



SANTA BARBARA COUNTY VINTNERS' ASSOCIATION  
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## **PRESS RELEASE**

April 19, 2013

The board of directors of the Santa Barbara County Vintners' Association is proud to announce the hiring of Morgen McLaughlin as the association's new Executive Director effective April 19.

Ms. McLaughlin joins the Santa Barbara County Vintners' Association from Finger Lakes Wine Country Tourism Marketing Association, a highly regarded regional tourism marketing association based in Corning, NY, where she served as the President and CEO since early 2007. From 1994 – 2006, Ms. McLaughlin co-owned and managed a small winery and vineyard in Connecticut and oversaw all aspects of wine production, grape growing, and marketing.

While at Finger Lakes Wine Country, Morgen increased the association's revenues by more than 50%, developed powerful and effective integrated tourism and wine marketing campaigns, and generated significant media coverage for the Finger Lakes region. Ms. McLaughlin is especially skilled at digital and social media, public relations, wine marketing, and stakeholder relations. She holds Bachelors of Arts degrees in English and Secondary Education from Boston College.

The SBCVA Board of Directors has conducted an exhaustive search over the last three months which produced several very qualified candidates. Kurt Ammann, President of the Board said, "The final decision was very tough, but we are confident and excited to have Morgan joining the team! Her experience is a perfect fit to thoughtfully grow our organization and significantly increase the benefits for our members. We believe this change comes at a time when the association is poised to increase recognition for the area as a whole and better communicate the unique diversity and quality of the areas vineyards and wines."

"I am honored to be the next Executive Director of the Santa Barbara County Vintners' Association," stated Ms. McLaughlin. "I believe that my proven experience in the wine and tourism industries will help me bring increased regional, national and international attention to the AVAs, wineries, vineyards, and wines of Santa Barbara County."

McLaughlin will be attendance for the Spring Vintners' Festival on Saturday, April 20 at the Old Mission Santa Inés and will transition to full-time residency in Santa Barbara County by June 30 with her husband and three sons. She will be meeting with wineries, grape growers, and other associated businesses April 21-27, May 16-23, and June 20-27. Ms. McLaughlin replaces Jim Fiolek who resigned from the association in early 2013.

### **About the Santa Barbara County Vintners' Association**

The Santa Barbara County Vintners' Association is a non-profit organization (501c6) founded in 1983 to support and promote Santa Barbara County as a premium wine producing and wine grape growing region. The Vintners' Association produces festivals, seminars, and wine tastings as well as providing information to consumers and the wine and travel media.

Through the Santa Barbara Vintners' Foundation, the Association contributes to the community through local charitable, art and educational and scholarship organizations with proceeds from its various events, such as Santa Barbara Wine Auction, held every other year and benefitting Direct Relief International, and silent auctions at all the Association's festivals.

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