

**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA**  
**Office of the Governor**

Mark R. Warner  
Governor

September 22, 2005

Contact: Kevin Hall  
Phone: (804) 225-4260  
Cell Phone: (804) 393-9406  
Internet: [www.governor.virginia.gov](http://www.governor.virginia.gov)

Leighton Powell/Scenic Virginia  
Office Phone: (804) 282-5522  
Cell Phone: (804) 363-9453  
[www.scenicvirginia.org](http://www.scenicvirginia.org)

**GOVERNOR WARNER ANNOUNCES DESIGNATION OF NATIONAL SCENIC  
BYWAYS IN VIRGINIA**

~Va. awarded 4 *America's Byways* on first attempt, Blue Ridge Parkway designated at last~

RICHMOND -- Governor Mark R. Warner announced today that Virginia's four federal parkways -- Blue Ridge Parkway, Skyline Drive, George Washington Memorial Parkway, and Colonial Parkway -- are among the latest group of roads designated as America's Byways by the Federal Highway Administration. This designation is part of a broader effort to preserve, protect and enhance the scenic beauty and community character of these roads.

There are currently 125 America's Byways in 44 States. Today, 45 roads were recognized as new America's Byways, extensions of existing Byways, or changed designation from National Scenic Byway to All-American Road.

"It's amazing to think that these roads were not already National Scenic Byways," said Governor Warner. "These designations literally 'put Virginia on the map' that millions of tourists will use to plan their travel. It's unusual for any state to have four roads designated at the same time, and attests to the extra-special character of these roads, and the fact that they are long overdue in being recognized."

Another unusual twist is that the four nominations for National Scenic Byway were submitted as a package - not individually by each parkway - and topped with a cover letter from Governor Warner to demonstrate the statewide reach and support of the coalition that worked together for the America's Byways designation.

"The 400th anniversary of the founding of Jamestown is less than two years away," says Eugenia Anderson Ellis, president of Scenic Virginia, the non-profit group that has served as the project's coordinator. "While Jamestown will be the initial destination for most, we need to encourage our visitors to explore other areas of the state. The four new America's Byways will connect the Commonwealth and offer these tourists a scenic alternative for discovering our history, culture and natural beauty."

"Designation for the four roads represents the culmination of three years of hard work by a dedicated statewide coalition," Anderson-Ellis said. "We are so pleased to have played a major role in this effort."

The coalition -- composed of representatives from Scenic Virginia, the Virginia Department of Transportation, Virginia Tourism Corporation, the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, the National Park Service, the Blue Ridge Parkway Association, the Federal Highway Administration, the four Parkways, and numerous local groups and attractions, including Luray Caverns and Colonial Williamsburg - has stayed active and focused since 2002.

"Three years ago the Virginia General Assembly passed legislation, which Governor Warner then signed into law, giving the four roads the required State Scenic Byway designation. Since then all of us have been eagerly anticipating today's events," said Thomas C. Vick, Luray Cavern's Representative for Marketing & Public Relations and the former president of the Blue Ridge Parkway Association.

Alisa L. Bailey, President and CEO of the Virginia Tourism Corporation, notes that the America's Byways designation is a huge honor for both the Commonwealth and the localities that border the roads. Equally important, she says, is the exposure it brings. "Virginia's absence from the National Scenic Byways map and website has prevented us from the tourism marketing and publicity that comes with the designation," she said. "Until we received this designation, potential tourists using the National Scenic Byways map might have thought that the glorious Blue Ridge Parkway, which traverses through North Carolina and Virginia, would have stopped at the Virginia border."

The National Scenic Byways Program (NSBP) is part of the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The NSBP vision is to create a distinctive collection of American roads, their stories and treasured place, promoting a unique travel experience and enhanced local quality of life through efforts to preserve, protect, interpret, and promote the intrinsic qualities of designated Byways.

Photographs are available through Leighton Powell of Scenic Virginia at [lpowell@scenicvirginia.org](mailto:lpowell@scenicvirginia.org).

# # #