

## 2013-J3352

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commemorating the 100th Anniversary of Masker Orchards

WHEREAS, It is incumbent upon the people of the State of New York to recognize and acknowledge those individuals and enterprises within our midst which have made significant contributions to the economic successes and quality of life therein, and distinguished themselves by their demonstrated achievements and acclaimed excellence; and

WHEREAS, The agricultural industry is part of the foundation upon which our distinct American heritage is built; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of Masker Orchards of Warwick, New York; and

WHEREAS, New York State is the second largest grower of apples in the United States and grows more varieties of apples than any other state in the Nation; and

WHEREAS, The Masker Orchards tradition began in 1913 when Ora J. Masker and his wife, Rena, purchased 200 acres of farmland in the beautiful Warwick Valley; the couple dedicated their lives to farming, and discovered that the soil conditions and climate were perfect for apple trees; and

WHEREAS, Furthermore, as time passed, Ora became a successful commercial apple farmer, harvesting thousands of bushels of apples each season; after his picking crew departed the farm following the harvest, Ora opened the farm to local residents to take the remaining apples that had fallen from the trees, and thus, the pick-it-yourself orchard was born; and

WHEREAS, Shortly after Ora J. Masker's death in 1969, his wife sold the orchard to George Vurno and Victor Ludmerer, with the knowledge that

the tradition and legacy Ora had worked so hard to create would continue under the guidance of these two friends; and

WHEREAS, George Vurno and Victor Ludmerer, affectionately known as Apple George and Apple Jack, continued the commercial operation for their first two years of ownership; in 1972, Masker Orchards opened solely as a pick-it-yourself orchard with the belief that families would drive to the picturesque Warwick Valley to enjoy a day in the country picking their favorite apples; and

WHEREAS, The tradition continues today, as Masker Orchards is one of the only orchards where you can drive right up to the tree, breathing the crisp fall air while enjoying quality time with family and friends; the views of the entire Warwick Valley are breathtaking amidst the fall foliage, and there are now barnyard baby animals, pony rides and wagon rides for the kids; and

WHEREAS, Masker is more than a pick-it-yourself orchard, it is a family tradition and an experience that creates memories to last a lifetime; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that those who enhance the economic well-being and quality of life in their community, and in this great Empire State, and have shown a long and sustained commitment to the maintenance of high standards in their industry, certainly have earned and deserve the recognition and applause of all the citizens of this great Empire State; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of Masker Orchards; and be it further RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Masker Orchards.