



For Immediate Release

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**Highlands State Bank Names Rochelle Leonardo Vice
President/Branch Manager of Their Sparta Office**

Vernon, NJ – March 4, 2010 – Highlands State Bank has announced the appointment of Rochelle Leonardo as Vice President and Branch Manager of their Sparta office at 351 Sparta Avenue. She will oversee all day-to-day operations and business development at the Sparta branch, which was acquired in 2008 as part of Highland's merger with Noble Community Bank.

Ms. Leonardo has over 20 years of banking and property management experience. "We are pleased to have Rochelle join us," stated George E. Irwin, President and Chief Executive Officer of Highlands State Bank. "In addition to her management and banking expertise, she brings extensive knowledge of the Sussex business community and a strong commitment to customer satisfaction to her new position."

Ms. Leonardo previously served as Vice President and Branch Sales Manager at Valley National Bank. She is a member of the Sussex County Chamber of Commerce, Secretary of the Sparta Chamber Council and Chairperson for the Sparta Chamber Council Ambassador Committee. She lives in Wantage, NJ with her husband, Brett C. Leonardo, a General Contractor, who is also a member of the Sussex County Chamber of Commerce.

Highlands State Bank is an FDIC-insured, independent community bank headquartered in Vernon, NJ with branch offices in Vernon, Totowa and Sparta. Founded in 2005, Highlands is traded on the NASDAQ under the symbol HSBK. The bank offers a wide range of personal and commercial banking products and services designed to serve the needs of individuals and small to mid-sized businesses in Sussex and Passaic Counties. For more information, call 973-764-3200 or visit their website, www.highlandsstatebank.com

