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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**TOWN OF AMHERST VISUALIZATION PROJECT WINS AWARD**

**Amherst Industrial Development Agency Recognized For Efforts By The Western New York Upstate Chapter of the American Planning Association**

The Amherst Industrial Development Agency (AIDA) announced today that it has received the Director's Award from the Western New York Upstate Chapter for the Town of Amherst Zoning Visualization Project. The Project, completed last year, was a collaborative effort between the AIDA, Amherst Planning Department, Amherst Chamber of Commerce and National Grid that tested and modeled the new zoning code adopted by the Amherst Town Board in May 2006.

James Allen, Executive Director of the AIDA said, "We are pleased to be recognized by the Western New York Upstate Chapter for this important effort that exemplifies what can be accomplished when government partners with the private sector and development community."

An integral part of the Town of Amherst's Zoning Ordinance revision process Visualization Project tested, illustrated, and clarified the Town's proposed zoning revisions and helped identify potential implementation problems. A major focus of the project was ensuring that the new Zoning Ordinance did not create hindrances to the redevelopment of older commercial and infill sites. Redevelopment has emerged as a key area of focus over the last several years for the Town, as well as the AIDA and Amherst Chamber of Commerce.

The Zoning Visualization Project was part of an overall process to develop a new comprehensive plan and revised Zoning Ordinance. In the thirty years since the last comprehensive plan and Zoning Ordinance were developed, the Town has undergone significant change and new approaches are necessary to respond to the needs of a maturing community: maintaining quality of life, revitalizing older neighborhoods and commercial centers, providing for connective open space, and accommodating quality new development. In February 2004, the Amherst Town Board accepted the Bicentennial Comprehensive Plan as its guide for long-term growth and development.

Formed in 1973, the AIDA continues to promote economic diversity and induce private sector investment in the Town of Amherst. Since its inception, the AIDA has induced over \$1 billion in new investment, involving over a 700 companies creating 33,000 new jobs for the region. In recent years, the AIDA has focused efforts on redeveloping older areas of the Town and has helped 27 projects invest over \$83,000,000 in Eggertsville, Snyder and Williamsville.