Foundation transportation study could give area a lift

By CORY ALLYN
Staff Reporter

HARLEM VALLEY — The Foundation for Community Health has decided to fund a transportation study for rural areas in northeast Dutchess County. The goal is to find a more effective (and less expensive) way to assist area residents who have places to go but not the means to get there.

Gertrude O'Sullivan, the director of communications and special programs with the Foundation for Community Health (FCH), based out of Sharon, Conn., said Nelson/Nygaard Consulting Associates has been chosen following a thorough search for professional help.

"We hunted quite a while," she said. "We found a firm that has experience with rural area transportation studies, and [FCH Executive Director Nancy Heaton and I] felt they inspired confidence."

The foundation first went public with its search for area transportation after an announcement by Dutchess County early last year that it would be eliminating several routes of its LOOP bus system, including those traveling through Millerton and Pine Plains. Since then, a transportation task force was assembled with members of the foundation, the North East Community Center, representatives from local municipalities as well as outreach and community groups with a goal to work toward reestablishing some form of transportation for those who found themselves suddenly stranded.

"We think it's a good idea," O'Sullivan explained, including existing conditions of transportation and local need and travel market demand and service, all of which will give the group a better idea of the transportation needed in this area, including priorities and preferences.

There is hope that the study could be utilized by...