



Franklin County
A Natural Setting for Opportunity

PRESS RELEASE

COUNTY RECEIVES PRESTIGIOUS GOLDEN STAR AWARD FROM THE ROANOKE VALLEY CONVENTION AND VISITOR'S BUREAU

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For Additional Information:

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Rocky Mount, Virginia --- Debra H. Weir, Tourism/Special Events Manager with the Franklin County Department of Commerce & Leisure Services, earlier today presented The Franklin County Board of Supervisors with the Golden Star Award from the Roanoke Valley Convention and Visitor's Bureau (RVCVB). This annual award is presented to an individual or organization in recognition for outstanding service and commitment to facilitating economic growth in the tourism industry. The award was formally presented to Mrs. Weir during a ceremony previously held yesterday at the Hotel Roanoke. "This honor is very gratifying in that it recognizes the importance tourism plays in Franklin County's economy" stated Mr. Charles Wagner, Chairman of the Board of Supervisors.

The Roanoke Valley Convention and Visitor's Bureau offered the following points in reaching its decision to choose Franklin County with the prestigious Golden Star Award:

- Franklin County has not only been a significant partner within the RVCVB's efforts to generate economic growth by promoting the many existing tourism initiatives and assets throughout the Roanoke Valley and Southwest Virginia, the County has also shown tremendous leadership and significant commitment in developing and supporting the many unique opportunities directly in its backyard.
- The County takes its outdoor recreation seriously and knows what the impact of luring outdoor enthusiasts to the region can mean to the economy. Through the County's efforts in hosting numerous fishing competitions including the Fishers of Men and two televised Bassmaster Elite bass fishing tournaments and playing host to the Oakley Big Bass Tour this upcoming fall, thousands of spectators and hundreds of professional anglers from as far away as Japan have visited the region and is quickly making Smith Mountain Lake known for being one of the premier destinations for professional angling tournaments in the country.

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- The County has also been one of the driving forces behind a new regional fishing trail promotion called Fish Virginia First. Fish Virginia First is designed to make it easy for visitors and event planners to find, and then enjoy, fishing in Virginia’s many bodies of water. Created by a consortium of counties, Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, Virginia Tourism Corporation and the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, it promotes the many freshwater fishing opportunities and the associated tourism infrastructure in central, southwest and southern regions of Virginia.
- Franklin County has also capitalized on its many waterways by developing a series of blueway trails. Each year hundreds of canoeists and kayakers hit the rivers during popular floats with ever-increasing record number of participants.
- Although outdoor recreation is key to the County’s tourism product, it is not the only asset. The locality also contributes significantly to several other well-known regional tourism initiatives such as the Crooked Road- Virginia’s Music Heritage Trail, the Wilderness Road, the new Heartwood Artisan Center, and the Round the Mountain Artisan trail.

During Monday’s award ceremony, keynote speaker Alisha Bailey, CEO of the Virginia Tourism Corporation complemented Franklin County for thinking regionally and being creative with its tourism efforts.

“For me personally, to be honored with this regional award is humbling as the award is a testament to our County’s continued efforts to promote outdoor fun, history, music, and the arts. The dedication and welcoming spirit of our business owners and citizens is an integral part of the community’s growing hospitality industry” stated Debra Weir, Tourism/Special Events Manager with the Franklin County Department of Commerce & Leisure Services.

For more information about the award or how you can make a visit or enjoy a vacation stay in Franklin County, please contact the County’s tourism office at 540-483-9293 or plan your vacation online at: <http://www.visitfranklincountyva.org> . A natural setting of adventure, music, and fun awaits you.

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