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Governor Kaine Announces Three New Main Street Designations
– Blackstone, Abingdon and Altavista join downtown revitalization program –

RICHMOND – Governor Timothy M. Kaine today announced that Abingdon, Altavista and Blackstone have been designated as Virginia Main Street communities. Each community will utilize the technical assistance, training, and resources of the Main Street program to revitalize their downtown. The designations bring the total of Virginia's Main Street communities to 22 across the state.

"The Virginia Main Street program has a proven record of providing assistance in the revitalization and preservation of Virginia's historic downtown districts," said Governor Kaine. "It is with great pleasure that I announce today three additional communities who will benefit from this designation."

The Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) administers the Virginia Main Street program. Virginia Main Street uses the National Main Street Four Point Approach™ model to help communities revitalize their downtowns, focusing on their unique heritage and attributes. The program helps communities develop strategies that create economic growth and pride in their downtown areas. Since its inception in 1985, the Virginia Main Street program has supported the creation, expansion, or retention of more than 4,115 businesses and helped to create more than 11,571 jobs in Main Street communities.

"Being designated as a Virginia Main Street community is an important accomplishment," said Kaine. "Virginia's Main Street program has seen three communities - Lynchburg, Manassas and Staunton - receive the Great American Main Street award from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, for their excellence in revitalization."

"Main Street designation provides resources and training to revitalize not only the character and historic architecture of these downtowns, but to revitalize the economic core – bringing back businesses, jobs and people to these communities," said Patrick O. Gottschalk, Secretary of Commerce and Trade.

DHCD accepts applications for new Main Street designations every three to four years. Communities seeking Main Street designations must have populations of 75,000 or less and have a traditional downtown district that includes at least 50 businesses and 70 commercial structures. Often the

downtown structures are older and have historic significance. These buildings are targeted for redevelopment through the Main Street program.

“In addition to the economic benefits that the Main Street program creates, it also makes significant improvements to the older, architectural gems that exist in Virginia’s historic downtowns,” explained Bill Shelton, DHCD Director. “Over the past 20 years the program has encouraged more than \$433 million in private investment that has helped restore these buildings to their original glory and increase the sophistication and charm of Virginia’s downtowns,” said Shelton.

For more information about the Virginia Main Street program go to www.dhcd.virginia.gov or call (804) 371-7030.

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