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HUDSON VALLEY BUILDER URGES GOVERNMENT LEADERS
TO USE 400th ANNIVERSARY
OF HUDSON RIVER'S DISCOVERY TO BOOST TOURISM

Ginsburg eyes use of piers, ferries, cruise ships to help people rediscover Hudson Valley

VALHALLA, N.Y. (Feb. 8) – Martin Ginsburg, principal of Ginsburg Development Companies and a longtime proponent of Hudson Valley economic development, today issued a call for government officials to use the 400th anniversary of Henry Hudson's historic journey to raise the region's profile and significantly enhance its tourism industry. As part of the celebration, Ginsburg is urging officials to build more piers along the river to serve ferry boats and cruise ships – a legacy that would benefit generations to come.

“The Hudson Quadricentennial in 2009 is an opportunity to seize national and international attention and create awareness that will attract visitors for decades to come,” said Ginsburg, whose Valhalla, N.Y.-based company is one of the state's largest home builders. “The Quadricentennial is a tremendous opportunity to rediscover the beauty of the river, the historic sites and the lovely old towns lining its shores. However, for the Hudson Valley to become a premier tourist destination there must be more piers along the river for visitors to stop and explore our attractions.”

Ginsburg believes the most significant lasting impact of the Hudson Quadricentennial should be a major public initiative to create more piers along the Hudson River. “The celebration of the river's discovery should mark its rediscovery as a significant public transportation lane as it once was during the steamboat era. My fear is that we may let this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity pass us by with just a tall ship parade and fireworks displays. We need to think much bigger than that and build a lasting legacy of new piers that will support river commerce for decades to come,” said Ginsburg.

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To build support for his plan, Ginsburg has written a white paper, has submitted Op-Eds to major daily newspapers in New York and has been meeting with state-level officials and Hudson River advocates since last year.

“As we work to redevelop our Hudson River waterfronts our vision needs to extend beyond the shoreline. We need to create economic activity in the river itself with expanded ferry service and the introduction of water taxis, dinner boats, visiting historic vessels and cruise ships,” said Ginsburg, who was instrumental in launching the successful cross-river commuter ferry that runs from his Harbors at Haverstraw development to Ossining’s Metro-North Train Station. “For this vision to be realized we need to recognize that piers are the basic public infrastructure of the river’s post-industrial future.”

Ginsburg is the originator and principal sponsor of Ferry-go-Round, which each summer since 2004 has sponsored several weekends of ferry service linking various Westchester and Rockland communities hosting waterfront events. On a weekend last September, more than 10,000 rides were taken connecting Haverstraw, Peekskill, Ossining, and Tarrytown. “Ferry-go-Round has demonstrated that there is great public interest in ferries beyond commuter hours. Regular weekend summer service would be very popular connecting communities such as Irvington and Piermont or Tarrytown and Nyack. Imagine how the quality of life would improve if life *near* the river became life *on* the river. Unfortunately, of those four communities, only Tarrytown has a suitable pier and it is in need of a major renovation and upgrade,” said Ginsburg.

According to Ginsburg, the opportunity for an expansion of the tourism economy extends beyond local residents and day-trippers. Citing a recent report from Mayor Michael Bloomberg that New York City experienced 44 million tourists in 2006, Ginsburg believes that river cruise ships would just need to attract a small fraction of New York City visitors to be successful and have a significant economic stimulus in the region.

“Vacations to other world-class cities include cruises on rivers such as the Rhine or the Danube. Why not the Hudson?,” asks Ginsburg. Waterborne tourism and travel actually have a long history in New York, Ginsburg noted, dating back to when Robert Fulton established the world’s first commercial steamship service along the Hudson in 1807. Millions of people a year used to take trips from New York City to Albany before the advent of the automobile led to the demise of riverboat travel in the middle of the 20th century.

But interest in sightseeing along the river still exists, Ginsburg said. Circle Line cruises around Manhattan are still popular, he noted, but he believes that visitors are missing out on an opportunity to cruise up the river and visit world-class tourist attractions such as Kykuit, John D. Rockefeller’s mansion, the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and Frederick Vanderbilt’s estate and the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Presidential Library and Home Site in Hyde Park.

“Studies have shown that cruises along the Hudson River could be popular and profitable, but investors have been hesitant to be the first to make that commitment,” said Ginsburg. “I think the government should provide financing or other support that would make it possible to bring cruising back to the Hudson River in time for the Quadricentennial. Imagine seeing our historic river towns becoming ports of call again!”

Ginsburg concluded by citing a recent report by the New York State Association of Convention and Visitor Bureaus that in 2006 the Hudson River Valley experienced tourism revenue of \$5.6 billion dollars. “What is astounding is that we are generating \$5.6 billion in tourism revenue in the Hudson River Valley without the Hudson River itself playing much of a contributing role. With a major public initiative to activate the river we should see that number grow significantly.”

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