agricultural buildings, such as dairy cow barns or milking facilities, and acquire agricultural machinery.

CCEDC has earned particular note for its financing of beginning farmers looking to purchase their first farm. Through a public private partnership using the Next Generation Farmer Loan Program, more than 60 beginning farmers have been able to own a farm through the work of the Council and its partners, the Chester County Industrial Development Authority and the Central & Western Chester County Industrial Development Authority.

Redding said in cooperation with PAgrows, which helps producers gain access low interest loans, the Council has helped local agriculture business owners to advance the economic strength of the industry.

The Chester County Economic Development Council is a private, non-profit economic development organization that has been nurturing economic growth in Chester County and the surrounding region for 50 years. The Council’s portfolio of business growth services includes: low-interest financing, small business lending, workforce training, retention and expansion, customized international business assistance, land and building site selection, brownfields consultation and remediation, urban redevelopment, and agricultural economic development. The Council also offers state-of-the art conference and training facilities at its facility in Eagleview. For more information, see [www.cceconomicdevelopment.com](http://www.cceconomicdevelopment.com).