



NEWS FROM THE ULSTER COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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CATSKILL REGION COUNTIES AND SKI MOUNTAINS AGREE TO PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP TO BOOST REGIONAL APPEAL

Kingston, NY – March 11, 2009 – Four counties and five ski areas of the Catskill Mountain Region announced a bold new marketing initiative to promote spring skiing in the Catskills. Representatives from Belleayre, Holiday, Hunter, Plattekill and Windham Mountains, along with leaders from Delaware, Greene, Sullivan and Ulster Counties hosted a press conference today at the Ulster County Office Building announcing details of the plan.

The effort is the result of meetings between the five ski area businesses, four county tourism directors, and the leaders of Greene and Ulster's economic development agencies. As an outgrowth, the ski centers have launched billboards on strategic highways with a carefully crafted message letting passersby know that they could have played more and traveled less if they had chosen to ski the Catskills.

The signs direct travelers to the Catskill Association of Tourism (CATS) website, VisitTheCatskills.com, where a 25% discount to anyone presenting a lift ticket from anywhere outside of New York is prominently featured.

To maximize exposure and improve the chance for success, operators of each mountain have posted the promotion to their homepages and CATS has sent out an e-mail blast to thousands of subscribers. This promotion comes at the perfect time because of all the months in the winter the Catskill Mountains typically see the most amount of snow in March.

Belleayre Mountain Superintendent, Tony Lanza said, "This partnership greatly enhances our overall marketing efforts. The additional revenue generated will benefit all of the businesses and local governments in the area. I appreciate the leadership of Ulster and Greene counties for bringing everyone together."

"Hunter Mountain is thrilled by this joint campaign between the winter sports areas of the Catskills. The five winter resorts and the surrounding towns hold so much natural splendor for skiers and riders traveling from New York City, Connecticut, Pennsylvania and New Jersey," Brian Czarnecki, Director of Marketing for Hunter Mountain, said.

Tim Woods, President and General Manager of Windham Mountain said, "The ski resorts in the Catskill Mountains offer a wide variety of terrain and services. This campaign is focused on leveraging our proximity to the market place and that is a move in the right direction."

"I cannot overstate the significance skiing has on our regional economy," Ulster County Executive Mike Hein said. "This collaboration between multiple county governments and the private sector is an innovative approach to ensure that the regional ski industry remains strong and vital and that it continues to generate jobs. This is a great first step toward future collaboration."

“With the importance of tourism to our economy, this is a successful first step to leverage resources to market the Catskills for skiing and snowboarding,” said Wayne C. Speenburgh, Chairman of the Greene County legislature. “For several years, Greene County has promoted a very successful spring skiing campaign in partnership with Hunter and Windham Mountains. Hunter and Windham Mountains are key drivers of the Greene County economy, so the 1-2 punch of the Catskills collaborative marketing effort and Greene County’s March Mountain Madness Campaign should help stimulate more business for all of our tourism related industries. It’s a good return on our investment.”

According to some estimates, 69% of Vermont skiers come from outside of the state. The campaign provides a tremendous opportunity to divert a meaningful portion of that business to the Catskill region.

The campaign was paid for through a combination of county and private funds with CATS utilizing I Love New York regional matching funds for part of the cost and the ski areas funding part of the cost.

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