

PRESS RELEASE: For Immediate Release - July 1, 2010

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**ROCKBRIDGE AREA RECEIVES TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENT
GRANT: Rockbridge, Lexington and Buena Vista will Benefit**

It was announced that the Rockbridge Region will receive a Transportation Enhancement Grant from the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT). The money will be used for a wayfinding signage system to design, install and maintain a system of customized directional signage to guide residents and visitors to primary and secondary attractions and destinations throughout the Rockbridge County area, Lexington and Buena Vista. The project will provide \$125,000 in funding for the planning stages of the wayfinding signage system. The planning stage consists primarily of identifying sites requiring wayfinding signage, designing the appearance of the signs and prioritizing the installation of the signage. Rockbridge Regional Tourism will administer the planning grant and oversee the project.

The Transportation Enhancement (TE) program is a federally funded program administered through the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT). Transportation Enhancement activities include community-based projects that expand travel choices and enhance the transportation experience by improving the cultural, historic, aesthetic and environmental aspects of our transportation infrastructure. For example, projects can include creation of pedestrian facilities, streetscape improvements, refurbishment of historic transportation facilities, and other investments that enhance communities and access. The federal government provides funding for TE projects through our nation's surface transportation legislation.

This program is designed to improve the safety and functionality of the transportation system in the Rockbridge County area. In the near future, the wayfinding signage system will reduce sign clutter and establish a comprehensive information network within the study area. As a safety benefit, this project will reduce the number of crashes in the area by providing a comprehensive wayfinding system. This project will give early alert to drivers seeking historic, recreation and scenic sites throughout the Rockbridge area. This wayfinding sign system will offer a high-impact, common sense approach to bring more people to the traditional business districts in Lexington, Buena Vista and Rockbridge.

“We are delighted to have been selected to receive this funding”, said Buster Lewis, Chairman of the Rockbridge County Board of Supervisors and board member of the Rockbridge Area Tourism Board. “This project will give both the local resident and the visitor a sense of arrival and an easily identifiable guide to the many outstanding cultural, historical and natural resources that our area has to offer”, Lewis said.

With the assistance of the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission, the Region’s planning organization; Rockbridge Regional Tourism along with local government staff studied ways to design a wayfinding signage system that is easily and quickly understood by motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians. This project has received funding from VDOT’s Transportation Enhancement program for two consecutive years totaling \$175,000.