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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Hawthorne Valley Receives \$600,000 Grant

**DECEMBER 9, 2016, GHENT, NY** – Hawthorne Valley Association (HVA) is thrilled to announce receipt of a \$600,000 Empire State Development (ESD) grant, part of the \$83.1 million awarded in the Capital Region from the Regional Economic Development Council. This grant will allow HVA to implement the Hawthorne Valley Food Hub and Sauerkraut Expansion Project, which includes: moving the farm's growing lacto-fermentation business to Hudson to increase and expand its sauerkraut production; business incubation and job training programs -- already developed with other non-profits in the area and successfully prototyped at Hawthorne Valley's main campus; and a small retail component to serve current residents by providing easy access to fresh and local food in the neighborhood. HVA looks forward to continuing to contribute to the Regional Council's community-based, performance-driven approach to economic development.

Martin Ping, HVA's Executive Director expressed his gratitude and enthusiasm for the grant. "We would like to thank all the dedicated staff at Columbia Economic Development Corporation and the Empire State Development. We see this as being important not only for Hawthorne Valley, but the Hudson community. This long-awaited expansion into Hudson will create jobs as well as opportunities for working collaboratively with partners in the area to continue building a strong regenerative and resilient food system in the county and the region."

Andreas Schneider, Director of Farm Enterprises at Hawthorne Valley Farm elaborates, "Because of the central role of the food and agriculture sectors to the health of the rural economy in the Capital Region, as well as the importance of the restaurant industry in Hudson specifically, there is a growing need for employees with experience in value added food production and trained with culinary job skills. We will

be providing both new jobs in our own facility, and job training that will prepare people to work in other companies in Hudson's fast-growing hospitality and restaurant sector and elsewhere in the region.”

Educationally, HVA will expand its existing programs focused on business planning for aspiring farmers and its existing artisan food business incubation program. This expansion will include business acceleration services for select local brands and small farms. Finally, the new infrastructure will allow HVA to expand existing partnerships with other local non-profits and educational institutions.

The grant will also allow the creamery to add co-packing capabilities specifically for small to mid-sized local dairies. Dairy co-packing will help small farmers introduce new products and brands to the wholesale marketplace and diversify their revenue streams without incurring large upfront plant and equipment costs.

The Capital Region Economic Development Council's Strategic Plan identifies agriculture and food businesses as key sectors to grow the rural economy throughout the region. This project would allow for more local food to be grown, processed, and distributed throughout the region. The Hawthorne Valley Food Hub and Sauerkraut Expansion Project will lead to increased production, increased employment, and job training opportunities. The kraut business’ physical space will grow by 300% – and triple its purchasing of local and regional produce to an estimated 350 tons of produce annually and cementing Hawthorne Valley’s current status as the largest organic sauerkraut producer in New York State. This project builds on Hawthorne Valley's 45-year history as a local food hub and educational non-profit. This project is part of Hawthorne Valley's 5-year, multi-million-dollar expansion effort designed to increase educational opportunities and spur regenerative economic development in the region.

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## **ABOUT EMPIRE STATE DEVELOPMENT**

Empire State Development is New York’s chief economic development agency. The mission of ESD is to promote a vigorous and growing economy, encourage the creation of new job and economic opportunities, increase revenues to the State and its municipalities, and achieve stable and diversified

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local economies. Through the use of loans, grants, tax credits, and other forms of financial assistance, ESD strives to enhance private business investment and growth to spur job creation and support prosperous communities across New York State. ESD is also the primary administrative agency overseeing Governor Cuomo's Regional Economic Development Councils and the marketing of "I Love NY," the State's iconic tourism brand. For more information on Regional Councils and Empire State Development, visit <http://www.regionalcouncils.ny.gov> and <http://www.esd.ny.gov>.

#### **ABOUT HAWTHORNE VALLEY**

Hawthorne Valley Association is a diverse nonprofit in Ghent, NY, located in the scenic Hudson Valley's Columbia County. Hawthorne Valley is committed to social and cultural renewal through education, through agriculture, through the arts, and through research. Hawthorne Valley Association's integrated learning campus is embedded in a 780-acre Biodynamic farm and includes: a Waldorf school; on-farm education programs; a full-line organic/natural foods and grocery store; social, ecological, and cultural research groups; teacher education programs; arts initiatives and more. For additional information, please visit <http://www.hawthornevalley.org>.