



## **Aqua America Chairman Nicholas DeBenedictis Receives Top Honor from Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce**

PHILADELPHIA, Apr 21, 2006 (BUSINESS WIRE) -- The Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce - one of the country's largest - bestows its highest honor for an individual business leader, the William Penn Award(TM), tonight to Nicholas DeBenedictis, Chairman and CEO, Aqua America, Inc. (NYSE:WTR). The 2005 William Penn Award recognizes DeBenedictis' professional accomplishments, as well as his outstanding contributions to charitable and civic activities across the region.

Approximately 700 people are expected to attend the William Penn Award Gala at Philadelphia's Park Hyatt at the Bellevue, where former Pennsylvania Governor and Chamber President and CEO Mark S. Schweiker will present the award. Also in attendance will be Governor Edward G. Rendell, U.S. Senator Arlen Specter and former Pennsylvania Governor and U.S. Attorney General Richard Thornburgh.

Under DeBenedictis' leadership, Aqua America has grown to become the nation's largest U.S.-based, publicly-traded water company, serving more than 2.5 million residents in 13 states. He has guided the company's successful growth-through-acquisition strategy, which has added more than 180 water and wastewater systems to its national footprint since 1995. During his tenure, the company's market cap has grown from \$100 million to more than \$3.3 billion.

"It's a great honor to share this special evening with my business and civic colleagues, especially when we consider the tremendous rising tide of pride that is engulfing this region," DeBenedictis said. "Furthermore, I am grateful to be recognized for leading a home-grown company that is expanding across the country and becoming a major player in supplying one of our most precious natural resources - water."

In addition to his chief executive role at Aqua America, he is Chairman of the Philadelphia Convention & Visitors Bureau's Board of Directors and Chairman of the Chamber's Legislative Policy Committee. Prior to joining Aqua America, DeBenedictis spent three years (1989-1992) as Senior Vice President of Corporate and Public Affairs for PECO Energy, a subsidiary of Exelon, the nation's largest electric utility. Currently, he is a member of Exelon's Board of Directors. From 1986 to 1989, DeBenedictis was president of the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce. He also served in two cabinet positions in Pennsylvania government: Secretary of the Department of Environmental Resources (1983-1986) and Director of the Office of Economic Development (1981-1983).

"Nick DeBenedictis is a true leader, in every sense of the word, whether you're talking about guiding the nation's leading water company or getting involved in important issues that affect our region," said Schweiker. "Under Nick's guidance, Aqua America's growth has been phenomenal. He is a driving force who will take on many responsibilities and excel in everything he does."

Among the list of past William Penn Award(TM) recipients are Willard G. Rouse, III, Chair, Liberty Property Trust; G. Fred DiBona, Jr., former President and Chief Executive Officer, Independence Blue Cross; Ambassador Walter H. Annenberg; Ronald Rubin, Chairman, Pennsylvania Realty Investment Trust; Dr. Judith Rodin, former President, University of Pennsylvania and now President, Rockefeller Foundation; and Ed Snider, Chairman of Comcast-Spectacor and owner of the Philadelphia Flyers and 76ers sports franchises.

Aqua America is listed on both the New York and Philadelphia Stock Exchanges under the ticker symbol WTR.

WTRG

SOURCE: Aqua America, Inc.

Aqua America, Inc.  
Donna Alston, 610-645-1095  
dpalston@aquaamerica.com

or

Terry Maenza, 610-645-1175  
tmmaenza@aquaamerica.com

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