

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Santa Maria Valley Wine Country Association Announces New Executive Director**

**Santa Maria, CA** – The Santa Maria Valley Wine Country, an advocacy group that champions winemakers and winegrowers working in the Santa Maria Valley appellation, has named a new Executive Director. Kady Fleckenstein, former Assistant to the Director of the Viticulture and Enology Program at Allan Hancock College, has accepted the position, and will begin working with this relatively new organization in April.

The Santa Maria Valley Wine Country, founded in 2006, counts Santa Maria Valley's top 27 wineries and vineyards as its members, including Au Bon Climat, Ambullneo, Bien Nacido Vineyards, Foxen, Native 9, Qupe, Rancho Sisquoc and numerous others. Unlike other vintner organizations, the Santa Maria Valley Wine Country Association works closely with the Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce and a broad network of non-winery related businesses, in an effort to truly celebrate and promote the diversity of the dynamic Santa Maria community.

Fleckenstein also had a successful stint at Plan A, an event planning company in Beverly Hills, California. Santa Maria Valley Wine Country Board of Directors President, Nicholas Miller, says the following regarding Fleckenstein's strengths, "Kady's background is in planning and coordinating special events. This past fall she moved to Santa Barbara County to study viticulture and enology in the effort to fully understand the wine industry. Kady is very passionate about wine, good food, hospitality and music and looks forward to working with the members of SMVWC to better promote all that Santa Maria has to offer."

Raised in Arlington, Virginia, Fleckenstein has lived in New York, Los Angeles and, most recently, San Diego. She currently resides in Santa Barbara county.

Fleckenstein replaces Cynthia Stanfield, the association's first Executive Director, who has moved on to establish her own business management consulting practice.

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