Farmingville, NY - Brookhaven Supervisor Mark Lesko was named Man of the Year in Government by several editions of the Times Beacon Record papers during the last week of 2011. The papers specifically recognized Lesko's "bipartisanship and honest hard work" over the course of the past year and the fact that he was able to bridge party differences during difficult economic times.

"It is an honor to be recognized for our hard work over the past year. I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues on the Town Board to address economic challenges that lie ahead and implement projects like the Ronkonkoma Hub Transit-Oriented Development to infuse economic vitality in Brookhaven and create jobs," said Supervisor Mark Lesko.

The Times Beacon Record papers praised Lesko's strong fiscal record, noting that "since taking his seat as supervisor in 2009, Lesko has frozen taxes for three consecutive years and cut back on compensation for appointed board members... Lesko has championed tax-spending caps and has cut back on the budget." With the economic downtown and plummeting revenues, combined with increasing fixed costs like pensions and health insurance, the Town has experienced several challenging budgets in the past few years. Lesko has held the line on taxes every year he has been in office, cut spending by over 26%, supported a property tax cap, debt management cap, and spending cap (which voters overwhelming approved), and started a discussion on the size and cost of Town government. In 2011, the Town Board members unanimously passed the 2012 Budget across party lines, which had not occurred since 2004.

Lesko was also recognized for his efforts to promote business growth and create jobs in the Town, including the Ronkonkoma Hub Transit-Oriented Development, Accelerate Long Island, and Blight to Light. The Times Beacon
Record papers stated, "And he was recognized for his efforts when he became the first elected officer to receive the Visionary Award from the Long Island Business Development Council because of his Blight to Light initiative that create jobs and promoted businesses."

Blight to Light was announced in 2010 to redevelop monuments of suburban blight throughout the Town and was accompanied by a code that accelerates redevelopment projects that meet specific criteria. Some of the notable accomplishments in 2011 include the demolition of the Plaza Theatre, an eyesore in East Patchogue since the 1980’s, the re-opening of Buckley's Pub in Center Moriches, which was damaged in a fire, and the opening of ShopRite at the Raymour & Flanigan Building off of Sunrise Highway in Patchogue, where a vacant, graffiti-ridden Home Depot was located. The Town is also working with a private developer on a plan to redevelop the former UA Theater in Coram, which has been an abandoned eyesore in the community for many years.

The Ronkonkoma Hub Transit-Oriented Development envisions a live-work-play destination adjacent to the busiest train station on the Long Island Rail Road and proximate to MacArthur Airport. The Ronkonkoma Design Team recently recommended Tritec Real Estate Company, LLC as Master Developer and the project received a $4 million state grant to start work on a sewage treatment plant from the Long Island Regional Economic Development Council's award winning strategic plan.

Accelerate Long Island was announced by Supervisor Mark Lesko in January 2011 to connect research conducted at Long Island's world class research institutions with entrepreneurs to spin off new start-up companies. Accelerate Long Island is now a public-private partnership between the Long Island Association, Stony Brook University, Brookhaven National Laboratory, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, North Shore LI-J Health System, Hofstra University, Canrock Ventures, and the Rauch Foundation. Accelerate Long Island also received a grant of $500,000 from New York State through the strategic plan. The grant will be used for seed funding for new companies that will match private venture funds to support start-up technology firms.

Eileen Gerle, Environmental Educator at West Meadow Beach, was also named Environmentalist of the Year by Times Beacon Record Papers. In 2011, the nature programs at West Meadow Beach included a public lecture series, Horseshoe Crab Walks, Junior Beach Ranger Program, and Full Moon Walks. Over 2,000 visitors came to West Meadow Beach in 2011.

To learn more about Supervisor Lesko's accomplishments and initiatives, visit www.brookhaven.org.

Division of Public Information * Office of the Supervisor
One Independence Hill • Farmingville • NY 11738 • Phone (631) 451-6595 • Fax (631) 451-6258