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WOMEN WORK!
The National Network for Women's Employment

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 27, 2006

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West Virginia Women Work! Honored in Washington
Step-Up for Women Program Helps Families Reach Self-Sufficiency

WASHINGTON, DC — West Virginia Women Work! (WVWW!) will be honored for its innovative and successful approach to helping women in transition gain meaningful employment, in a Capitol Hill reception on April 6. Selected from a competitive pool of organizations, WVWW! will be presented with the Women Work! Award of Excellence. Service providers and advocates from around the country will attend the ceremony — sponsored by Verizon Communications. The event will be held from 8:00 a.m. – 9:45 a.m. at the Rayburn House Office Building, room 2168.

WVWW!'s Step-Up for Women skilled-trades training program, maintains a 91% job placement rate. Graduates earn between \$9 and \$15 dollars an hour — an average increase of \$6.80 from the jobs they were working in before entering the program.

“We have such a high success rate because we work with local employers to ensure that our students are learning the most in-demand skills and have opportunities for job shadowing and job placement,” explained WVWW! Executive Director Janis Gunel.

The number of single mothers in West Virginia has increased nearly 70% since 1994 according to Women Work!'s 2005 census report *Chutes and Ladders: The Search for Solid Ground for Women in the Workforce*. Today, nearly half of these women and their children live in poverty. Escaping from poverty proves especially difficult for single mothers who tend to have lower levels of educational attainment. Too often these women end up in low-income service jobs with few benefits. In West Virginia, only three in 10 single mothers have progressed beyond a high school education.

Sharon, a single mother of two daughters, graduated from Step-Up in April 2005. Due to WVWW!'s partnership with March-Westin, an engineering, general contracting and design-build firm, Sharon learned of and secured a job at the company. Today Sharon is making \$10 an hour, receives medical benefits and can support her children. Many other women have similar success stories, thanks to the employer partnerships WVWW! has forged with more than 10 employers including Allegheny Development, Swanson Industries, Orders Construction and Tri-County Electric.

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West Virginia Women Work! is a statewide nonprofit organization that supports and advocates for the education, employment and economic equity for all women. They achieve this goal through a comprehensive program of recruitment, training, referrals, placements, networking, advocacy, retention activities and public workshops. They are an affiliate of Women Work! The National Network for Women's Employment in Washington D.C. For more information, visit www.wvwomenwork.org or call (304) 598-0114.

Women Work! The National Network for Women's Employment is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that advocates for women's economic security through policies, programs and partnerships. Since 1978, the Network has assisted more than 10 million women to successfully enter, re-enter and advance in the workforce. Through supporting, advocating and advancing women's economic self-sufficiency, Women Work! members strengthen families and communities. For more information, visit www.womenwork.org or call (202) 467-6346.

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