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Virginia Tobacco Commission Awards Grant for Fries Economic Revitalization Project

Galax, Va. - The Tobacco Indemnification and Community Revitalization Commission has awarded the Blue Ridge Crossroads Economic Development Authority (BRCEDA) a grant of \$193,141 for the purchase of the existing Fries Volunteer Fire Department and adjoining properties in downtown Fries, thereby opening up the downtown area for economic redevelopment.

The Virginia Tobacco Commission's grant to BRCEDA will be matched with an equal amount from the Appalachian Regional Commission, awarded to the Town of Fries and administered through the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development.

At the current time, a new fire department is being constructed in Fries west of the downtown, under the management of the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, the Town of Fries and BRCEDA.

Senator Roscoe Reynolds comments "The Tobacco Commission grant is an important element in the cooperative effort to revitalize the economy of Southwest Virginia, an area that has had to face more than its fair share of economic adversities. As a member of the Commission, I hope this will be a real boost to the economy in Fries and Grayson County. I am grateful to all who contributed to this effort."

Delegate Bill Carrico, who lives in the Fries community, has worked with the project team to revitalize the economy in Fries.

"The funding for this project is the result of a lot of hard work by many individuals and agencies. I want to thank the Tobacco Commission, BRECEDA, the Town of Fries, and everyone involved in making the revitalization of the town possible. The purchase of the firehouse is vital first step in creating a hub of activity which will renew the financial viability of the town of Fries," said Carrico.

The Tobacco Indemnification and Community Revitalization Commission is a 31-member body created by the 1999 General Assembly. Its mission is the promotion of economic growth and development in tobacco-dependent communities, using proceeds of the national tobacco settlement. To date, the Commission has awarded 1,221 grants totaling more than \$652.8 million across the tobacco region of the Commonwealth, and has provided \$234 million in indemnification payments to tobacco growers and quota holders.

The Blue Ridge Crossroads Economic Development Authority directs regional economic development activities and projects in Grayson County, Carroll County, and the City of Galax. The Board of Directors is comprised of representatives from each of the localities.

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