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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**EMOTIONALLY IT'S HARD TO LEAVE. FINANCIALLY IT'S HARD TO STAY.**

*WHILE NATURAL BEAUTY AND AMENITIES ARE PLENTIFUL, DISCONTENT AMONG LONG ISLAND'S POPULATION IS GROWING*

Garden City, NY (January 26, 2007) – According to the **Long Island Index 2007**, most Long Islanders (82%) think that Long Island is a good place to live and 87% identify strongly with the region. But for many on Long Island, the promise of the suburbs is no longer being kept. An increasing number of Long Islanders (21%) report they are finding it “very difficult” to meet monthly mortgage or rent, up from 7% in 2002. For those who own homes, high mortgages are compounded by high taxes. Most Long Islanders (84%) consider high taxes a “very” or “extremely” serious problem and many (54% up from 45% in 2004) report that they will soon move away. With annual wages on Long Island now only 5% higher than the U.S. average and median household income dropping, Long Islander’s income advantage is disappearing, pushing families to the breaking point. The Rauch Foundation will formally release Long Island’s fourth indicators report, the **Long Island Index 2007**, on **Friday, January 26<sup>th</sup> from 8:00 am to 9:30 am at the Cradle of Aviation Museum, Garden City**. A survey funded by the Rauch Foundation and conducted by Stony Brook University Center for Survey Research titled, ***In a Tough Spot: Jobs, Taxes and Affordability on Long Island***, will be released simultaneously.

As reported in the 2007 *Index*, a healthy economy needs innovation, and the fires of innovation on Long Island have grown cold. From 1997 to 2001, annual venture capital investment on Long Island averaged \$236 million. For the five years since then, that average has plummeted to \$28 million. From 1995 to 2005, federal research and development investment in Long Island universities, labs and businesses fell 42%. According to Nancy Rauch Douzinas, President of the Rauch Foundation, “Our region is well-positioned with respect to two vital factors that are necessary for incubating high-tech industries: the presence of some of the best research institutions in the world and a well-educated workforce. Building on these assets and working together in new and creative ways are keys to reversing these trends.”

Another important trend reported is the growing disparity amongst Long Islanders. According to Ann Golob, Project Director, *Long Island Index*, “Household income for the top 10% continues to grow but the bottom 10% declines. While overall poverty levels on Long Island are low, there are concentrated areas where the number of children receiving free lunch exceeds 50%. Disparity is evident in public education as well. Although public education continues to be a regional strength, with Long Island students far surpassing New York State results on all measures, there is a wide and growing gap between low and high poverty schools”.

Comparing poverty levels in individual schools with their associated district, the *Index* reveals a “layering of disadvantage” with students in high-poverty schools in high-need districts struggling and falling significantly behind their peers. Only 26% of residents in high-need districts rate their schools as good or excellent compared to 77% in low-need districts.

Dr. Golob stated, "Long Island loses much of the local talent it educates as young adults choose to move elsewhere. In addition, we have a costly 'brain waste', as large numbers of Long Island children who attend high-poverty and high-need schools do not receive equal educational opportunities."

Attendees at the press conference will include business and community organizations, Nassau and Suffolk County government leaders and the media. Speakers at the press event include:

**Nancy Rauch Douzinas, President, Rauch Foundation**  
**Ann Golob, Project Director, *Long Island Index***  
**Edward Travaglianti, President, Commerce Bank Long Island**  
**Steve Levy, Suffolk County Executive**  
**Thomas R. Suozzi, Nassau County Executive**

Simultaneously, copies of the 2007 *Index* will be distributed to business and community organizations, public officials and the general public. Its conclusions target the region's leaders who are in the position to gather community support to affect positive change and create viable solutions. Downloadable copies of the *Long Island Index 2007* are available at [www.longislandindex.org](http://www.longislandindex.org).

The report presents an unbiased, nonpartisan view measuring the well being of the Long Island community. It also details an overall picture of how Long Island is faring as a region and where there are needs or gaps that should be addressed now to avoid future problems. By identifying emerging trends, the Index has created a tool that can be used by government, business and community leaders in their decision-making processes that will affect the quality of life for Long Island residents.

The *Long Island Index 2007* was developed and spearheaded by an advisory committee representing Long Island's diverse communities, businesses, labor and civic sector. The specific indicators were selected to reflect region wide impact and interests. The Rauch Foundation provided funding for the project. The report can be found at [www.longislandindex.org](http://www.longislandindex.org). To obtain print copies of the report, please call (516) 873-9808. E-mail questions and comments to [info@longislandindex.org](mailto:info@longislandindex.org).

This is the first year that local Long Island universities did most of the Index research. Hofstra University completed more than two-thirds of the indicators research.

The opinion poll, ***In a Tough Spot: Jobs, Taxes and Affordability on Long Island***, was conducted by the Stony Brook University Center for Survey Research during the fall of 2006 for the *Long Island Index* project. Telephone interviews were conducted with a randomly selected sample of 808 Long Island residents, with a margin of error of +/- 3.4%. In addition, interviews were conducted with randomly selected over samples of 205 African-American and 100 Hispanic residents of Long Island to enable more detailed analysis of opinion in those groups. This poll is downloadable at [www.longislandindex.org](http://www.longislandindex.org).

*Long Island Index 2007 Highlights:*

## **ECONOMY**

### **Long Island's economy continues to grow but shows signs of weakness.**

- Annual average wages are growing at a slower rate on Long Island than in the U.S. and are now only 5% higher than the U.S. average.
- The top 10% of households account for 31% of the total household income on Long Island and the bottom 60% of households account for 32% of the total household income.
- Long Island is experiencing the greatest growth in the lowest paying jobs and a decline in the highest paying jobs.

- Long Island firms receive almost no venture capital or federal R&D funds.

#### **Small firms dominate.**

- 88% of Long Island firms have fewer than 30 employees and many new firms with a small number of employees are being created.

#### **OUR COMMUNITIES**

**Most Long Island downtown business centers have low vacancy rates (average is 7.3%).**

**Long Island continues to diversify, age and lose young adults as housing affordability worsens.**

- 21% of the population reports having a very difficult time paying rent or mortgage – up from 7% in 2003.
- Only 17% of housing units on Long Island are rental – compared to Westchester's 37%.

#### **HEALTH**

**Long Island has high quality health care, but not all Long Islanders have access.**

- Long Islanders have very different health risks depending on economic factors and the community where they live.
- 43% of inpatient health care is paid by Medicare.

#### **EDUCATION**

**Overall, Long Island students excel but marked disparities persist in areas of concentrated poverty.**

- Long Island students far surpass statewide results in completing Regent's Diploma requirements (86% for Long Island vs. 69% for New York State) and in high school graduation rates (90% for Long Island vs. 80% for New York State).
- The difference in high school graduation rates between low-poverty and high-poverty is 20%.
- The gap between low poverty and high poverty schools is declining for the 4<sup>th</sup> Grade English Language Arts test and is increasing for the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Mathematics test.
- There are schools in areas of concentrated poverty where the number of children receiving free lunch exceeds 50%.
- Students with Limited English Proficiency are growing markedly in high-poverty schools.

#### **OUR ENVIRONMENT**

**Between 2000 and 2005 Long Island preserved land at a rate of 2,200 acres per year.**

**Air quality is considered "good" two out of every three days.**

#### **GOVERNANCE**

**Bond ratings remain high for both Nassau and Suffolk Counties.**

**Property taxes as a share of personal income were 18% higher than the state average.**

**About the Rauch Foundation:** The *Long Island Index* is funded by the Rauch Foundation, a family foundation headquartered in Garden City, New York. In addition to funding the *Long Island Index* for four years the Rauch Foundation commissioned The Long Island Profile Report and a series of five polls on Long Island to determine how the region is faring compared to other suburbs in the NY Metro area. The polls, (1) "Long Islanders: Who Are We?", (2) "Caring for Long Island's Children", (3) "Room for Growth: Long Island's Changing Economy", (4) "Where Do We Grow From Here?: Land Use on Long Island", (5) "Regional Attitudes on Taxation and Governance" and the *Long Island Index 2004*, *Long Island Index 2005* and *Long Island Index 2006* are all available for download at [www.longislandindex.org](http://www.longislandindex.org). To obtain hard

copies of the reports or provide feedback, please call 516-873-9808 or e-mail questions and comments to [info@longislandindex.org](mailto:info@longislandindex.org).

*For media who would like to receive the complete report, please attend the press event on January 26<sup>th</sup>. Continental breakfast from 8:00 am to 8:30 am and Long Island Index release from 8:30am to 9:30am at the Cradle of Aviation Museum.*

*Media are encouraged to attend but must register by calling Deanna Morton at 516.829.5502 or 516.732.6414 (cell) or Sara Rietbroek at 516.829.5502.*

**Directions to The Cradle of Aviation Museum  
One Davis Avenue, Garden City:**

**From the South Shore:**

Meadowbrook Parkway north to exit M4, follow signs to Nassau Coliseum which will put you on Charles Lindbergh Blvd, stay on Charles Lindbergh Blvd. to the second traffic light and turn right into the parking lot.

**From the North Shore:**

Meadowbrook Parkway south to exit M4, follow signs to Nassau Coliseum. Within approximately ¼ mile, take the right fork to Charles Lindbergh Blvd., to the second traffic light and turn right into the parking lot.