



PRESS RELEASE

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RRRC and Regional Tourism Partners Receive Virginia Tourism Corporation Grant for ‘Tween Rivers Trail Brand Awareness Campaign

Governor Ralph Northam announced today that the Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission (RRRC) received \$21,012.50 from the Virginia Tourism Corporation Marketing Leverage Program grant fund. In total VTC awarded more than \$840,000 for 56 tourism marketing projects across the state to help increase visitation and revenue for Virginia’s localities through tourism.

The grants are designed to help local and regional tourism entities attract more visitors by leveraging local marketing dollars, and will ultimately impact at least 232 other statewide tourism entities. The local organizations match the state grant funds by a minimum of 2:1 in order to support marketing projects. This funding cycle, the local partners will match the VTC grant dollars with more than \$3.1 million, providing more than \$3.9 million in new marketing to increase visitation to Virginia.

RRRC and its regional tourism partners received the \$21,012.50 grant for the ‘Tween Rivers Trail Brand Awareness Campaign. RRRC partnered with the Town of Culpeper Tourism & Economic Development Department, Fauquier County Department of Economic Development, Madison County Economic Development & Tourism Department, and Orange County Department of Tourism to supply \$42,025 in matching funds for the project. The Rappahannock County Visitor’s Center is also a partner in the ‘Tween Rivers Trail and other regional tourism efforts.

The grant will allow the regional partners to...

(Insert quote from local tourism official)

“The Marketing Leverage Program grant received from VTC will enable RRRC and our local tourism partners to expand the marketing of the ‘Tween Rivers Trail to both new and returning visitors from within and outside the Rappahannock-Rapidan region in order to support the region’s agri-artisan industry,” said Patrick Mauney, Executive Director of the Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission. “The ‘Tween Rivers Trail is a fine example of local partners working together to support marketing opportunities for agri-artisan businesses across the entire region, including working farms, farm-to-fork restaurants, wineries, distilleries, and craft breweries, accommodations, and artisan galleries.”

The VTC Marketing Leverage Program is designed to stimulate new tourism marketing through partnerships by leveraging limited marketing dollars, resulting in increased visitor spending. A minimum of three entities must partner financially to apply and may consist of Virginia towns, cities, counties, convention and visitors bureaus, chambers of commerce, other local or regional destination marketing organizations, private businesses, museums, attractions, cultural events, and other tourism-related entities.

Research shows that every VTC dollar invested in grants resulted in \$16 of direct visitor spending. Marketing campaigns that received Marketing Leverage Grants increased visitation by 15%.

“Virginia’s tourism industry is a key pillar of our economy and growing it is a great way to create new jobs and opportunity in every corner of the Commonwealth,” said **Governor Northam**. “These grants help communities across the Commonwealth discover new ways to market themselves to travelers by creating new tourism products and enhancing existing attractions and destinations. These efforts improve the visitor experience, making it easy for travelers to discover why Virginia is for Lovers.”

“The Marketing Leverage Program grants continue to provide critical funding for our tourism businesses across the state, and demonstrate the power of public-private partnerships,” said **Esther Lee, Secretary of Commerce & Trade**. “These dollars are injected into local economies across the Commonwealth, helping to create vibrant communities and premier destinations that attract travelers from all over the world. These efforts help to ensure that Virginia remains the best state in the nation not only to visit, but to live, work, and raise a family.”

Tourism is an instant revenue generator for Virginia. In 2016, tourism generated \$24 billion in revenue, supported nearly 230,000 jobs and provided \$1.7 billion in state and local taxes. Dollars invested in tourism are proven to provide a 7:1 return in tax revenue for Virginia, and the grant awards and matching funds provide a stimulus to localities seeking to increase tourism visitation and revenue.