

Northern Neck Artisan Trail officially opens

After two years of community development and outreach, the Northern Neck has kicked-off its Artisan Trail. Over 100 guests attended the recent kick-off gala for the Northern Neck Artisan Trail at Belle Mount Vineyards, near Warsaw.

"Your energy and enthusiasm for this trail will encourage visitors to explore our back roads and scenic byways, visit cottages and bed & breakfasts and restaurants in order to find your studios and workshops," said The Hon. Wally Beauchamp, a member of the Lancaster County Board of Supervisors and chairman of Northern Neck Chesapeake Bay Region Partnership.

The Northern Neck Artisan Trail is the largest of the 28 such trails across the Commonwealth with 127 artists, artisans, agri- and aqua-artisans, cultural attractions, hotels, B&Bs and restaurants.

A new map/brochure gives visitors a road map to an exciting visitor experience throughout King George, Westmoreland, Northumberland, Richmond and Lancaster counties

Community members on the artisan trail management team representing the arts, agriculture, and the region's hospitality and cultural attractions met for two years, planning and engaging the communities in a coordinated effort. This approach to economic development, based on the successful



Regional artisans and their support network gathered recently to officially kick off the Northern Neck Artisan Trail.

Artisan Center of Virginia business model, is designed to strengthen communities and increase the visibility of artisan and agri-artisan entrepreneurs to the public, and help the business community network find new strategic partners and foster new business innovation.

"The Northern Neck Artisan Trail capitalizes on the region's creative economy, boosts the marketing reach of trail sites, and encourages visitors through print and digital media to discover the Northern Neck's heritage crafts and artistic talent," said Lisa Hull, economic development and

tourism coordinator for the Northern Neck Planning District Commission.

The trail represents all that is wonderful about the region. This area's rich agricultural heritage, breathtaking scenery and centuries of history have shaped the region and inspired so many of the local artisans.

The trail also promotes economic development for the region. With its emphasis on locally produced products and locally owned and operated businesses, visitors have many enticing opportunities to support the region's economy.

Visitors can pick up a copy

of the full color, descriptive map/brochure at Virginia Welcome Centers; Northern Neck Tourism Commission, Warsaw; Lancaster by the Bay Chamber of Commerce, Kilmarnock; Dahlgren Heritage Museum Visitor's Center; or Colonial Beach Chamber of Commerce. The map/brochure also is available at ArtisanTrailNetwork.org.

The Northern Neck Artisan Trail is a regional trail of the Artisans Center of Virginia (ACV) statewide Artisan Trail Network program, in partnership with Northern Neck communities.