

April 14, 2006

## Virginia and Maryland National Scenic Byways to Get Tourism Marketing Boost from Federal Grant

Media Only

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**RICHMOND, Va.** – The National Scenic Byways of Virginia and Maryland will get a tourism marketing boost thanks to a grant from the U.S.

Department of Transportation. Capital Region USA, Inc., a non-profit organization responsible for marketing Virginia, Maryland and Washington, D.C., as a unified travel destination in targeted overseas markets, announced that it has received a \$94,748 grant to fund a marketing initiative promoting the scenic byways of Maryland and Virginia.

CRUSA will partner with the Virginia Tourism Corporation and the Maryland Office of Tourism Development to implement the marketing plan that is intended to increase visitation from the United Kingdom to the seven America's Byways located in the two states. With the grant, CRUSA will place advertising, create a supplement to its international travel planner, conduct public relations and Web site marketing, work with UK-based tour operators, promote the byways at selected travel-trade shows and conduct research to evaluate the program's effectiveness.

Matt Gaffney, executive director of CRUSA, said the grant will be instrumental in helping to bring increased overseas tourism spending to Virginia and Maryland. "The best way for overseas visitors to get a true feel for the American experience is by driving the scenic secondary roads and visiting the communities along the way. This grant will better enable us to attract visitors who are looking for that experience," he said.

Four of the seven America's Byways are in Virginia – the Blue Ridge Parkway, the Colonial Parkway, George Washington Memorial Parkway and Skyline Drive. Maryland's three byways are Catocin Mountain Scenic Byway, Chesapeake Country Scenic Byway and the Historic National Road – Maryland. Virginia Tourism Corporation's Web site, [www.Virginia.org](http://www.Virginia.org), contains features on its National Scenic Byways with links to information on attractions and lodging along the routes.

Gaffney said the Capital Region is ideal as a "fly/drive" destination for European visitors. "They can fly into the region from one of our European markets, rent a car and then tour at their own pace. The scenic byways are favorite routes because of their natural beauty and history."

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## NEWS

Attracting visitors from overseas markets is a vital factor in overall tourism revenue. According to CRUSA data, overseas total direct spending in the Capital Region grew from \$679,279,600 in 2003 to \$827,956,400 in 2004. In Virginia in 2004 the average overseas visitor stayed 12.1 nights and spent \$77 per day.

Alisa Bailey, president and CEO of the Virginia Tourism Corporation, said the grant-funded cooperative marketing effort with CRUSA will be of great benefit to the visitor as well as Virginia. "Our scenic byways are a unique way to bring international visitors into contact with the best that America has to offer. They will get to experience great small towns, wonderful people, extraordinary natural landscapes - and like our domestic visitors, they will find some wonderful surprises along the way."

For more information on CRUSA and its mission, visit [www.capitalregionusa.org](http://www.capitalregionusa.org).

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