



NEWS FROM THE OFFICE OF ULSTER COUNTY EXECUTIVE MIKE HEIN



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COUNTY EXECUTIVE HEIN SPEAKS AT RALLY IN SUPPORT OF FARMERS AND JOINS WITH COUNTY LEADERS FROM ACROSS NEW YORK FOR BLUE RIBBON TASK FORCE ON THE FUTURE OF FARMING

Kingston, NY - Ulster County Executive Mike Hein spoke in Albany today at American Farmland Trust's No Farms – No Food Rally. At the rally, County Executive Hein emphasized the importance and value of local agriculture - and of preserving working family farms in our communities.

Following the rally, the County Executive, acting as sole Hudson Valley representative, joined county leaders from across New York for the first meeting of a Blue Ribbon Task Force on the Future of Farming. The Task Force was created by the New York State Association of Counties (NYSAC), at its 2010 Legislative Conference, to address the challenges facing New York farmers and help preserve the industry for future generations.

"Farming is at the very heart of our proud heritage in Ulster County and it is a critical industry that accounts for over \$65 million dollars in annual sales. That doesn't even count agriculture's contribution to the \$471 million dollar tourism industry in our area," said County Executive Hein. "As someone raised on a farm, I fully recognize that preserving viable, working family farms is critical to our economy, our way of life - and our future. Collectively we must recognize the financial, regulatory and competitive pressures that impact the farming industry and do everything we can to mitigate those pressures and help our farmers succeed. Locally, we have implemented effective farmland protection plans, purchase of development right programs and enhanced access to credit, however, we need to do more and I'm delighted to work with my colleagues as we develop new strategies to ensure a sustainable future for our agricultural industry in New York."

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“We are delighted to be sponsoring this event and we are grateful for the ongoing support provided by County Executive Hein, for our industry and our region. I’d also like to thank all of the organizations who are giving their time and expertise to strengthen our business community,” said Bob Linge, Executive Director of the Belleayre Regional Lodging and Tourism Association.

Participants from Ulster County include Rick Remsnyder, Ulster County Director of Tourism, who will deliver introductions and March Gallagher, Ulster County Deputy Director of Economic Development, who helped organize the event and will serve as panel moderator.

Other organizations and individuals represented at the event are as follows:

- * Ulster County Banking Consortium – Steve Hack, V.P./Commercial Loan Officer, Ulster Savings Bank.
- * Ulster County Development Corporation – Paul Rakov, Director of Business Development and Marketing
- * Mid-Hudson Small Business Development Center – Myriam Bouchard, Certified Business Advisor
- * Catskill Watershed Corporation – Michael Triolo, Economic Development Director
- * Shandaken Revitalization Plan Committee, Inc. (SHARP) – Buffy Kibe, Executive Director
- * The Mark Project (a non-profit rural development company) – Peg Ellsworth, Executive Director
- * Delaware County Economic Development – Glenn Nealis, Director
- * New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), Represented by Kema. Inc. - Edward Smyth, Director
- * United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) - Rural Development - Beverly J. Von Pless, Business Programs Specialist

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