Tourism News

DUTCHESS COUNTY TOURISM

For Immediate Release

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Mary Kay Vrba Promoted to Executive Director of Dutchess County Tourism

Tom McQuade, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Dutchess County Economic Development Corporation (DCEDC), today announced the electionof Mary Kay Vrba as an ex officio member of the Dutchess County Economic Development Corporation Board of Directors, and also announced herpromotion to Executive Director of Dutchess County Tourism (DCT), effective immediately. She has served as the Director of Tourism since 2006.

Tourism has a significant economic impact in Dutchess County, where we welcome 4.1 million visitors annually, who spend $451.5 million on lodging,food, shopping, and area attractions. Dutchess County is located in the Hudson Valley region of New York State.

McQuade noted, "You can't overstate the significance of the tourism industry to our local, regional and state economies. Here in Dutchess, tourismsustains 8,717 jobs, which translates into $244.7 million in payroll. Mary Kay is absolutely the right person to lead our continuous efforts to attract morevisitors. Under her leadership, more tourists are vacationing in Dutchess, and they're staying longer, which is demonstrated by our healthy occupancy taxrevenue of $1.9 million in 2011. This is an increase of 5.63% over 2009. She's a driving force in the industry, and we're delighted to recognize her longtime leadership and vision for the future." Tom McQuade, a business coach, is proprietor of The Entrepreneur's Source in Poughkeepsie.

Dutchess County Executive Marcus J. Molinaro stated, "Congratulations to Mary Kay Vrba on her promotion to Executive Director of Dutchess CountyTourism and her new role as a Dutchess County Economic Development Corporation Board Member. Mary Kay is one of the most respected tourismofficials in New York State. Under her leadership, Dutchess County Tourism's efforts have funneled millions of dollars every year into our localbusinesses, creating jobs and generating sales tax dollars. Having Mary Kay closely involved with our 4R Future economic development efforts, togetherwith Cathy Maloney as the head of the DCEDC, and Ron Hicks as the County's Deputy Commissioner of Strategic Planning and Development, we have agreat team focused on greater economic stability and growth for Dutchess County."

President and CEO of the Community Foundations of the Hudson Valley, Andrea Reynolds, who also chairs the DCEDC Tourism Committee, said, "Thispromotion is certainly a testament to Mary Kay's skills and expertise. The tourism industry is comprised of private businesses, historic sites, arts venues,government, parks, farms, restaurants, and a host of accommodations and other attractions. Mary Kay is an expert at facilitating partnerships and creatingsynergy between all of these groups. She sees the future's greatest possibilities, and is able to link together all those who provide hospitality, recreation andentertainment to our 4.1 million visitors. Her dedication and extensive knowledge of our entire community and those who visit here ensure tourism willremain a vital sector of our economy."

Mary Kay has been with Dutchess County Tourism since 1994, serving as Assistant Director of Tourism and Group Tour Manager. Previously, she was theHudson River Valley Association's Director of Tourism, and partner in Crossroads International Management. Mary Kay was also Dutchess County'sCommissioner of Parks, Recreation, and Conservation.

Dutchess County Economic Development Corporation President and CEO Catherine A. Maloney said, "Mary Kay is tireless in her enthusiasm for guidingtourism locally and regionally. Her far-reaching industry knowledge is evident in her interactions with our leaders, partners, visitors, and staff. I lookforward to working with her to develop future programs."

Mary Kay is partnering with Adventure Junction and Ulster County Tourism to present the first Hudson Valley Outdoor Recreation Expo on June 2 and 3at the Poughkeepsie waterfront, created expressly for outdoor enthusiasts. Under her auspices, the BBG&G Advertising and Public Relations firm createdthe award winning marketing campaign "Simple and Sophisticated. You Deserve Dutchess." She also expanded the Farm Fresh One-Day Getawaysprogram, bringing more than 4,000 visitors to Dutchess since it began in 2007, with each visitor spending an average of $80 per person on their trip. AtNew York University, she's been an adjunct instructor in their hospitality program. She recently developed the "Creating Culinary Adventures" tourismpackaging conference. She serves on the planning committee for the 2012 DCEDC Annual Breakfast on May 3 at the Poughkeepsie Grand Hotel.

She holds an MS degree from George Williams College and a BA from the College of St. Mary. Receiving full Certified Tourism Planner accreditation in1991 from the National Tour Foundation, she's a member of SKAL, Travel Industry of America, National Tour Association, and American Bus Association.

She resides in Beacon.