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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**INCREASED TOURISM GENERATES OVER \$246 MILLION FOR MERCER COUNTY
ECONOMY**

-- Growing Number of Tourists Visit Mercer's Varied Amenities---

Pittsburgh, Pa.- October, 2008- Despite a recession in the economy and costly fuel prices, VisitMercerCountyPA, formerly known as the Mercer County Convention & Visitors Bureau, reported an increase in tourism in Mercer County. The comprehensive advertising campaign that promotes Mercer County's quaint Bed & Breakfasts, popular shopping hotspots, highly rated golf courses and other entertainment venues attracted vacationers from all over the country and Canada, generating over \$246 million for the county last year.

"I am pleased with the growth of tourism which directly supports our economy," said Peggy Mazyck, Executive Director of VisitMercerCountyPA. "Tourism is ever-changing and competitive so we must continue to be innovative in our advertising efforts."

Mercer County retailers who are members of VisitMercerCountyPA have noticed an increase in sales and attendance in the area. Prime Outlets at Grove City reported that motor coach traffic to its site increased eight percent since September 2007. In total, Mercer County had more than 1,500 motor coach visits in 2007, surpassing the 2006 count of approximately 1,200.

Named one of the top ten golf destinations, as recognized by *Golf Digest*, the Mercer County Golf Trail, which includes golf courses and accommodations in western Pennsylvania and northeast Ohio, recorded an increase in the number of Canadians traveling to the region. A golf lodge located along the Mercer County Golf Trail most recently stated that approximately 75 percent of people who stay at their lodge are from Canada.

In addition to the organization's advertising efforts in Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Western New York and Southern Ontario, VisitMercerCountyPA has implemented new initiatives to support tourism growth including a Tourism Attraction Development Grant program that provide funds for new developments or expansions that will attract increased tourism to Mercer County.

With the help of the grant and the bureau's advertising efforts, VisitMercerCountyPA notes that tourism in Mercer County is on track to continue to grow. For more information on tourist attractions in Mercer County, log onto www.VisitMercerCountyPA.com.

About Mercer County:

Located in Northwestern Pennsylvania, along the Ohio border, Mercer County is home to name-brand outlets, boutiques and unique specialty stores for shoppers. The area is also known for its more than 25 challenging golf courses of inspired design. Golf Digest ranked Mercer County as one of its top golf destinations. Visitors can dine on mouthwatering cuisine in Mercer County's array of fine restaurants and then stay overnight in a well-appointed hotel, a luxurious bed and breakfast or a cozy country inn. Close to Pittsburgh, Erie, Cleveland and other major markets, Mercer County is easily accessible via I-80 and I-79. The County offers the perfect escape. For more information, visit www.VisitMercerCountyPa.com

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