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Great to see everyone at the Bike Summit! Report & photos soon, but the big news is, “three foot passing” was passed by the House.

Gov. McDonnell, Dominion Kick Off New IMBA Ride Center at Pocahontas State Park

admin July 11, 2013 0 comments



Accepting the \$50,000 matching gift from Dominion are (l-r) Joe Elton, Va State Parks; Gov. Bob McDonnell; Johnny Finch, VA Association for Parks; Hunter Applewhite, Dominion Foundation; Stephen Ellsworth, Chesterfield County; Jim Beamer, Dominion.

Governor McDonnell Announces First Legacy Project of Richmond 2015 Bike Race

– Kicks-Off Fund Drive for World Class Richmond Region Ride Center; Dominion Foundation Donates \$50,000 –

Study: Trail Improvements to Have Annual Economic Impact of \$4.5 Million and Create 51 New Jobs

RICHMOND – Governor Bob McDonnell was joined today at Pocahontas State Park by leaders from Richmond City, Chesterfield County and Virginia’s bicycling community to announce that Dominion Resources has donated \$50,000 toward development of the Richmond Region Ride Center, matching Virginia’s investment in the project. The Governor requested the state appropriation last session and it was approved by the General Assembly. The Dominion donation officially launches a fund drive to raise the remaining \$700,000 needed for trail improvements to Pocahontas State Park.

Upon completion, Richmond will become the 12th site worldwide of an International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA) Ride Center. The center will focus on mountain biking trails in Pocahontas State Park and Richmond’s James River Park System and will serve as a key ongoing legacy project of the Richmond 2015 UCI Road World Championships.

“Bringing the road championships to Richmond and Virginia is the result of outstanding regional and public-private cooperation,” said Governor McDonnell. “Dominion’s donation to this regional ride center, which will be a lasting legacy for this region, is the epitome of continuing that cooperative spirit. This internationally renowned event will highlight the Commonwealth’s beautiful landscapes and create jobs and economic development for the entire region.”

[Read the rest of the press release.](#)

See the video of Governor McDonnell’s speech below, followed by the transcript.



Gov. McDonnell, Dominion Kick Off New IMBA Ride Center at Pocahontas State Park

David: But specifically as it relates to parks, and this project specifically, you should really know that it's his administration who thought of this idea of doing this along with the IMBA and some other key private partners.

I remember the first meeting I was at having to do with this project, and right there is the Governor's Senior Staff People. This is a stamp of approval. We said we needed \$50,000 of state funds, seed money to get this thing going along, and it really didn't fit the budgeting process. He was behind it and made it happen. This was a...

A: Thank you.

Governor Bob: McDonnell: Well, they bugged me to death. They wouldn't let me not do it.

David: One of the great big deal, and you can see the Governor behind it. It's a big deal. He and his Senior Staff have been fabulous to work with, and made things happen. That's why we're here. Without and further, I'd like to bring forward the Governor of Virginia, Bob McDonnell.

Governor: Thank you very much. Thank you very much. I appreciate it, thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Please sit down, because I'm the last bit of hot air you can get between now and the time you start [riding]. David Johnson is about to go into cardiac arrest here, so I got to talk fast.

Thank you all for coming, what a great day. I got my green tie on here, today. It's my second time in just a couple of days that I get to do something with one of the great Virginia parks and I'm delighted to do it after opening Powhatan on Saturday as the 36th park.

Very few governors have the privilege of opening a state park. We got the best park system in all of America. It's been recognized by the [inaudible 01:51].

[inaudible 01:57] staff and cementing that legacy. I'm delighted to see the leaders from Chesterfield and Richmond, and so many of the IMBA and other groups that are here today that have been a real great partnership to get us to where we are today.

This is, as we discussed, a regional partnership. It's different localities working together with the government and with the private sector, I'll call up some sponsors here in just a minute, all to achieve a common goal of providing world class entertainment and avenues for a healthy lifestyle here at this beautiful Pocahontas State Park.

I'm delighted that the people from IMBA are here and I'm delighted that Wilson was here to talk a little bit about the great UCI event we're going to have here in 2015. The eyes of the world will be on Richmond, Virginia, Chesterfield County, Richmond, and other places as well, because for nine days, we're going to have 1,000 world class athletes here and we'll join international destinations as this race happens here over that nine day period.

450,000 spectators, 300 million international TV audience, that's a pretty good number. I look forward to you all continuing your regional cooperation and private fundraising. Wilson will be able to make this happen and I think it's going to be a real boost to all of the cycling community to be able to have this event here in Richmond, Virginia.

I want to thank IMBA and all of you from the groups that are here today for your leadership in helping to push Mayor Jones and everybody else to make this pitch. It was a successful partnership with everybody working together.

Gov. McDonnell, Dominion Kick Off New IMBA Ride Center at Pocahontas State Park

Having an IMBA-certified ride center right here in the community is really a big deal. I understand that this would only be the twelfth site of an IMBA riding center in all the world.

That's a pretty big deal. Right here in Chesterfield County, Virginia. I think that's a big deal. That deserves a round of applause.

You heard Dr. Magnum talk about economic impact. This becomes a traveling destination for cyclists from around the world when they've got a certified center, \$4.5 million in increased economic activity is what we expect. An increase in the happiness coefficient, he did leave that out, but I think that's important.

Although, I get happy when I eat, too. I think you don't want to discount that, as well. As I mentioned, cycling is part of a healthy lifestyle. The numbers are pretty shocking. 60% of Americans don't get enough exercise, a significant number overweight. A great remedy for that is getting out on your mountain bike and doing a little bit of work on these trails.

You mentioned the return on investment is three to one, so if we expect to get for investment in the trails here in the community. I'm delighted that this is a trail that truly is for everyone. The complement of the trails that are here at Pocahontas include cyclists with disabilities.

I'm really delighted to have our friends and so many people from the PVA here, our Paralyzed Veterans Association, that are here with us, that have worked on this, and that are ready to ride with us, and especially for your great service to the United States of America. Thank you.

It is regional partnership, it is Richmond, it is Chesterfield, it's the state, it is DCR. There are a number of other groups working together towards a common goal. I do want to thank IMBA. Richmond Moore, PVA, Friends of the Pocahontas State Park, the Virginia Parks Association, and many others for making this happen.

We were glad to chip in at \$50,000 because it really is economic development. I think anything we can do to create jobs, improve quality of life, and get a payback for the taxpayers, is a smart thing to do.

As you might suspect from that introduction that David gave me, we did have a staff member who was very passionate about the work [inaudible 06:05].

He camped out in my office. He was a sit-in of one. He would not leave my office until I agreed to the budget amendment. That's the only way I could get him out of there, was to agree to the... But no, it's made a lot of sense, and I do thank Jason for his advocacy as an outdoorsman himself.

Honestly, it's going to take a lot of work in order to get this done. It's going to take voluntary donations. That's what I hope to convey to the people of the public that are listening or watching what we're doing here today to say we need help now.

We've got a start with the state money. I'm delighted that our friends from Dominion Resources, being great community corporate citizens, are donating today another \$50,000.

That's going to kick off a drive to raise funds, and I'm delighted that the Virginia Association of Parks has agreed to be the repository to help to raise those funds. I'm really interested in this history about the origin of the parks.

As I said, I opened up the 36th state park at Powhatan on Saturday, and since 1936, at least 77 years, we've added all these parks to have such a great system. Private donations have really been a key for the development of our parks through these 77 years.

The Civilian Conservation Corps built those original six state parks, a lot of volunteer labor. Some of the original parks, like Douthat, Berrystone, Seashore, and First Landing were all donations to the state. A lot of them, like Claytor Lake, Chippokes Plantations, Sky Meadows, Leesylvania, and others, and the yet to be opened Seven Bends, I think, up in Stafford, are all the result of donations from citizens, families, or businesses.

This idea of philanthropy and donations is really the heart and soul of the great parks system that we have, and that's why we're going to need people to help donate on top of this \$100,000 initial donation to make sure that the rest of the work is done here.

I want to call up now, if I could, Jim Beamer and Hunter Applegate from the Dominion Foundation, and also Johnny Finch [SP], representing the Virginia Association of Parks. I understand they have a presentation of a check that they would like make.

Gentlemen. Thanks so much for coming, James. Put that coat on. [inaudible 08:40] Johnny, [inaudible 08:46], okay.

James: I guess I hear this [white]. Anyway, thank you.

Governor:: Any more that want to come up with \$50,000?

James: Thank you.

Governor: Still got time. That's a great start, and we encourage people to be generous. Every bit helps. Thank you, Johnny, for being willing to do this and getting the word out. I know Doug and Dave and all of our team will make sure that the word is out.

Anyway, I appreciate so much all of you coming today. This is a marvelous step forward in the life of the Virginia parks system and the life of the cycling community here in central Virginia.

We look forward to seeing you all on the trail, and then watching in 2015 when we have the eyes of the world here on Richmond, Virginia.

With that, I think this great celebration of this legacy of project now is ready to get underway, and so I would like to say, riders, get on your gear, and let's get on the trail. Thanks very much.

Sharing is caring!
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