

# Tourism News

**DUTCHESS  
COUNTY TOURISM**

*"Inviting The World  
To The Heart Of The  
Hudson Valley"*

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**For Immediate Release**

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DUTCHESS COUNTY, NEW YORK -- Fairweather Consulting has been selected to conduct a planning study to explore the creation of a Hudson River Valley Wine & Culinary Center (HRVWCC). The New York Wine and Grape Foundation (NYWGF) is utilizing a \$44,500 grant from Empire State Development to fund the strategic planning for the proposed facility. A similar center opened in mid-2006 in Canandaigua in New York State's Finger Lakes region.

The Center's goals include advancing education and training, economic development, and increasing agri-tourism related to Hudson Valley foods and wines. Fairweather's study will include defining a model for organizing and managing the facility; identifying the operations and services involved; developing detailed understanding of siting issues; and also identifying potential investors or stakeholders to support the HRVWCC.

A steering committee comprised of representatives from the public and private sectors is overseeing the planning study. Phyllis Feder chairs the steering committee. Phyllis, with husband Ben Feder, is co-owner of Dutchess County's Clinton Vineyards, and immediate past chair of the Board of the NYWGF. Serving as vice-chair is Mary Kay Vrba, director of Dutchess County Tourism.

Phyllis Feder said, "We selected Peter Fairweather and his associates as our planning consultants from a strong field of applicants. We look forward to turning the concept of a Wine & Culinary Center here in the Hudson Valley into a reality. It will serve as a marvelous showcase for New York wines and foods and a gateway to wineries and farms in the Hudson River Valley."

Mary Kay said, “Fairweather Consulting has brought in several partners who are positioned to advance this critical project as a strategic institution to position the HRVWCC as a national center for excellence in wine and the culinary arts. We will all benefit from their considerable familiarity with issues related to wineries and agriculture as well as tourism.”

A locally based firm from New Paltz, Fairweather will be joined in this effort by Rick Bishop, the agriculture economic development specialist for Sullivan County, and the Shepstone Management Company, which has extensive expertise in zoning and regulatory issues associated with agriculture and agriculture-related processing facilities.

“This is an inspiring opportunity to enhance the region’s position in terms of being a producer of quality wines and food products as well enhancing the region’s position as a tourism destination for wine and culinary enthusiasts. The Wine and Culinary Center offers major economic development potential for the entire Hudson Valley region,” Peter Fairweather declared.

“This is an exciting project which we are pleased to help launch with this grant, and we thank Empire State Development for their support,” said Jim Trezise, President of the New York Wine & Grape Foundation. “The New York Wine & Culinary Center provides a good model for a similar venture located in the Hudson River Valley that will focus on the region while promoting wines and foods from other New York regions as well.”

Chair Phyllis Feder added, “My thanks to Jim Jacob at Empire State Development who made the grant possible and to Jim Trezise at the NY Wine and Grape Foundation for his role in securing and administrating the grant. Their support is a great vote of confidence for the project.”

The NYWGF, created in 1985 by State legislation, is the only private sector organization statutorily recognized to receive and disburse State funds for projects like this. It works very closely with the wine and food industries statewide, and is one of the Founding Partners of the NYWCC. More information about the Center is at [www.nywcc.com](http://www.nywcc.com).