

## Collaboration in New York: A Success for a Community and a Pipeline Project

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's Dispute Resolution Service's efforts proved successful in a highly contentious pipeline certificate proceeding in a New York community. Mediation was initiated following a December 21, 2001, Interim Order issued by the Commission that authorized Millennium Pipeline Company to construct and operate a pipeline from Lake Erie to Consolidated Edison's high-pressure line in the City of Mount Vernon, New York. The Interim Order, however, did not certificate a specific route for the Millennium pipeline through Mount Vernon because the citizens of that City raised numerous concerns about pipeline construction through their community and opposed the proposed pipeline in their community. The Interim Order requested that Millennium and the elected officials, interested parties and citizens in Mount Vernon negotiate over an alternative route. The Commission also offered the services of its Dispute Resolution Service to the parties.

The parties accepted the Commission's offer and in January 2002, the Commission's Dispute Resolution Service initiated a mediation process that continued over the next three months in the Mount Vernon area. In early May 2002, Millennium and the Mayor and the City of Mount Vernon agreed on a revised pipeline route through Mount Vernon.

The Mount Vernon elected officials called the agreement a major victory for the City because it addressed a number of important concerns. Millennium also claimed that the agreement met all of its interests and stated that it remained committed to working closely with Mount Vernon City officials and its citizens. Both U.S. Senators from New York (Senators Clinton and Schumer) filed letters commending the efforts of the Commission and its Dispute Resolution Service in support of the parties' negotiation efforts.