

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **SCENIC VIRGINIA RECOGNIZES EXCELLENCE IN SCENIC CONSERVATION**

Governor Mark Warner a Scenic Hero for 2005, Others Honored

*Richmond, Va.* Scenic Virginia paid tribute to Governor Mark R. Warner on Tuesday for his administration's overwhelming support of the successful effort to bring the National Scenic Byways program to Virginia. The statewide nonprofit organization recognized Virginia's top elected official as its **Scenic Hero** at their 2005 Scenic Awards program in Richmond.

"We were delighted to honor him with this award," said Scenic Virginia president Eugenia Anderson-Ellis. "Because of Governor Warner and his administration, our Commonwealth now has four new National Scenic Byways. They are the Blue Ridge Parkway, Skyline Drive, George Washington Memorial Parkway, and Colonial Parkway; and each was given the *America's Byways*<sup>™</sup> designation in September. Governor Warner obviously understands the value of the Byways program to the Commonwealth's tourism, and he provided support at every level. His efforts have literally put Virginia on the map."

In addition, Scenic Virginia honored the following:

**Best Preservation of a Scenic Viewshed.** Scenic Virginia paid tribute to the **Clarkton Bridge Alliance** for rallying a coalition to save the historic Clarkton Bridge, which spans the Scenic Staunton River between Charlotte and Halifax counties. Slated for demolition by VDOT in 2003, the 1901 structure is now being celebrated as a regional resource for heritage tourism, nature tourism, and outdoor recreation, and is featured as a loop on the Virginia Birding & Wildlife Trail. Pamela Kent "P.K." Pettus, Doug Powell, and former Secretary of Transportation Whittington W. Clement were singled out for their efforts to save the bridge.

**Honorable Mention.** Scenic Virginia recognized **Save Our Gateway** in Front Royal, Virginia for their successful opposition to the location of a Wal-Mart on the south fork of the Shenandoah River. In presenting the award to Craig Laird of Save Our Gateway, President Anderson-Ellis noted that Scenic Virginia -- while business-friendly -- advocates the placement of businesses where they will best serve a community. In this case, she noted, citizens preferred that the scenic viewshed of the gateway into Front Royal not be marred by the construction of a large distribution center.

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**Best Preservation of a Scenic River Corridor.** Scenic Virginia honored the **RappFLOW Project** in Rappahannock County for developing a county-wide watershed management plan for the people, land and streams of the Upper Thornton River. In presenting the award, Scenic Virginia's president praised the grassroots group for its determination to include all interested parties in the planning, and for subscribing to the belief that "where there is health, there is beauty."

**Honorable Mention:** Scenic Virginia saluted **The Grassroots Conservancy, Marion Civitan Club, and Town of Marion** for the Marion Riverwalk Project, a greenway of several miles along the middle fork of the Holston River that runs through the center of town.

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**Most Creative Scenic Improvement.** Scenic Virginia acknowledged **The Friends of the Rockfish Watershed and the Lynchburg VDOT District** for a successful river remediation project along two miles of the South Fork of the Rockfish River in Nelson County. As a result of the work, the beauty of the Rockfish Valley as seen from several Virginia Byways has been enhanced, and the formerly-stagnant portion of river is now a candidate for Virginia's Scenic River designation. Peter Agelasto of the Friends of the Rockfish Watershed and John McClain of the Lynchburg VDOT District accepted the award.

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**Best Local Anti-Litter Practices:** Scenic Virginia honored the **Keep Henrico Beautiful Committee** for its "Because We Care" program, which recruits dedicated citizens of Henrico County to be proactive about litter in order to make their roads, parks, schools and communities a more beautiful place to live, work and play.

**Honorable Mention:** Scenic Virginia praised **Giles County** for its educational School Anti-Litter program, in which car litter bags containing other materials were distributed to more than 2,500 students. More than 2,000 bags of litter were collected by 450 participating students.

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**Best Implementation of VDOT Tree-Trimming Policy.** Scenic Virginia saluted the Staunton VDOT District in recognition of good communication in its efforts to enhance the Avenue of Trees entrance into the Village of Brownsburg, a National- and State-Registered Historic District, along Route 252 in the Walkers Creek Magisterial District of Rockbridge County. After recognizing that the beloved stretch of sugar maples contained 28 dead or dying trees, VDOT arborist Scott Nye contacted area residents to inform them of the situation and to include them in the process. VDOT planted 64 new sugar maples and performed deadwood-trimming on the remaining 171 older trees.

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**Scenic Hero.** In addition to paying tribute to Award winner Governor Mark Warner, Scenic Virginia recognized members of the statewide coalition that had worked together on the project to secure the *America's Byways*<sup>TM</sup> designation for Virginia's four federal parkways. Executive Director Leighton Powell singled out Thomas C. Vick and the Blue Ridge Parkway Association for initiating the project in 2002, and she acknowledged the National Park Service, Federal Highway Administration, Blue Ridge Parkway, Colonial Parkway, George Washington Memorial Parkway, Skyline Drive, the Transportation and Natural Resources Secretariats, VDOT, Virginia Tourism Corporation, and the Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation as project partners. In a surprise move, Anne Dayton of the George Washington Memorial Parkway presented plaques to Mr. Vick and Ms. Powell for their work on the National Scenic Byways designation project.

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Established in 1998, Scenic Virginia is a statewide private nonprofit whose mission is to preserve, protect and enhance the scenic beauty and community character of the Commonwealth.

To obtain high-resolution photographs of the award-winning projects, photographs of the Awards ceremony, or this press release in electronic format, please contact Executive Director Leighton Powell at 804.363.9453 or email@scenicvirginia.org.

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