NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Roanoke County Chairman Announces Prestigious Tourism Award Honoring for Local Area Governments

ROANOKE COUNTY, VA (November 6, 2013) – During the 2013 State of the County Address at Green Ridge Recreation Center, Roanoke County Board of Supervisors Chairman Mike Altizer announced that Roanoke County, along with the cities of Roanoke and Salem, jointly received the prestigious 2013 Governmental Tourism Leadership Shining Example Award from the Southeast Tourism Society.

On Tuesday evening, November 5th, Roanoke City Mayor David Bowers, City of Salem Mayor Randy Foley and Roanoke County Vice-Chair Charlotte Moore accepted the award at the Southeast Tourism Society's conference in Jacksonville, FL. This annual award typically honors a state, local or federally elected official whose support greatly enhances the tourism industry. This is the first time a joint jurisdictional nomination has been recognized.

All three governments banded together in support of the Roanoke Valley Convention & Visitors Bureau (RVCVB) by signing off on a regional tourism agreement investing three percentage points of the local lodging tax to the RVCVB, adding over one million dollars dedicated to marketing Virginia's Blue Ridge. "This is a big accomplishment for regional cooperation and the beginning of a new era for tourism," said Landon Howard, President of the RVCVB. "This is all about building a regional destination for Virginia's Blue Ridge creating more jobs and increasing local revenue. We are already beginning to see the benefits of this investment with tourism numbers trending upward with more hotel rooms sold and more lodging tax revenues collected than at any point in our history."

Due to the increased marketing support from these local governments, the RVCVB will be able to expand its marketing reach to potential visitors through a campaign designed to attract target markets in Virginia and North Carolina to Virginia's Blue Ridge. "The support of tourism from our local governments is a great investment for Virginia Blue Ridge," said Lee Wilhelm, Chair of the RVCVB. "Visitors don't see city or county lines. The CVB's job is to sell the area as a whole

and can now do it much more effectively. We appreciate the confidence that our elected officials have placed in our organization."

In 2012 tourism in Virginia's Blue Ridge region generated $730 million in revenue, providing $52 million in state and local taxes and supporting more than 7,200 jobs.

The Shining Example Awards have been a tradition since 1985 and were started by the STS, an organization dedicated to the promotion and development of tourism to its 12 member states of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia.

For information about the Southeast Tourism Society and the Shining Example Award, contact Catherine Fox, RVCVB Director of Public Relations & Tourism at (540) 342-6025 (ext. 114) or (540) 494-0514 (cell) or email cfox@visitroanokeva.com

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2013 GOVERNMENTAL TOURISM LEADERSHIP SHINING EXAMPLE AWARD

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To read more, click here for Elizabeth Jones' article in SWO-CO.