

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 6, 2006

Press Contact:
Leighton Powell/Scenic Virginia
Office Phone: 804.282.5522
Cell Phone: 804.363.9453
email@scenicvirginia.org

SCENIC VIRGINIA HONORS 2006 AWARD WINNERS

Recipients feted at ceremony recognizing excellence in scenic conservation

Richmond, Va. Scenic Virginia paid tribute last week to the recipients of its 2006 Scenic Awards at a ceremony at the historic Kent-Valentine House in Richmond. The honored projects represented a range of critical work being done in the field of scenic conservation throughout the Commonwealth.

Awards Chair Bill Beck of Fredericksburg noted that the nominations received this year were truly outstanding and represented almost every region of Virginia. Award winners were equally diverse, coming "from Abingdon to Chincoteague, from Loudoun to Chesterfield."

Speaking before a capacity crowd, President Eugenia Anderson-Ellis of Richmond reminded the audience of Scenic Virginia's mission, noting, "Beauty is good for business. Beauty is essential for the soul. The projects we're honoring will help preserve Virginia's scenic beauty -- our common wealth -- for generations to come."

Scenic Virginia presented its 2006 Scenic Awards to the following projects:

Best Preservation of a Scenic Viewshed: *Preservation of Tinker Mountain* in southern Botetourt/northern Roanoke counties.

A public-private partnership saved 250 acres of Tinker Mountain. The project has preserved the western ridge and the top of the mountain from future development, and is the first effort of its kind to succeed in the Roanoke Valley. The mountain -- one of the region's most visible landmarks -- has played a significant role at Hollins University since 1842. Project partners are Hollins University, the Western Virginia Water Authority, two private land owners and the Western Virginia Land Trust.

Honorable Mention: ***Brown & Williamson Conservation Easement*** in Chesterfield County.

A coalition worked to preserve 262 acres along a one-mile stretch of the James River that qualifies for the Scenic River designation but is zoned industrial and was threatened by development. The conservation of the property will enhance water quality in the James River while preserving significant wildlife habitat and magnificent views. Project partners are The Chesterfield County Parks & Recreation department, Friends of Chesterfield's Riverfront, Virginia Outdoors Foundation, Brown & Williamson Company, Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation, DuPont Teijin, and Environmental Solutions.

Best Preservation of a Scenic Water Corridor: *City of Fredericksburg Rappahannock-Rapidan Conservation Easement*.

In 1968, the City of Fredericksburg acquired nearly 4,800 acres of land along the Rappahannock and Rapidan Rivers. During the intervening years, and with the support and encouragement of local conservation groups, neighboring localities, and resource agencies, the City Council has worked to preserve and protect this river corridor by effecting coordinated planning, addressing encroachments, and monitoring recreational access points. The effort culminated in 2006 with the granting of a scenic easement on more than 4,200 acres to The Nature Conservancy and the Virginia Outdoors Foundation. Additional partners include Virginia Department of Game & Inland Fisheries and the Friends of the Rappahannock.

Honorable Mention: ***The Goose Creek Scenic River Advisory Committee*** for its work along the Goose Creek Scenic River in Loudoun County from the Fauquier County line to the Potomac River.

Over a period spanning nearly 30 years, the Goose Creek Scenic River Advisory Committee has created partnerships and cooperative working relationships and management that have preserved and conserved the corridor of the Creek.

Best Creative Scenic Improvement: *The Captain John Smith Trail*, running along the James River from the Huguenot Bridge in Richmond to the James River Bridge at Newport News.

With 2007 in mind, the Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation, in conjunction with the Department of Historic Resources, Virginia Council on Indians, Virginia Tourism Corporation, and Jamestown 2007 created this water trail and driving tour of 40 sites along our nation's founding river.

Honorable Mention: ***Robert R. Reed Sr. Downtown Waterfront Park*** on Chincoteague Island.

A public-private coalition undertook this project to convert an abandoned seafood dock with a dilapidated bulkhead into a scenic walking park that features a pavilion and boat slips.

Best Local Anti-Litter Practices: *Assign-A-Highway Program*, founded by attorney Frank Kilgore and managed by the Upper Tennessee River Roundtable, Inc.

Under the Assign-a-Highway program, probationers are utilized to pick up litter 26 times a year. Participation in the program is part of the probationer's sentence, and a Litter Control Officer is recommended to monitor and facilitate the program. The original program has now expanded statewide. The results are cost savings for the locality, tons of trash collected, and increased civic pride in residents. The 12 localities currently implementing the program include Lee, Wise, Dickenson, Buchanan, Tazewell, Russell, Washington, Giles, Carroll, Henry, Hanover, and Accomack counties.

Best Implementation of VDOT Tree-Trimming Policy: *Fredericksburg VDOT District* for developing and implementing new performance-based specifications for its tree-trimming program in an effort to improve workmanship and appearance.

Emphasis was placed on proper pruning techniques, reduction in trimming heights, and trimming to retain the natural form of the tree species while still addressing objectives such as clearance, safety, and sight distance in Stafford, Gloucester, King & Queen, Mathews, and Middlesex counties.

Scenic Hero: *Friends of the Rappahannock* for 30+ years of work to promote the conservation, protection, and enjoyment of the natural, cultural, recreational, scenic, and historical values of the Rappahannock River and its tributaries through planning, education, and relationship-building.

Two recent major successes have been the removal in 2004-2005 of the Embrey Dam, making the Rappahannock the longest free-flowing river in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, and efforts to convince the Fredericksburg City Council to place a conservation easement on 4,200 acres of land along the Rappahannock and Rapidan Rivers.

In addition, Scenic Virginia recognized the panoramic view of the James River from Libby Hill Park in Richmond as the **2006 Endangered Virginia Viewshed**. This historic viewshed -- the basis for the naming of Richmond due to its resemblance to a view in Richmond-upon-Thames, England -- is currently threatened by a proposed riverfront development of massive height that would destroy the viewscape.

"The view of the James River from Libby Hill Park is *the* quintessential Richmond view," noted executive director Leighton Powell. "This is the view that gave Richmond its name, and it's important that we preserve it. Scenic Virginia believes that a riverfront park is the best solution for keeping that magnificent view, preserving public access to the riverfront, and giving our citizens and tourists something to celebrate."

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 this release in electronic format or to request high-resolution photographs of any project listed above**, please contact Executive Director Leighton Powell at 804.363.9453 or email@scenicvirginia.org.

###