



Southside Planning District Commission

For Immediate Release: November 9, 2007

Contact: Carol Corker

434-447-7101

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

Roanoke River Rails To Trails announced today, 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 through 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

November 27, 2007 Southside Virginia Community College, Christanna Campus
7:00—9:00 PM John J. Cavan Workforce Development Center, Alberta, VA

November 28, 2007 Boydton Elementary School Cafeteria
7:00—9:00 PM 175 Mayfield Drive, Boydton, VA

November 29, 2007 The Prizery
7:00—9:00 PM 700 Bruce Street, South Boston, VA

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 www.railstotrails.org/; for information on the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program, visit www.nps.gov/rtca; and, the Tobacco Heritage Trail website is www.tobaccoheritagetrail.org.
