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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **W.J. Cowee Program Scholarships Awarded**

BERLIN, NEW YORK, April 17, 2006 – Diane Gentner of Petersburg, NY and Caleb Vincent of Berlin, NY, are the recipients of the 2006 W.J. Cowee Scholarship Awards. Gentner and Vincent, who are both seniors at Berlin Central School, will receive the award in recognition of their outstanding performance and achievement in the W.J. Cowee Program.

The W.J. Cowee Program, jointly developed by the Berlin Central School system and W.J. Cowee, LLC, is an academic course that challenges and encourages students with an interest in mechanical and industrial engineering. The program gives students a working knowledge of engineering, finance, and manufacturing which they apply to a case study at Cowee's Berlin, NY manufacturing facility. This year's case study challenged the students to solve a thermodynamic issue in the production of Cowee's products.

Experts in a variety of fields worked with the students in the Cowee program this year. David Zimmerman, Chairman of the Economics Department at Williams College, served as a mentor to the program and as one of the judges for the award. Lecturers and mentors also included David Smith a top manufacturing executive at Nucor Corporation; John Holden, engineering consultant and former head of facilities for Williams College; Professor Lester Gerhardt, Associate Dean of the School of Engineering at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute; and Kenneth Connor, Professor and Department Head, Electrical, Computer, and Systems Engineering at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

“We were thrilled to collaborate with the Berlin Central School for the second year of the Cowee Program, and we were honored to host what was really a stellar group of guest speakers. The students in the program worked very hard, and developed a unique understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing American manufacturing industries today,” said Brian E. Suslak, President and CEO of W.J. Cowee, LLC.

School Superintendent Toni Diamond is equally excited about the program. “By uniting us with business and university partners, the Cowee Program provides our students with expert resources and real life learning opportunities. The result is a rigorous, meaningful, highly academic and engaging course of study. Often high school students will ask, ‘Why do I have to learn that?’ Students in the Cowee Program don't ask that question. They are eager to be enrolled in the Cowee Program and they understand that the knowledge they gain in the classroom, either with their regular teacher or their business

and university partners, is knowledge they will use when solving the challenging problems presented to them. We are grateful that W.J. Cowee, LLC asked us to collaborate in developing this very special program for our students.”

W.J. Cowee, LLC, which is located in Berlin, NY, is the world’s leading manufacturer of wooden floral picks, plant stakes and other tools and accessories for professional floral designers.

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