



## NEWS RELEASE

**For Immediate Release  
November 12, 2013**

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### **Orange County Receives Planning Grant as part of Regional Commission**

Orange, VA – Orange County was pleased to learn that Governor Bob McDonnell announced the recipients of the initial round of fiscal year 2014 planning grants from the planning grants program of the Governor's Agriculture and Forestry Industries Development Fund (AFID). The Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission (RRRC) received a \$33,000 grant for a project entitled "Building Agricultural and Forestry-based Businesses in The Foothills." The RRRC is comprised of Culpeper, Orange, Madison, Fauquier, and Rappahannock counties.

The project is an effort to increase support and preservation of the region's agricultural and forestry based industries by implementing specific strategies designed to raise awareness of these industries, increase the purchases of regional agricultural and forestry products, and sustain the future of agriculture and forestry in the region. Deliverables include a regional agro-artisan trail, directory, brand, annual conference, marketing effort, and completion of regional green infrastructure maps and data with agricultural soils and water quality.

Board of Supervisors Chairman, S. Teel Goodwin stated "Orange County remains committed to tourism, forestry, and agricultural endeavors and is proud to be a recipient and participant in this program."

The AFID planning grants program was developed to encourage local governments and regional organizations to think strategically about how they can better support and integrate agriculture and forestry-based industries into their community's overall economic development efforts.

"At the state level, we've had great success incorporating the Commonwealth's two largest industries, agriculture and forestry, and their \$70 billion overall impact on our economy into our economic development agenda," said Governor McDonnell. "Creating a program that incentivizes communities to plan for how they can best grow and support these industries in their business community is a natural continuation of a strategy that is proven to benefit Virginians and create jobs."

The Orange County Tourism Department will be working closely with the RRRC on this grant in the development and implementation of the ago-artisan trail. The Tourism Department remains focused on increasing tourism revenues and visitation to the County for the benefit of the citizens and businesses Orange. Through its presence at the Visitors Center in the Train Depot, website [www.visitorangevirginia.com](http://www.visitorangevirginia.com), Facebook page Visit Orange County Virginia, multiple publications and appearances, the mission of Orange County Tourism remains strong.

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