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Community meeting slated on tobacco trail

Tobacco Heritage Trail Receives Support from Rails-To-Trails Conservancy

A public community meeting has been scheduled for Thursday evening, November 29 to discuss the Master Plan for the Tobacco Heritage Trail. The meeting will be held at The Prizery in South Boston from 7 until 9 p.m. that evening.

Discussion will focus on the recent announcement by Roanoke River Rails To Trails that they have secured a small grant from the Rails-To-Trails Conservancy (RTC), a national non-profit organization devoted to trail and greenway development. Since 1986, RTC has worked in partnership with communities across the country to transform unused rail corridors into trails, enhancing the health of America's environment, economy, neighborhoods and people. Funds from RTC will be used to support local trail planning and community outreach efforts for the Tobacco Heritage Trail, a network of trails and connecting routes in Southern Virginia. The Roanoke Rivers Rails to Trails Association (RRRT), founded in 2004, has been leading the charge for development of the trail network. To date 40 miles of abandoned rail corridor have been acquired, with negotiations underway for additional sections. According to Sandra Tanner, President of RRRT, the grant will help cover operational costs that often do not typically qualify for government funding programs, but are essential for the success of small non-profits. "We're really excited about this new partnership with the Rails-To-Trails Conservancy," said Ms. Tanner. "RTC has a long history of expertise in rail-trail development, and the grant will help cover costs for upcoming trail master plan community meetings."

The grant was made possible though the National Park Service, Challenge Cost Share Program. Since October 2005, The National Park Service, Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA) has served as

an advisor to the RRRT Board and assisted in areas of planning, coordination, and facilitation. RTCA will be continuing their support of the project in 2008, working with RRRT, Southside Planning District Commission, and local project partners to develop the Tobacco Heritage Trail Master Plan. The planning process will include a series of community meetings held at the following times and locations: Tobacco Heritage Trail Master Plan Community Meetings include one on November 27, 2007 at the Christanna Campus of Southside Virginia Community College from 7 to 9 p.m.

and another at the John J. Cavan Workforce Development Center in Alberta.

A third meeting will be held on November 28, 2007 at Boydton Elementary

School Cafeteria from 7 to 9 p.m. at 175 Mayfield Drive, Boydton. For additional information on the upcoming Tobacco Heritage Trail community meetings contact John Schmidt, 434-296-2108 or 888-781-5732.

For information on the Rails-To-Trails Conservancy, visit HYPERLINK "<http://www.railstotrails.org/>" www.railstotrails.org/; for information on the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program, visit HYPERLINK "<http://www.nps.gov/rtca>" www.nps.gov/rtca; and, the Tobacco Heritage Trail website is HYPERLINK

"<http://www.tobaccoheritagetrail.org/>" [www.tobaccoheritagetrail.](http://www.tobaccoheritagetrail.org/)

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by Swanson

