



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Franklin County and Virginia Western Announce Scholarship Program

The Franklin County Board of Supervisors has established a \$1 million scholarship program over 10 years with Virginia Western Community College to benefit residents of the County.

To facilitate the transaction, Franklin County will purchase a parcel of land adjacent to Smith Mountain Lake that was bequeathed to the community college over 30 years ago by James Turner Smith, which has been known over the years as the Smith Farm. The transaction was approved by the State Board of Community Colleges of the Commonwealth of Virginia Board of Directors at its November 12, 2009 meeting.

Smith died in 1979 and stipulations in the will restricted the land to educational, training, and public uses and also requested that the land be preserved in its farm like and woodland condition to the largest extent possible. The desire to donate the family farm was a decision jointly made by James Smith and his sister, Gladys Smith, who predeceased him. The Smith Farm is located on the Gills Creek area of Smith Mountain Lake, near the intersection of State Routes 668 and 944 in the Union Hall Magisterial District. The board of the community college system has determined that it would not use the land to create an additional community college or a secondary campus operated by Virginia Western. Given the restrictions in the will, the County is the most appropriate owner of the property because the will prohibits the traditional development of the property for residential or commercial use.

The Virginia Western Community College board of directors and the Virginia Western Foundation board of directors had previously unanimously approved the sale. Under the terms of the sale, the County will pay \$100,000 annually to the community college foundation for a period of ten years. The proceeds from the purchase of the Smith Farm,

totaling \$1 million, will be used for scholarships for residents of Franklin County. The criteria for the administration of the scholarships will include technical and vocational training as well as traditional certificate and degree programs and will be coordinated with the Franklin County School System.

The vision for the use of the Smith Farm, which totals approximately 307 acres, could include a future combined County Park and environmental education opportunities. Discussions concerning the appropriate use of the Smith Farm have been ongoing for over ten years between the County and the Virginia Western. Franklin County expects to be partnering with a number of organizations as the planning process proceeds as the property is adjacent to the 4H Center and has opportunities for a multitude of uses.

"The establishment of this scholarship fund allows Franklin County to expand its commitment to providing workforce development opportunities for its citizens," said Board Chairman Charles Wagner. "We must be able to provide a trained workforce for future businesses desiring to locate in our County."

"Virginia Western is pleased to partner with Franklin County in the creation of this scholarship program and in the utilization of the Smith Farm for the purposes the Smith family intended, added Virginia Western President, Dr. Robert Sandel."

Scholarship funds are anticipated to be available beginning with the 2010-2011 School Year.