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All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. **Deadline: June 1, 2018.** Please include this application form with electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact Gage Harter.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Pittsylvania County

Program Title: Park Project

Program Category: Parks and Recreation

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Mark Moore

Title: Director

Department: Parks and Recreation

Telephone: 434-713-4505

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Email: mark.moore@pittgov.org

SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Richard Hicks

Title: Assistant County Administrator

Signature: 



2018 VACO Achievement Awards – Nomination Summary Pittsylvania County, VA Park Project

Executive Summary

Utilizing existing middle school campuses, Pittsylvania County Parks and Recreation built the first parks in the 250-year history of the county at each of its four middle schools. \$150,000 in “seed funding” was obtained through the county’s budget. With that funding in hand, an exhaustive fundraising campaign was completed over the next twelve months to raise an additional \$501,000 from nine different private funders including two regional hospitals, a regional foundation, charitable trust, two electric cooperatives, a local revitalization group and a national playground manufacturer. Parks include picnic shelters, restrooms, paved walking tracks and state-of-the-art playgrounds.

Community parks at schools have created a community atmosphere there, bringing school and community assets together. Athletic events held at the middle school fields now see the park area crawling with all ages utilizing all the park has to offer. Those events also help market the parks to the community with many families returning after practices or games have ended. The parks have received regional and state acclaim winning a regional health award and a “Best New Facility” state award from the Virginia Recreation and Park Society in October 2017 as well as the Virginia Treasures state designation from the Governor and a 2018 Governor’s Environmental Excellence Award.

The addition of these parks has helped improve Pittsylvania County’s health ranking from 75 out of 133 in 2017 to 70 out of 133 in 2018 (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute).

Brief Overview

Utilizing existing middle school campuses, the Pittsylvania County Parks and Recreation Department built the first parks in the 250-year history of the county at each of its four middle schools. Seed funding of \$150,000 was obtained through the county's budget. With that funding secured, an exhaustive fundraising campaign raised an additional \$501,000 over the next 12 months to completely fund the new parks. Parks include picnic shelters, restrooms, paved walking tracks, playgrounds and athletic fields. The park project has received several awards including the Virginia Treasures state designation from the Governor, a regional health award, a Virginia Recreation and Park Society state award for Best New Facility, a Governors Environmental Excellence Award and accolades from regional leaders and the school board. The addition of these parks has also helped improve Pittsylvania County's health ranking from 75 out of 133 in 2017 to 70 out of 133 in 2018 (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute).

Public response has been wonderful with calls to reserve the parks for activities and events as well as gym teachers raving about the benefits that the parks provide to the students and their lesson plans. Those gym teachers have also held benefit walks in the new parks and used parts of the new playgrounds for fitness tests. Community parks at schools have created a community school atmosphere here, bringing school and community assets together for the betterment of the community.

Problem, Challenge or Situation

The Pittsylvania County Parks and Recreation Department was established in April 2011 with the hiring of a Director. The Director was the first and only full-time employee for the first four and a half years. Four years into building the department and after the establishment of a strong youth sports program, the department turned its focus to creating more park access opportunities for county residents of all ages. Building on the department's strong relationship with the Pittsylvania County

School Board and an even stronger 9-page joint usage agreement, a fundraising campaign was implemented to build community parks at all four middle schools in the County; Chatham, Tunstall, Dan River and Gretna Middle Schools. These are the first parks ever built in the 250-year history of Pittsylvania County! Park amenities include a playground, paved walking track, picnic shelter and restrooms to go along with the athletic fields that were added during the first four years of the department. The parks were subsequently named after each middle school's mascot (Titan, Cavalier, Hawk and Wildcat Park).

Implementation

From the day the vision was conceived, the park project had two objectives, (1) provide every citizen in the county access to a park in their community for unstructured recreational opportunities. (2) create opportunities for the community to get out and exercise and start to address the obesity rates in the county. Community parks co-located on school campuses is a well-known best practice in the recreation field and was sorely needed in Pittsylvania County. According to the RWJF County Health Rankings, only 15 percent of Pittsylvania County residents have adequate access to locations to be physically active compared to the Virginia State average of 78 percent. Not only does proximity to parks increase physical activity for both adults and children, it also increases property value and draws businesses to the area. Studies have shown that open spaces such as parks, have a positive effect on nearby residential property values and can lead to proportionately higher property tax revenues for local governments.

To engage the community in the new parks that were being built, we worked with each of the four county high schools to sponsor a service project for the high school football teams where they worked alongside parks and recreation staff to spread playground mulch and install playground borders.

This allowed the department to save \$22,000 in installation costs. This savings was put back into the playground structures and allowed larger playgrounds to be built.

In addition to all of the benefits of having nearby recreation space, parks that are on school property provide unique benefits to our community. Schools are generally situated in geographical locations that provide access to a wide variety of community members and facilities that can be utilized after school hours and on weekends. Studies indicate that schools with community parks are one of the most cost-effective ways to increase physical activity amongst all age groups, especially in rural areas like Pittsylvania County.

From a maintenance perspective, the school system already had weekly contractual mowing scheduled at the middle school sites. This takes the cost of keeping the parks mowed off of the parks and recreation department.

Pittsylvania County Parks and Recreation has received regional and statewide acclaim for the construction of parks at each of the county's four middle schools. The department received a regional award for improving the health environment from a regional health collaborative (The Health Collaborative of the Dan River Region). The department also received a Virginia Recreation and Park Society (VRPS) state award for Best New Facility (Parks, Playgrounds, Greenways or Trails) at the 2017 VRPS Conference held in Hampton, Va.

The four middle school parks were also named Virginia Treasures sites by then Virginia Governor, Terry McAuliffe. A state representative was on hand to present the designations at the park groundbreaking in May 2016. The Virginia Treasures initiative was launched by Governor McAuliffe as a strategy for conserving land and expanding access to public outdoor recreation.

Finance & Staffing

The total cost of the park project was \$651,000. Pittsylvania County contributed \$150,000 to the park project through CIP funds. After one year of fundraising, total grant funding for the park project was completed with \$501,000 raised from nine different partners including two hospitals in the region, regional foundations, charitable trusts and a national playground manufacturer, to name a few. A significant amount of grant funding considering the entire FY17 Parks and Recreation budget was just \$331,000! One highlight on the fundraising journey was a trip to Chattanooga, TN to present this project to Playcore, the parent company of GameTime Playgrounds. After a tour of their manufacturing facility and a presentation made to their executive staff, they came on board with a 50% matching grant for playground equipment as well as significant help in designing each playground to meet the needs of our community.

Starting a new parks and recreation department in the middle of a recession (2011) is not ideal and would require some innovative, creative and collaborative thinking to build it. Building on a strong partnership with the school system that has been built and nurtured since 2011, the Parks and Recreation department approached the school system about building parks on the campuses of its four newly built middle schools around the county. That would prove to be the most cost-effective way to build parks since the infrastructure work was already complete when the schools were built. That infrastructure includes parking, power, water, ingress and egress as well as a well-known community gathering space that would help market the schools to the community since almost every child in that area of the county would attend that school. Funding these infrastructure pieces would create an incredible cost that would likely kill the project. The middle school campuses were the only reasonable location for these parks given the county's and school system's budget constraints. Thankfully, the school

system was open to allowing parks but because of its own tight budget, would not be able to help fund them. Parks and Recreation would have to convince the county to put funding towards the project and then go after additional funds to make it happen. The department was able to garner \$150,000 from the county through its Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) budget and, with that funding in hand, was able to bring on board nine other funding partners contributing \$501,000 in grant funding to make the project a reality. At the groundbreaking for the park project, Calvin Doss, Pittsylvania County School Board Chairman, spoke in amazement that the Director, Mark Moore, was able to fully fund the project through grants and limited funding from the county. Doss stated, "He came to the board with a vision and a cost of \$650,000. I told myself there was no way he'd raise the money but he did and here we are!" The \$501,000 raised in grant funding for the project was more than the entire parks and recreation annual budget. The ability to place parks on school campuses also helped with keeping them mowed. Since the school system already has contracted mowing for schools, the parks would get mowed without the county having to purchase mowers and staff to keep the parks mowed. Parks on middle school campuses are also utilized by the 6th-8th graders that attend the schools. Teachers are able to incorporate them into their lessons.

As discussed in detail earlier, the capital costs incurred for this project were \$651,000. Those costs include:

- In-kind use of 4 middle school campuses
- four playgrounds and installation
- four 10-foot wide, paved walking tracks
- four picnic shelters or pavilions

- 24 commercial grade picnic tables
- 8 commercial grade trash cans
- 4 restroom buildings with mens and womens rooms (2 stalls in each)

Currently, the entire parks and recreation department is comprised 3 full-time employees and 1 part-time employee. These parks are maintained by one full-time maintenance worker with occasional help from a second full-time recreation programmer who also supervises a 14,000sf community center. There is also help from a number of volunteers in each community.

Program Results

Pittsylvania County now has four award-winning parks spread throughout the largest county in Virginia. These are the first parks in the history of the county. County residents now have a park nearby at their middle school to play sports on a variety of athletic fields, picnic, walk, run, bike, throw frisbee, and play on the playground. Unstructured recreation opportunities are now available that simply were not prior to these facilities. Park shelters are now rented for birthday parties and other events. Public response has been wonderful with calls to reserve the parks for activities and events as well as gym teachers raving about the benefits that the parks provide to the students and their lesson plans. Those gym teachers have also held benefit walks in the new parks and used parts of the new playgrounds for fitness tests. We were also able to place our most handicap accessible ramped playground at Chatham Middle School, home to the county's severe and profoundly disabled children. These children come to Chatham Middle School from all over the county. This allowed their play experience to be inclusive, playing in the same area as the other school children. Community parks at schools have created a community school atmosphere here, bringing school and community assets together. Athletic events held at the middle school fields now see the park area crawling with young and old utilizing all the park

has to offer. The athletic fields located in these parks are home to a youth sports program with more than 2,000 children on more than 140 teams in 6 sports. All of this and the department just turned 7 years old on April 1, 2018. Developing a vision and selling stakeholders and partners on that vision has brought our department a long way in a short amount of time.

The park project has collected numerous awards including a regional Thrive! Award from The Health Collaborative of the Dan River Region, a Virginia Recreation and Park Society state award for Best New Facility and a Governors Environmental Excellence Award from the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR).

The success of this project has been predicated on the cooperation between the county and the school system with both understanding that the children that leave the school at 3pm are the same children that return later that afternoon/evening to utilize the park and athletic fields. This community-minded thinking has created a win-win park project that has greatly affected the quality of life in Pittsylvania County and created a stronger sense of community.

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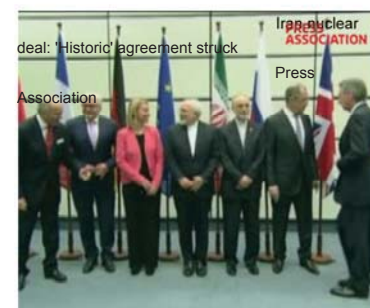
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\$100,000 advances park plans in county

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Posted: Tuesday, July 14, 2015 6:56 pm

GoDanRiver staff



A \$100,000 grant from the J.T.-Minnie Maude Charitable Trust will move Pittsylvania County closer to building four new parks at the county's middle schools.

Combined with \$150,000 from the county government and another large grant that "is in the works," construction is expected to begin soon, according to Mark Moore, director of Pittsylvania County Parks and Recreation.

"This is a project that will most likely happen in the next year or 18 months," Moore said. "They'll all have a walking track, picnic shelter, playground and restrooms. ... These are sites that have appeal to the entire family."

Pittsylvania County's middle school campuses were the perfect choice for the new parks because so much work had already been done — land acquisition, site preparation, water, electric power, parking and access from state roads. The schools are also geographically centered in their communities.

"They're already a focal point in the community," Moore said. "A lot of the work has been done for us. ... We can really hit the ground running."

Moore said that the new parks are part of the county's comprehensive plan for public recreation. The parks are being developed at a time when recreation and wellness are becoming more important in the lives of individuals while the county's recreation offerings are now considered an important part of economic development.

"It's about creating public access to open spaces," Moore said. "It's about creating a well-rounded recreation department. This is a piece that appeals to families of all ages."

Moore said the project's next step will be the actual construction.

While each of the four new parks will have the same features, the walking tracks will vary in length at each of the parks. The longest of the four walking tracks will be at Gretna Middle School, where a 1,600 foot track can be built because of the flat terrain there.

"It's exciting for the county, it's exciting for helping wellness in the county," Moore said of the new parks, which are designed for people to "get out and get moving."

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Posted in [Pittsylvania county](#) on Tuesday, July 14, 2015 6:56 pm.

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County school board approves middle school parks

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Trevor Metcalfe/Register & Bee

Pittsylvania County Parks and Recreation director Mark Moore shows where a new walking track and park additions will be constructed behind Chatham Middle School. The \$625,000 project will install the tracks at all Pittsylvania County middle schools, and was recently approved by the school board.

Posted: Thursday, August 13, 2015 6:50 pm

BY TREVOR METCALFE
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The Pittsylvania County School Board recently approved plans for \$625,000 in expansions to parks at all four county middle schools, including walking trails and playgrounds at each location.

"We want to bring parks right into the county, and make it conducive for families to get moving — from the little ones to the old ones," said Parks and Recreation director Mark Moore.

The project, which Moore said should have all funding secured by next year, will install walking trails of 1,600 feet at Gretna Middle School and anywhere from 600-800 feet at all other locations. Additionally, picnic areas, playgrounds and restroom facilities will be installed inside the walking track perimeters.

"Mom and dad can walk while the kids can play on the playground, and they can see their kids," Moore said. "That's the important part."

The project is the second phase of updates to the middle schools.

"We've worked hard over the last four years to update and improve our athletic fields at each of the middle schools," Moore said. "So now, what we're doing is using these sports programs to market these parks."

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Over the last four years, the recreation department has added or renovated seven ball fields around the county as well as install a walking track at Brosville Elementary School.

Moore said the schools would provide a central location for families to both exercise and relax, as well as hold recreational football, soccer and baseball games.

It cost about \$275,000 to build and renovate all of the ball fields at each location. For the next step of the project, the department has already secured \$150,000 from Pittsylvania County and \$100,000 from J.T.-Minnie Maude Charitable Trust. Moore said he plans pursue sponsorships from other local grants and health care providers.

The county recreation department also has plans to create an access point for Dan River in the future. The RiverBank Fund recently awarded \$30,000 to the county to construct the water access point west of Danville.

Metcalfe reports for the Danville Register & Bee.

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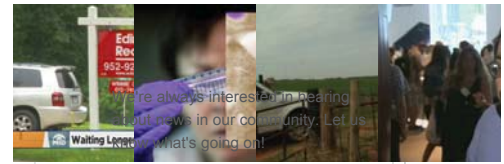
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Hospitals bring county closer to funding park project

BY JOHN R. CRANE

jcrane@registerbee.com

(434) 791-7987 | Posted: Saturday, February 27, 2016 3:37 pm

Centra has awarded a \$100,000 grant toward Pittsylvania County's middle school parks project. An additional \$14,465 will come from Danville Regional Medical Center, the county's parks and recreation director said.

The contributions bring the county closer to achieving full funding for the \$625,000 project to build walking tracks and other amenities at the county's four middle schools.

Pittsylvania County Parks and Recreation Director Mark Moore was especially excited to receive money from Centra that will help complete the park at Gretna Middle School.



Pittsylvania County seal

"They stepped up to the plate and hit a home run for the county," Moore said Saturday. Gretna Middle School is about a mile from Centra Gretna Medical Center, Moore pointed out.

The parks at Chatham, Gretna, Tunstall and Dan River middle schools will include 10-foot-wide paved walking tracks, playgrounds, picnic shelters and restrooms.

Of the \$100,000 from Centra, about \$54,000 will target the purchase of playground equipment at Gretna Middle, and about \$42,000 will go toward the walking track, Moore said. Remaining money will help pay for the playground's installation.

The \$14,465 from Danville Regional Medical Center will go toward completion of the walking track at Chatham Middle School. DRMC also will fund fitness equipment along the track and host walking and wellness activities at the park after it is finished, Moore said.

About \$110,000 is needed to cover the remainder of the project's cost, and Moore is in talks with a playground manufacturer for more grant money. He said there's potential for an additional small grant to pay for what's left.

Moore said he was optimistic about getting a substantial grant from the playground manufacturer.

Earlier this month, Moore announced that the Danville Regional Foundation approved a \$150,000 grant for the \$625,000 project. The grant was a match to the county's \$150,000 contribution.

The JT Minnie Maude Charitable Trust has also provided \$100,000.

Moore said the county's \$150,000 was the catalyst for getting funding from private entities, which want to see commitment from localities when determining whether to provide funds. "That's what got us off the ground," Moore said.

He said he expects to have full funding for the project by the spring and to break ground this summer.

The project — in the works for about 18 months — needed two things from the beginning: commitment from the Pittsylvania County School Board to allow the parks and money from the Pittsylvania County Board of Supervisors, Moore said.

"We're here at the end of the funding process and it looks like all the things are falling into place," Moore said. "It's a good example of a public/private partnership."

By bringing parks to the schools, the county is providing a core service to its citizens, Moore said.

The project is a "watershed moment" for the parks and rec department, he said. With the parks, it's moving recreation outside of just youth sports into unstructured physical activities, Moore said.

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Pittsylvania County middle school parks named Virginia Treasures

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Matt Bell/Register & Bee

"Funding this park and putting this field to use was a no brainer," said Karl Stauber with the Danville Regional Foundation. Gretna Middle School is the first of four locations to have a park constructed on the grounds for public use. This marks the first time in the history of the county that a park has been constructed. The Danville Regional Foundation and Pittsylvania County Board of Supervisors gave \$150,000 for the park; Centra and J.T. Minnie Maude Charitable Trust \$100,000; and Danville Regional Medical Center \$14,000. Also making donations was the Mecklenburg Electric Cooperative, Southside Electric Cooperative, and Revitalization for a greater Gretna.

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Matt Bell/Register & Bee

Mark Moore, director of Pittsylvania County Parks and Recreation, was ecstatic to be breaking ground on one of the four parks scheduled to be constructed in the county. It will be the first time in the history of the county that a park has been constructed.

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Posted: Wednesday, May 11, 2016 6:00 pm

BY JOHN R. CRANE
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 (434) 791-7987

GRETNA — Gov. Terry McAuliffe has named Pittsylvania County's four middle school parks Virginia Treasures sites.

Officials announced the designation during the groundbreaking for the \$625,000 parks project at Gretna Middle School on Wednesday morning.

Felix Schapiro, special assistant to Virginia's secretary of natural resources, told attendees quality of open space is as just as important as quantity of land when it comes to designating sites.

"You've got both of them today," Schapiro said.

In the past, conservation efforts focused on a per-acre approach, but McAuliffe is

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trying to emphasize quality over quantity, Schapiro told the Danville Register & Bee before the ceremony. Also, public access has been a key aspect, Schapiro said.

“Parks can become hubs for the community,” he said during his brief remarks before attendees.

McAuliffe launched the Virginia Treasures initiative in spring 2015 as the state’s strategy for conserving land and expanding access to public outdoor recreation.

Officials from Pittsylvania County and the town of Gretna attended the groundbreaking, along with representatives from organizations that contributed money for the parks project. Money came from the Pittsylvania County Board of Supervisors (\$150,000), Danville Regional Foundation (\$150,000), JT Minnie Maude Charitable Trust (\$100,000), GameTime (a playground manufacturer, \$110,000) and Danville Regional Medical Center (\$14,465).

Mecklenburg Electric Cooperative, Southside Electric Cooperative and Revitalization for a Greater Gretna also provided funding for the project.

Pittsylvania County Parks and Recreation Director Mark Moore — who led the effort to bring the parks to the county — pointed out that just \$150,000 of taxpayer money paid for the project, roughly a quarter of its cost.

“The middle school parks [are] the culmination of a five-year plan for my department,” Moore told attendees.

They will include a paved walking track, picnic shelter, playground and restrooms at each of the county’s four middle schools — Tunstall, Gretna, Chatham and Dan River. Each park will be about six acres, totaling about 24 acres of recreational space in the county. Moore expects the project to be complete by the end of the year.

Moore credited the school board’s support and the board of supervisors’ \$150,000 contribution for making the project possible.

“Without the county’s and the school system’s progressive thinking, I would not be standing here today,” Moore said.

Moore’s goal when he became parks and rec director five years ago was to bring recreational opportunities to all of the county’s citizens. He said he was once asked why the word “parks” was included in the department’s name, since the county does not have any parks. “One day, we will,” was Moore’s response.

Board of Supervisors Chairman Jessie Barksdale said he was happy the parks were getting state recognition.

County School Board Chairman Calvin “Bunky” Doss, Centra Managing Director Shannon Knight, JT Minnie Maude Charitable Trust Executive Director Fred Webb Jr., Danville Regional Foundation President and CEO Karl Stauber, and GameTime Sales Associate Mitch Reno also gave remarks.

“It’s unusual to find a county of this size with no parks,” Reno said during an interview after the groundbreaking. “It’s an honor for us to bring the first playgrounds and parks to the county and to be part of that.”

As for the Virginia Treasures designation, Moore said he did not seek the status but received a call from Schapiro about the parks. Schapiro encouraged Moore to apply for the program. Signs will be put up at the parks signifying the designation, Moore said.

During the ceremony, Schapiro presented a signed letter and a certificate for the designation to Moore.

The Virginia Treasures program’s “idea is to preserve, protect and highlight Virginia’s most important ecological, cultural, scenic and recreational assets as well as its special lands,” according to information provided by Schapiro.

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Job Corps Information Sessions for Young Adults
Tue, May 24, 10:00 am EDT
Workforce Development Center, Danville

Danville Republican Committee to Meet
Tue, May 24, 6:15 pm EDT
Mary's Diner, Danville

Wednesday
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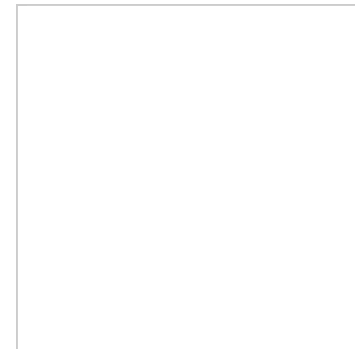
Danville Regional Medical Center Blood Drive
Wed, May 25, 1:00 pm EDT
United Electric Company (UES), Danville

Virginia Community Capital 10-Year Celebration
Wed, May 25, 5:00 pm EDT
Danville Community Market, Danville

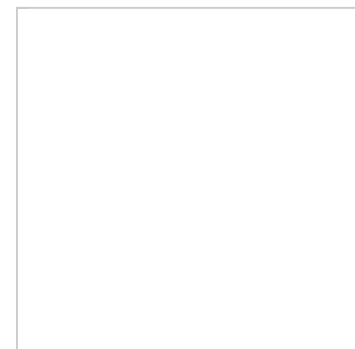
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McAuliffe's goal under the program is to identify, conserve and protect at least 1,000 treasures by the end of his term; 469 have been designated so far.

A recreational treasure "provides new public access to a natural, cultural or scenic outdoor recreation resource," according to information provided by Schapiro. The chosen projects help the public "by enhancing outdoor recreation" and "foster stewardship of natural and cultural resources."

"Recreational or cultural treasures must be owned by the federal, state or local government or, if privately owned, accessible to the public" to be eligible, according to the program.

The Tobacco Heritage Trail, a 17-mile multi-use trail in Southside Virginia, is a designated recreational treasure.

Crane reports for the Danville Register & Bee

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Danville's 2016 Festival in the Park – Part #9

There's no way that I can top the delicious photo of the BBQ ribs from Part #8 in this series , but we have to move on down the RSS Feed Widget

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Ground broken for parks

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Eddy Lloyd/Star-Tribune

Ground broken for parks

Participants in the groundbreaking included, from left to right, Amy Blair and Kate Farmer with RGG, Shannon Knight (Centra), Clarence Monday (Pittsylvania County administrator), Mark Moore, Parks and Rec Director, Bunky Doss, Chairman PCS School Board, Fred Webb, (J.T. Minnie Maude), Alan Larson, (Danville Regional Medical Center), Mitch Reno, (GameTime Playgrounds), Jessie Barksdale, (Pittsylvania Board of Supervisors Chairman), Elton Blackstock (PC Supervisor), Karl Stauber (Danville Regional Foundation), Jerry Hagerman and Bob Warren (PC Supervisors).



Posted: Wednesday, May 18, 2016 10:41 am

By EDDY LLOYD

Star-Tribune Staff Writer | [0 comments](#)

Mark Moore has looked towards this day for longer than he would like to remember.

Moore, Director of Pittsylvania County Parks and Recreation Department, said he had often fielded questions of people asking why the name of the department was parks and recreation, not just recreation.

Moore said people would tell him, "You know we don't have any parks, right?" Moore said his patent reply was, "Just wait. One day we will." The day was May 11, 2016.

Groundbreaking ceremonies took place at Gretna Middle School Wednesday for the park that will be built on Gretna Middle School property. While GMS was the official site, construction also began at Chatham, Dan River, and Tunstall Middle Schools.

For a department that has been in existence for just a little over five years, this was a giant step. In that time, Moore has overseen the creation of 11 athletic fields while getting funding for a county that had never received funding for parks and recreation.

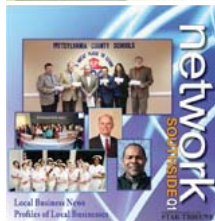
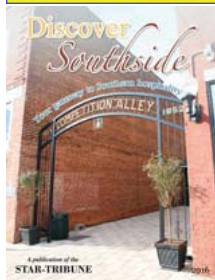
The parks project cost in the neighborhood of \$625,000, but Moore was able to obtain funding for approximately 75% of the cost. The first \$150,000 was provided by the Board of Supervisors, but the remainder of the funding came from nine different sources.

The contributors to the parks included Centra Health, Danville Regional Foundation, JT-Minnie Maude Charitable Trust, GameTime Playgrounds, Danville Regional Medical Center, Revitalization for a Greater Gretna, Mecklenburg Electric Cooperative, and Southside Electric Cooperative.



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Felix Shapiro, special assistant to Virginia's secretary of natural resources, was on hand to present Moore with a letter designating the parks as Virginia Treasures.

The Virginia Treasures program, a creation of Governor Terry McAuliffe, is an idea "to preserve, protect and highlight Virginia's most important ecological, cultural, scenic and recreational assets as well as its special lands."

Each park will consist of a walking track, picnic shelter, playground and restrooms. Expectations have construction of the parks to run approximately 12 months.

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Dan River High School football players put finishing touches on middle school playground

Ceillie Simkiss Jul 18, 2016



Matt Bell/Register & Bee

Dan River High School's varsity football team went to work shoveling mulch around the brand new park that is nearing completion at Dan River Middle School. Pittsylvania County Parks and Recreation will have the football teams of each respective high school move the mulch onto the playground area, allowing for \$22,500 to be spent in other ways for the parks project.

Dan River Middle School officially has a new playground thanks to the Pittsylvania County Parks and Recreation department and the Dan River High School football team.

More than 25 members of the football team showed up with their coaches on Monday afternoon to help spread mulch 12 inches deep around the playground equipment.

"All the kids participate in little league ... around here, so it was a great opportunity to give back to the community, give back to where they started from," said head coach Ferrell Edmunds. "It's a good opportunity for the guys."

Ray Richie, an assistant JV coach, said, "We've been real fortunate — people have donated more to Dan River than they ever have, so we're trying to find ways to pay it back, and this is just paying it forward for the football team. It's building character, too. That's what we're trying to do here.

"Character follows you wherever you go, whatever you're doing. We've got a good turnout of football characters and this is building character and teamwork."

There is still a lot to be done for the Dan River's park site. Each of the sites also will include a walking track, a 19-foot by 30-foot shelter and public bathrooms, according to Pittsylvania County Parks and Recreation Director Mark Moore. He said the shelters will be the next thing to go up since they are being installed by the same company that installed the playground equipment.

Moore said the other three playgrounds should be finished and mulched by Labor Day, with the help of other local high school football teams. Thanks to the help of the local football teams in spreading the mulch, Moore was able to save \$22,000 and put that money back into the project.

The funding for these parks came mostly from private donations, with only a quarter of the funding coming from the Pittsylvania County Board of Supervisors. This park is part of a five-year project from the parks and recreation department, and the park sites were named Virginia Treasures by Gov. Terry McAuliffe on May 11.

TITAN PARK at Tunstall Middle School



CAVALIER PARK at Chatham Middle School



WILDCAT PARK at Dan River Middle School



HAWK PARK at Gretna Middle School

