

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**I LOVE NEW YORK BRAND TO BE RE-LAUNCHED AT
GOVERNOR'S TOURISM CONFERENCE**

May 14-16 Conference Urges all to "Re-Imagine" New York State

The 2008 I LOVE NEW YORK Governor's Tourism Conference promises to offer attendees a new look at how to promote New York State. This year's conference takes place in Lake George at the Sagamore Resort May 14-16.

Open to the public, the Governor's Tourism Conference will attract more than 500 of the State's tourism promotion professionals, attraction operators, hoteliers, independent restaurant owners and managers, group tour operators, travel writers, festival and event planners, legislators, local economic development officials, students and others. During general sessions and workshops, several issues of importance to the tourism trade will be addressed.

First Lady Silda Wall Spitzer said, "This is a wonderful opportunity for key stakeholders of New York's tourism industry to build on the latest trends and sharpest ideas so that we can best promote New York's incredible regional assets. Tourism is a critical economic driver for our state and the re-launch of the I LOVE NY campaign will help it to remain a dominant force for our economy."

The main topic of discussion at the Governor's Tourism Conference will be the re-launch of the I LOVE NEW YORK brand and how local tourism partners throughout the state can build upon it. Also, state tourism officials will share innovative marketing strategies and provide key insights on new travel trends and tourism professionals from around the state will share business models and best practices to help participants better-promote their communities.

Recipients of Explore NY grants, the matching funds program designed to encourage integrated, thematic approaches to tourism promotion, as well as the winners of several other awards, will also be announced at the conference.

Thomas Ranese, Chief Marketing Officer of Empire State Development, New York State's economic development agency and manager of I LOVE NEW YORK, said "The underlying goal of the conference is to find new and different ways to remind consumers that New York State is a world-class tourism destination. Over the two-day meeting, we aim to re-energize what we have to offer, renew our strategies and redefine success. By doing so, we believe that we can attract travelers to enjoy our breathtaking scenic views, expansive outdoor recreation, rich American history and farm-fresh experiences."

The theme of the conference, “Re-Imagine Your New York,” reflects the movement currently underway to reinvigorate the I LOVE NEW YORK brand and stimulate tourism - and the economy - throughout the state. Governor Spitzer is supporting these efforts by submitting a 25% increase in funding to I LOVE NEW YORK in the Administration’s 2008-2009 budget proposal. This increase would boost tourism marketing from \$16 million (2007-2008 appropriation) to \$20 million, helping to make New York State more competitive in this global market. To date, New York State has launched the revamped iloveny.com web site and initiated multiple partnerships with private companies to raise awareness of the I LOVE NEW YORK brand and attract even more visitors to the state.

Tourism is vitally important to the economy of New York State. In 2006, New York took in \$46.6 billion in direct tourism sales and the Travel & Tourism industry employed 490,252 New Yorkers, according to a study published by Tourism Economics.

Businesses, media outlets and travel industry organizations are invited to partner with I LOVE NEW YORK through sponsorship of the conference. A wide range of sponsorship levels and benefits are available that will showcase the sponsor and build customer awareness of their products. All sponsorships are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

For more information on the Governor’s Tourism Conference, including sponsorship opportunities, email gtc@empire.state.ny.us.

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The Beat provides leads and tips about destinations, experiences and events throughout New York State, in addition to offering new and unusual story angles. For quick responses to press inquiries, a toll-free journalist hotline and important regional media contacts are also displayed on The Beat.