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**Santa Barbara County Wins Gold & Best Marketing Awards
For New Exhibit at California State Fair**

Santa Barbara County recently won Gold and Best Marketing Awards from the California State Fair for the County's new exhibit currently on display at the CalExpo Fairgrounds in Sacramento until Sept. 7. The exhibit was a collaborative effort by the County and the Santa Barbara Conference and Visitors Bureau. It was the first all-County exhibit at the State Fair promoting Santa Barbara County's agriculture and tourism industries in more than 10 years.

"The exhibit is a dynamic marketing tool that invites Northern Californians to re-discover Santa Barbara County while also promoting the valuable ag products of our farming and wine industries," said Kathy Janega-Dykes, President & CEO of the Santa Barbara Conference & Visitors Bureau. "Showcasing the richness of our region was an important partnership for the Bureau and the County, and winning Best Marketing is reflective of how enticing our destination truly is."

The 2009 California State Fair runs Aug. 20 through Labor Day, Sept. 7, and annually draws about 1 million visitors. This year, 35 of California's 58 counties entered exhibits. The judges selected Santa Barbara County's exhibit for the Best Marketing Blue Ribbon Award from among all of the county exhibits. The County's exhibit was also given one of seven Gold Ribbons presented for having one of the top showcase exhibits.

The exhibit draws upon the County's history and Spanish-style architecture to highlight regional areas of interest for visitors while promoting products from the County's agriculture industry, including wines, grape growing, strawberries, avocados, artichokes, lemons and cattle ranching. The overall theme was to urge people to pack their bags for an adventure to Santa Barbara County. Each major region of the county was represented, from Santa Maria, Lompoc, Solvang, Buellton and Santa Ynez to Goleta, Santa Barbara, and Carpinteria.

Each region displayed mementoes, posters, over-sized postcards and other items that are presented in large steamer-trunk suitcases extolling the adventures here that await visitors. As visitors pass underneath a Spanish-style archway, they are also able to view a special, high-def BluRay video about Santa Barbara County shown on a 52-inch monitor that is inserted into a 12-foot-tall version of the famous clock tower at the historic County Courthouse.

A special feature video about the County exhibit and the livestock competition in which Santa Barbara County youth participated in at the State Fair will air soon on County cable television station Ch. 20. Check online at www.CountyofSB.org for more information.

For more information about the Santa Barbara Conference & Visitors Bureau and Film Commission, go online to www.santabarbaraCA.com or call (805) 966-9222.

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