



CHAPTER VIII: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
A Series of Town Meetings

To further engage the communities and gain greater public participation a series of ten public meetings were set up by the representatives in each of the communities to meet and discuss in detail the sections of road through those particular areas. Over a week long period in September 2010, meetings were held the following communities:

- Lee County – *Focus on the Keokee, St. Charles, Pennington Gap areas*
- City of Norton – *Focused on the City of Norton and Wise County areas*
- Wise County - *Focused on Blackwood, Appalachia, Big Stone Gap, Exeter, Imboden and the City of Norton*
- Tazewell County – *Focused on Richlands, Cedar Bluff, Claypool Hill, Pounding Mill & Tazewell areas*
- Scott County – *Focused on Dungannon, Fort Blackmore, Duffield.*
- Russell County – *Focused primarily on the Dante area*
- Wise County – *Focused on Tacoma, Coeburn, Virginia City and St. Paul*
- Dickenson County – *Focused on the communities of Haysi, Clinchco, Fremont, McClure, Nora, Trammel*

In October 2010, additional town meetings were held in:

- Buchanan County – *Focused on the entire route through the county*
- Tazewell County – *Focused on Jewell Ridge*
- Tazewell County – *Focused on Pocahontas and Bluefield*
- Dickenson County – *Focused on McClure and the strikes in the 70's and 80's*

Each meeting was focused on a particular section of the route and encouraged people along the route or those knowledgeable of those areas (both past, present and future) to attend the meetings of interest to them.

APPENDIX H provides an overview of the information gathered at each of these town meetings. Information from these meetings, the preliminary driving tour and follow-up meetings and tours of a few of the downtown areas was then reviewed and points added to the recommendation section found in CHAPTER IX: ACTION PLAN of this document.

The purpose of the meetings was to discuss in detail the sections of Virginia Coal Heritage Trail through those particular communities and determine what recommendations, suggestions and concerns needed to be included in the corridor management plan. The goal was to get public engagement and gain public support for the initiative so that, in the end, a corridor management plan would be developed that people felt they were a part of, that they could support, and that the communities could adopt.

In October, tours of three downtown areas were conducted to serve as examples for potential walking tours. Concept ideas and suggestions for each are provided in CHAPTER VII.

- Appalachia in Wise County
- Dante in Russell County
- St. Paul in Wise/Russell County