



It's time
to come
home to
Southwest
Virginia
for good...

www.ReturnToRoots.org

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Return to Roots and Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion partner for fund-raising Gala Event

BRISTOL, Va., AUG. 24, 2007 – Return to Roots and Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion have partnered to celebrate the first birthday of Return to Roots and its Web site, www.ReturnToRoots.org.

Virginia Governor Timothy M. Kaine launched the Return to Roots initiative on Sept. 18, 2006. The program, funded by a Tobacco Commission Special Projects grant, has more than 620 Southwest Virginia natives who are now living in one of 28 states, Canada or the Middle East. The web site, www.ReturnToRoots.org, also has seen employers post more than 120 jobs that are open in the Southwest Virginia region. The website is a portal to match those who seek to return or those who know about the quality of life Southwest Virginia has to offer to available career opportunities in Southwest Virginia.

To celebrate the launch of www.ReturnToRoots.org and to unite two great organizations, a fund-raising Gala event will be held the same weekend as the Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion.

“Two organizations – one that works, one that plays – are coming together to put Southwest Virginia on the map as the place to be for a great career and a great time,” said Carl Mitchell, president and CEO of Virginia Economic Bridge, which manages the program. “With the symmetry in missions and names, we could not have found a better partner for the first birthday of Return to Roots.”

The fund-raising Gala will be held Friday, Sept. 14, in Bristol’s Cumberland Square Park, the same night and just a few blocks away from the Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion kick-off night.

“This is an opportunity for two very innovative organizations to come together and promote Bristol and Southwest Virginia,” said Leah Ross, executive director of Bristol Rhythm & Roots. “This brings two population segments together to show that not only do we appreciate our cultural heritage, but that we also have great career opportunities here as well.”

For tickets to the Return to Roots Fundraising Gala, please call for availability at (540) 831-6159. Return to Roots continues to look for sponsors for the Gala Event. If you are interested in assisting in this innovative program that seeks to return

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native sons and daughters to the region, please contact Program Manager Susan Dickerson at (540) 831-6393.

This year marks the 7th annual Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion music festival that will occur Sept. 14-16, up and down State Street in historic downtown Bristol, TN/VA. Music will be alive on three outdoor stages and 13 indoor stages all up and down the street. The music festival commissioned Southwest Virginia native and artist April Street to provide this year's poster. For a complete schedule, please visit: <http://www.bristolrhythm.com/concerts.php>.

Tickets may be purchased at the following locations:

Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion office – 29 6th Street, Bristol, TN 423-573-4898

The Paramount Center – 518 State Street – Bristol, TN 423-274-8920

Fandango – 511 State Street – Bristol, VA 274-669-4448

Mountain Aire Music – 505 State Street – Bristol, VA 276-591-1240

Bristol Chamber of Commerce – 20 Volunteer Parkway – Bristol, TN 423-989-4850

Sonic Music & More – 311 Gate City Highway, Bristol, VA - 276-466-9402

Cat's Compact Discs – 151 E Mountcastle Drive, Johnson City, TN - 423-282-2287

Cat's Compact Discs – 7337 Kingston Pike, Knoxville, TN - 865 588-2287

Cat's Compact Discs – 536 Winfield Dunn Parkway, Sevierville, TN - 865-429-4600

Cat's Music – 5304 Broadway, Knoxville, TN - 865-688-1301

Kroger Stores:

31 Midway Street, Bristol, VA 276-642-0031

466 Cummings Street, Abingdon, VA 276-628-6015

1664 East Stone Drive, Kingsport, TN 423-392-0844

112 Sunset Drive, Johnson City, TN 423-282-5656

1919 S. Roan Street, Johnson City, TN 423-926-6429

1805 W. State of Franklin Road, Johnson City, TN 423-929-1408

Weekend tickets are \$35, single day tickets for Friday and Sunday are \$15 and Saturday tickets are \$20. The New Peoples Bank Super Jam tickets are \$10 in advance and \$15 at the door. All those who attend the gala will receive complimentary weekend passes to the music festival.

Virginia Economic Bridge, Inc. (www.VirginiaEconomicBridge.org), which is a non-profit organization focused on creating an environment for economic growth in today's technologically advanced society, promotes the economic vitality and external competitiveness of the Commonwealth by fostering business, industry and educational relationships between Southwest Virginia, Northern Virginia, as well as other areas of the Commonwealth. Virginia Economic Bridge manages the Return to Roots project.

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