



NEWS FROM THE OFFICE OF ULSTER COUNTY EXECUTIVE MIKE HEIN



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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COUNTY EXECUTIVE HEIN APPLAUDS CATSKILL REGIONAL SKI COLLABORATION Collaboration Continues Multi-County, Regional Ski Resort Marketing Effort

Kingston, NY (November 5, 2009) -Ulster County Executive Mike Hein is pleased to acknowledge that the five ski resorts he convened for an historic collaboration promoting skiing in the Catskills, have decided to build upon prior success with a new, expanded promotion for 2009-2010.

Belleayre, Holiday, Hunter, Plattekill and Windham Mountains have teamed up with the Catskill Association for Tourism Services (CATS) to launch a new CATS Card. The new CATS Winter Card costs \$25 and can be used an unlimited number of times for 20 percent off of the purchase price of full-day tickets at any of the participating five ski centers. CATS Cards will be available starting December 1st online at www.catscard.com or by calling 1-800-NYS-CATS (1-800-697-2287).

The ski resorts attended a meeting in February along with government and economic development leaders at the invitation of Ulster County Executive Mike Hein. The County Executive saw a need to put aside competitive differences and act regionally to divert metropolitan New York skiers away from Vermont's slopes and to the Catskills.

"We were told it was impossible to bring the public and private sectors together across county lines, but we never accepted that. I'm delighted that the original effort was successful and that this new initiative is moving forward," said Executive Hein. "The ski resorts and my colleagues in the surrounding counties deserve credit for recognizing the value of working together and developing a solid plan of action. The ski industry is a vital part of the regional economy and we must do everything we can to continue these types of win-win scenarios."

Last spring County Executive Hein urged the ski resorts to maximize the tremendous potential opportunity offered by pooling regional resources to persuade skiers that the Catskills offered great skiing, great resorts – and a much closer destination. Statistics showed that tens of thousands of metro NY area skiers passed right by Catskill Mountain thruway exits on their way to Vermont and other New England resort destinations. A successful March 2009 Ski the Catskills spring promotion was launched and resulted in an estimated 10 to 1 return on investment. Added revenues help local businesses and augment sales tax collections.

“Working together as a region is essential if we hope to gain market share over Vermont and other destinations”, said Belleayre Mountain’s Superintendent, Tony Lanza. “I applaud County Executive Hein’s efforts in persuading all of the interested parties to join forces”.

“Tourism is a key part of Ulster County’s economy,” said Lance Matteson, President, Ulster County Development Corporation. “The CATS Card will make it easier for skiers to grab a piece of the Ulster County experience and enjoy the outstanding ski and snowboarding venues the Catskills offers.”

This new promotion coincides with Ulster County’s recently launched marketing campaign, www.ulstercountyalive.com, designed to attract more visitors and strengthen the area tourism industry.

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