

Grants will aid Civil War commemoration

By Linwood Outlaw III -
loutlaw@nvdaily.com

Localities throughout the Northern Shenandoah Valley will receive grants from the Virginia Department of Transportation to fund improvement projects that may promote tourism as the state commemorates the 150th anniversary of the Civil War.

The Commonwealth Transportation Board announced this week that it has awarded 71 enhancement grants totaling \$21.9 million, which will help fund projects such as hiking trails and transportation-related tourism initiatives.

Officials also announced that \$3.5 million in enhancement grants were disbursed specifically to support ventures associated with a partnership between the Virginia Department of Transportation, Civil War Preservation Trust, Virginia Tourism Corp. and other winery and Civil War groups.

The partnership seeks to celebrate the sesquicentennial of the Civil War by fostering tourism and wineries across the state. The primary component of the project is the creation of a new multimedia information terminal for Virginia's 11 welcome centers.

Some of the grants awarded this week will be used to fund projects in New Market, Winchester, and Shenandoah and Warren counties. The enhancement grants will "allow Virginia to enhance its rich history, educate our citizens and visitors, and enhance the quality of life for all who call Virginia home," Secretary of Transportation Sean T. Connaughton says in a press release announcing the awards.

"This decision by the [transportation board] to focus a large portion of this available funding to support this innovative, multi-entity Civil War partnership illustrates how we can all work together to make Virginia a better place to live and do business," said Connaughton, who also serves as chairman of the Commonwealth Transportation Board.

In Shenandoah County, \$250,000 was allocated to the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation toward an ongoing project that involves restoring remnants of the Valley Turnpike and building trails that will connect Strasburg to the Fishers Hill battlefield. Warren County also will receive \$206,000 to help cover costs for the second phase of its Eastham Park Trail project, which involves constructing a shared-use trail from the railroad crossing to U.S. 340, said Brandy Rosser, the county's grants and special projects coordinator.

Meanwhile, Winchester will get \$400,000 toward the construction of the multi-use Green Circle Trail, which will follow Town Run and Abrams Creek and eventually encircle the city. The focus of the project is to provide safer bike and pedestrian facilities and connect some of the city's main



New Market has been awarded \$388,000 in enhancement grants from the Commonwealth Transportation Board to promote Civil War and wine tourism. Rich Cooley/Daily

attractions such as Shenandoah University, Jim Barnett Park and the Museum of the Shenandoah Valley.

The town of New Market also will receive a \$388,000 grant toward the construction of sidewalks, street lighting, and landscaping in the historic downtown area, according to a list of the overall allocations.

Under the Transportation Enhancement Program, up to 80 percent of the eligible project costs can be reimbursed with federal funds. However, a minimum 20 percent match must come from other public or private sources. Federal funds being requested for enhancement projects must not exceed \$1 million per application cycle.