



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Virginia Department of Housing
and Community Development

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
September 20, 2013

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Southwest Virginia region announces tourism milestone of \$927 million for 2012

-The region saw a 43 percent increase in total travel expenditures since 2004-

ABINGDON – It was announced today at the 2013 Southwest Virginia Creative Economy Conference that the Southwest Virginia region generated more than \$927 million in travel expenditures in 2012.

According to the Virginia Tourism Corporation's 2012 Economic Impact Report, Southwest Virginia saw a 43 percent increase in total travel expenditures for the region since 2004. During the same time, the commonwealth has seen a 41 percent increase in tourism revenue across the state, putting the region above the state average. The highest localities for increase in travel expenditures during the eight-year period were the city of Galax, with a 71 percent increase, and Floyd County, with a 55 percent increase. The percentage growth of travel expenditures for several of the localities that make up this region were among the highest in Virginia.

From 2004-2012, the Southwest Virginia region saw a 28 percent increase in local tax revenue from travel, totaling \$22.5 million in 2012.

The announcement was made at the Southwest Virginia Creative Economy Conference, which has been highlighting the region's outdoor recreation, natural assets, crafts and traditional music as the stepping stones for Southwest Virginia's growing creative economy. The two-day conference wrapped up today with special guest speakers Earl Gohl, federal co-chair of the Appalachian Regional Commission and U.S. Sen. Mark Warner.

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