



County of Fairfax, Virginia

NEWS RELEASE

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Tourism Gets a Big Boost in the Mount Vernon District *Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Approves New Funding for Tourism*

FAIRFAX, VA - On Tuesday, September 24, 2019, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors approved a \$100,000 budget consideration item brought forward by Mount Vernon District Supervisor Dan Storck to fund a new tourism initiative in the South County area. This effort supports the work of the Tourism Task Force (TTF) started by Supervisor Storck earlier this year. The mission of the TTF is to tell the story of the Mount Vernon and South County region, create synergy between historical, recreational and ecological venues, provide new employment opportunities, and overall, enhance visitors' experiences. Over the last year, the TTF has strengthened the bonds and communications between tourism sites, created cross marketing opportunities and brought partners together to tell their integrated story. This new funding will advance the group's branding efforts for the existing southeastern Fairfax County Cultural Corridor, provide greater opportunities to promote the numerous and varied cultural opportunities that abound in the area, while attracting new food and entertainment venues.

This fall a consulting team will begin work with the TTF to identify opportunities and strategies to grow and develop the tourism infrastructure of southeastern Fairfax County. The consulting team will conduct a comprehensive study to assess the region's assets and key attractions from a visitor's perspective to understand the area's strengths, weaknesses, gaps and opportunities to increase awareness of this rich tourism area. The team, in conjunction with the TTF partners, will then develop partnership themes and identify potential brand and marketing messages to promote the region as a whole.

"In its earliest days, Historic Route 1 and the Potomac River were the two major ways for colonial families to travel north and south in the region. Later years saw families taking Sunday drives along the parkway to venture out of the city for recreation and relaxation. Today, we want residents and visitors, alike, to continue these traditions by biking, hiking or driving along the corridor to sample the wide variety of history, food and fun we have here in the Mount Vernon District," stated Supervisor Dan Storck.

Today, visitors to southeastern Fairfax County enjoy everything from birdwatching to kayaking, strolling the Mount Vernon Estate, painting at the Workhouse Arts Center, catching a history lesson at Gunston Hall, celebrating reunions at the new Army Museum, sipping a pint at a craft brewery and enjoying a variety of culinary experiences. As part of its collaboration,

the TTF is creating connections between venues to encourage greater visitation between sites and enticing visitors to spend multiple days in southeastern Fairfax County. Some examples of future projects may include River Trail Experiences, History and Art Interpretive Tours, fine dining combined with professional theatre and additional outdoor recreational activities. Ultimately, the TTF is focused on attracting a full-service hotel and more fine dining experiences to the area.

Barry Biggar, Visit Fairfax President and CEO, stated, *“South County, especially the Mount Vernon District with its abundant tourism assets, contributes greatly to the economic impact of tourism to Fairfax County. Tourism as an industry in 2018 contributed \$3.3 Billion to the economy, supported over 30,000 jobs and contributed close to \$60 million to the local tax base here in Fairfax County. It is a sustainable industry and one that clearly is an industry that contributes to the diversity of our overall economy, providing vital contributions to our residents’ quality of life.”*

The Mount Vernon District is not only home to George Washington’s Estate and the powerful story of our first president, but also the oldest African American community in the County, started by one of his freed slaves. Southeastern Fairfax is also home to the father of the Bill of Rights George Mason’s Gunston Hall, the new Army Museum, the Workhouse Arts Center, the Woodlawn Estate and Frank Lloyd Wright’s Pope-Leighey House, premiere golf courses, extensive mountain biking trails, riverfront parks and activities, and a wide variety of other opportunities.

Photos available at: <https://flic.kr/s/aHsmHfQKSD>

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The Mount Vernon District is located in southeastern Fairfax County. It is bounded by the Capital Beltway and City of Alexandria to the north, the Potomac River to the east, the Occoquan River to the south and Huntley Meadows Park to the west. Representing a population of over 128,000 within 60 square miles, it includes the Census Designated Places (CDPs) of Belle Haven, New Alexandria, Huntington, Groveton, Hybla Valley, Fort Hunt, Mount Vernon, Fort Belvoir, Mason Neck, Lorton, and Newington, Virginia.