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Contact:

Austin Shafran (ESD) | ashafran@empire.state.ny.us | (800) 260-7313

Eric Scheffel (ESD) | escheffel@empire.state.ny.us | (518) 292-5274

“GREENEST NEW YORKER” TO VISIT THE CATSKILLS

Visit to one of NYS’s Iconic Green Destinations is part of I LOVE NEW YORK’s “Green Heart NY” tourism initiative

Albany, N.Y. – Erik Baard, New York State’s 2011 “Greenest New Yorker” will be on the road again -- this time cycling across the historic Catskills region on October 21-23 to promote its amazing autumn sights and outdoor activities.

Joined by area cyclists, Baard will travel approximately 60 miles on the Catskill Scenic Trail (www.catskillscenictrail.org) between historic towns to highlight the trail’s terrific bicycling opportunities and demonstrate that the Catskills region is open for tourists and outdoor enthusiasts. His travels along the trail, including his observations of the region’s spectacular fall colors, will be documented on his blog, *Diaries of the Greenest New Yorker*. [Editor’s note: A complete itinerary of the trip is attached]

“There is no better time than the fall foliage season for I LOVE NEW YORK’s ‘Greenest New Yorker’ to cycle through the Catskills,” said Edward Maitino, State Director of Tourism for Empire State Development. “From the breathtaking scenery that can be found throughout the region to all of the exciting destinations for tourists to experience, this area offers the complete package of events and activities everyone can enjoy.”

Baard was named the 2011 “Greenest New Yorker” by I LOVE NEW YORK in a contest to honor individuals who are doing their part in keeping the Empire State green and making earnest efforts to preserve the environment.

"I'm excited to be biking through New York, seeing the richness of the land. Our farms and woods are bursting with color and life," said Baard. As a daily bike commuter in New York City and volunteer for Transportation Alternatives, this Catskills ride will be a refreshing recreational change of pace!"

This weekend, Baard will travel to Phoenicia via Pine Hill Trailways bus on October 21 and spend the day and evening at The Emerson Resort & Spa (www.emersonresort.com). The spa offers a menu of holistic wellness, with a variety of treatment options to fit the desired lifestyle of every guest.

The following morning, Baard will have breakfast at Sweet Sue's in Phoenicia, and then bike 32 miles to Roxbury via the Catskill Scenic Trail, one of I LOVE NEW YORK's [Top Ten Green New York State Destinations](#). The 26-mile trail lies on top of the former rail bed of the Ulster & Delaware Railroad, offering a hard-packed surface perfect for hiking, biking, horseback riding and cross-country skiing. The Trail's very gentle grade – there is only a four hundred foot change in elevation over its entire length – makes it an easy trek for the young and young-at-heart through some of the most beautiful scenery in the world. For more information on the Catskill Scenic Trail visit www.catskillscenictrail.org/index.html.

The Catskill Mountains demand that visitors slow down their pace and enjoy the great outdoors. Saturday afternoon, Baard will spend an afternoon enjoying fall foliage and gallery hopping in the historic village of Roxbury. The afternoon includes the possibility of a side bike ride up to John Burroughs Woodchuck Lodge, where he will have the opportunity to revel in the great outdoors just as America's leading naturalist did. Saturday evening, Baard will lodge at the Roxbury (www.theroxburymotel.com), a "boutique motel" located amongst the picturesque Catskill Mountains and the recipient of Tripadvisor's 2010 Traveler's Choice Award. Sunday he will make a round trip on the Catskill Scenic Trail to the village of Stamford, home to Headwaters trails – a multi-use trail system that is a mix of public and private lands, including the CST.

"The Catskills region, which was 'green' long before the phrase became popular, offers some of the most majestic vistas in the oldest mountains in New York State," said Herb Clark, President of the Sullivan County Visitors Association. "Like so many other visitors to the Catskills, Erik will be amazed how a vacation destination so close to one of the world's most populous areas is still unspoiled and offers visitors a truly unique experience."

"Erik's experience in Delaware County will take him from forest and farmland to wide open river valleys – giving him that uniquely western Catskills experience." states Patty Cullen, director of tourism in Delaware County. "We're looking forward to his impressions of the Catskills and New York, and will be following his blog with much delight."

"We can't wait to have Erik Baard in Ulster County to spend some time biking the Catskill Scenic Trail, which is one of the loveliest trails in the Northeast," Ulster County Tourism Director Richard J. Remsnyder said. "I know Erik will love The Emerson Resort and Spa and all its fantastic amenities. I hope he'll work up an appetite before he goes to Sweet Sue's, which is noted for its scrumptious pancakes. Above all, we want him and all New Yorkers to know Ulster County has recovered from the Irene and is open for business."

Baard has been busy with the Greenheart NY program this month. On October 15 he escorted the children and staff of Hour Children, which supplies supportive services to incarcerated and formerly incarcerated women and their families, to Wilklow Orchards in the Hudson Valley for a day of apple picking and hay rides. The trip was sponsored by [Z Hotel New York](#) in Long Island City, Queens and was the second u-pick excursion for the Hour Children troupe, who went beach plum picking with the Greenest New Yorker in Long Island this summer. Photos and more on both trips can be found on his blog, [Diaries of the Greenest New Yorker](#).

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About Green Heart New York

In April of 2010, Empire State Development unveiled a new “green heart” in its famous I LOVE NEW YORK logo as part of an initiative that promotes green-certified restaurants and hotels, as well as the State’s parks, beaches, waterways and mountains. I LOVE NEW YORK’s Greenest New Yorker will spend the year traveling to national iconic green travel destinations. More information on the Green Heart NY program can be found at www.iloveny.com/greenheart.

About New York State

New York State features 11 beautiful vacation regions. New York’s attractions span from landmarks such as Niagara Falls, to the wine trails of Hudson Valley and treasures like the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown. Whether it’s wide-ranging outdoor activities for the whole family like fishing, hiking and boating, culinary wonders and farm-to-table fresh foods, or the rich history and culture of one of the 13 original colonies, New York State offers diverse activities for all travelers. For more information visit www.iloveny.com. Media can find press releases and more at www.thebeat.iloveny.com. For more information on the Adirondack Region of New York State, please visit VisitAdirondacks.com.

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Empire State Development is New York's chief economic development agency, committed to being recognized on a global scale as the economic development engine driving job growth, strategic investment and prosperity in New York State. ESD also oversees the marketing of "I LOVE NY," the State's iconic tourism brand. For more information, visit www.esd.ny.gov.

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