



For immediate release

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Interim Director Lance Reinheimer Moves Vanderbilt Museum Forward During His First Year

Highlights: \$1.1 Million in New Revenue, Expense Reductions and Fund-Raising; Planetarium Renovation, Media Coverage, Program Innovations

CENTERPORT, NY (February 15, 2012) – Lance Reinheimer, during his first year as interim executive director of the Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum, has made significant strides in stabilizing the institution’s finances, creating new sources of revenue, raising funds and reducing expenses. His efforts have generated \$1.1 million. Other progress includes renovation of the planetarium (to open in summer 2012), increased membership, addition of innovative programs and events, expansion of community awareness, visibility and positive media attention.

Reinheimer took over leadership of the Vanderbilt on February 15, 2011. The former assistant director of the Suffolk County Legislature’s Budget Review Office succeeded outgoing director Carol Ghiorso Hart.

“Creating new sources of income is crucial to the Vanderbilt’s future,” Reinheimer said. “We’ve made some genuine progress in the past year. We’re renovating the Vanderbilt Planetarium, our major source of operating revenue, and we have several projects underway that will generate additional income. All of us are striving to make sure that this singular place – an estate, mansion, museum, planetarium and park – thrives well into the future and continues to play a special role in Long Island life.”



Lance Reinheimer

The \$1.1 million represents several major policy initiatives:

\$200,000

Normandy Manor, built in 1917 for the superintendent of the Vanderbilt estate, was renovated by 18 Long Island designers, artisans and landscape architects, who invested in improvements to create the

2011 Restoration Design Show House. The grand house was open to the public for six weeks in fall 2011. Those improvements plus \$17,000 in admissions totaled \$200,000 of new income.

\$140,000

Normandy Manor will be leased for the next two years as a private residence to generate a new revenue stream to support museum programs.

\$150,000

Major private donations for the Vanderbilt Planetarium project include gifts to the successful Sponsor-a-Chair program, in which individuals sponsor the purchase of a planetarium theater chair for \$400. Donors are recognized with their name on the chair and on the donor wall in the planetarium lobby. A limited number of chairs are still available for sponsorship through the website: vanderbiltmuseum.org. (Call 631-854-5550 for details.)

\$275,000

The Vanderbilt sold its one-of-a-kind 1937 Chrysler Imperial Town Car – commissioned by Walter P. Chrysler and custom-built for his daughter – to Howard Kroplick. A retired communications executive, historian and classic-car collector, Kroplick plans to restore it to its original condition. The proceeds will endow a fund for the preservation and maintenance of the museum collections. A gift to the museum in 1959, the vehicle was de-accessioned from the collections in 1992.

\$250,000

Suffolk County has provided additional funding for critical aspects of the planetarium renovation, which will enable the facility to be used as a performance, lecture and meeting venue.

\$30,000

Careful reductions in museum operating expenses yielded large annual savings.

\$80,000

Traveling Museum: Discover the Universe – the 37-foot-long customized recreational vehicle is a mobile, hands-on science and astronomy classroom – was a gift to the Vanderbilt from the American Museum of Natural History with an estimated value of \$80,000.

PROGRESS DETAILS

Major Revenue Source: The Renovated Planetarium

The planetarium is undergoing a modernization and complete technological update. Included is the installation a state-of-the-art, \$3-million Konica Minolta Infinium star projector with full-dome video and surround-sound systems. The result will be an exciting, totally immersive, audience experience. Other enhancements include new seating and carpeting and a state-of-the-art ticketing and reservation system. When the renovated Vanderbilt Planetarium reopens in the summer of 2012, it will be one of the finest and most advanced in the United States.

The Vanderbilt is developing a comprehensive marketing program to promote the new planetarium with the goal to substantially increase attendance and admissions revenue. The renovation plans will allow the new compact star projector to retract out of audience sight lines. This feature, along with removable rows of planetarium seating, will provide flexibility for the planetarium theater to become a venue for performing arts, lectures and large-group meetings. A flexible theater space will allow the Museum to expand its audiences, visibility and regional appeal, and will broaden its ability to generate income.

Innovative Events Enhance Cultural Programming

The Vanderbilt, in addition to its annual, popular music events (Alex Torres and his Latin Orchestra and Madelyn and Nelson Avila, masters of the Argentine tango), has added programs to its summer schedule. New in 2011 were two more music events. In May, Linda Ray of Huntington Cabaret offered a sold-out benefit performance of the original New York City cabaret show *Fly Me to the Moon*, featuring 15 Long Island singers, which raised funds for the museum. In June, the well-known singer-songwriter Patricia Shih and her band performed the children's show *Songs in the Key of Earth*.

The Arena Players Repertory Theater Company and its Children's Theater, long associated with the Vanderbilt, are now in residence at the Vanderbilt Carriage House Theater. Area residents can now see professional regional theater all year in Centerport. In addition, after two successful decades, the company continues to offer its very popular Summer Shakespeare Festival on the stage in the Vanderbilt Mansion's courtyard.

A new event was scheduled last August for its inaugural summer at the Vanderbilt estate. The *Elwoodstock Music Festival*, founded in 2001, was set to play its first season as the renamed *Long Island Sound Festival*, but Hurricane Irene roared onto Long Island that weekend and forced cancellation of the event. The Vanderbilt and festival organizer Rich Rivkin are planning to unveil the festival in summer 2012.

Traveling Museum Program

This spring, the Vanderbilt will initiate a science-education outreach program to Long Island schools with its new *Traveling Museum: Discover the Universe*. The program will enable the Vanderbilt to enhance its longtime role as an adjunct to the science curriculum in local elementary and middle schools, and perfectly complements planetarium programs by providing students with observation principles for studying space. Educators from the Vanderbilt Planetarium and the museum's Education Department will collaborate with local science teachers.

When Reinheimer was appointed, William J. Lindsay, presiding officer of the Suffolk County Legislature, said he had "the greatest confidence that Lance can continue the ongoing process of putting the museum on the right track." He noted that Reinheimer, in his Budget Review Office post, had kept track of the Vanderbilt's financial and institutional struggles, adding that "his familiarity with the operations of the Vanderbilt is vitally important."

Reinheimer's long involvement with the Vanderbilt and its finances prepared him for the challenges of leading the museum and creating solutions to make it thrive in an economic climate that has been particularly difficult for cultural institutions. His largest project is renovating the 40-year-old Vanderbilt Planetarium, which opened in 1971 and was still operating with deteriorating, low-tech analog technology.

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