



# MONTGOMERY COUNTY

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## **STATE TOURISM OFFICE SELECTS MONTGOMERY COUNTY AS A NEW LOVEWORK DESTINATION**

**Montgomery County, Virginia** • The Virginia Tourism Corporation has chosen two sites in Montgomery County to stand among 16 new sites across the state to build and promote a giant LOVEwork for 2013. One LOVEwork is located at the Christiansburg Aquatic Center and the other in Downtown Blacksburg. The LOVEwork structures are the focal point of a social media campaign to share the message that love is at the heart of every Virginia vacation. The Blacksburg and Christiansburg sites will join 20 other LOVEwork sculptures found across the state featured on [www.virginia.org/LOVE](http://www.virginia.org/LOVE) as part of the Virginia is for Lovers tourism marketing campaign.

Visitors to Montgomery County will be encouraged to take a picture with the LOVEwork and share on social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Photos taken by people from throughout the world can be seen at [www.Facebook.com/VirginiaisforLovers](http://www.Facebook.com/VirginiaisforLovers) and on Twitter by searching #LOVEVA.

“Virginia is for Lovers is about love - pure and simple, and has been for more than 40 years,” said Rita McClenny, president and CEO of the Virginia Tourism Corporation. “This program uses the power of social media to promote Virginia as an ideal destination for families looking to completely connect on a Virginia vacation.”

The Blacksburg and the Christiansburg LOVEwork will receive up to \$1,200 in reimbursement funding from the state tourism office. Design and construction began earlier this year. Christiansburg will unveil its LOVEwork at 10 a.m. on April 15 and Blacksburg will unveil at **2:30 p.m.** (corrected time) on April 17.

The LOVEwork in Christiansburg consists of six-foot aluminum letters and was constructed by a local metalworker, John Long, of Giles County. The items attached to each letter are meant to be representative of what everyone knows and loves about Christiansburg: shopping, dining, and recreation. The sculpture is located on the front lawn of the Christiansburg Aquatic Center, 592 North Franklin St., Christiansburg.

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The Blacksburg LOVEwork project was a joint partnership between the Montgomery Regional Tourism Office, the Town of Blacksburg, the Blacksburg Partnership, 16 Blocks Magazine, Blacksburg Regional Arts Association, and Blue Ridge Real Estate LLC, for the Cranwell and Frizzell Trusts. The mural was designed by local artist Den Bento, who is a Mexican-Brazilian graphic designer, artist and art teacher who came to Blacksburg in the fall of 2011 to help promote ConviviumNRV, a community building project. Bento's mural, located on the building adjacent to the Armory Gallery on Draper Road, is about love of community, nature, and the New River Valley. Incorporated into the mural is the Love Where You Live emblem, which brings attention to a campaign to engage Virginia Tech students and encourage them to embrace Blacksburg as their home. The unveiling event will take place in the Armory parking lot.

"Montgomery County is excited to share the LOVE with our residents and visitors," said Lisa Bleakley, Director of the Montgomery Regional Tourism Office. "We're delighted with the response from the towns, artists, partners, and property owners who came together to produce these wonderful pieces of art. These attractions will draw people to them for real time interaction and encourage the recording of those experiences for sharing with others, a true tourism win for everyone."

Visitors will be encouraged to view the artwork, take a picture and post to Facebook.com/VirginiaisforLovers or on Twitter using the hashtag #LOVEVA.

A complete list of LOVE artwork locations across the state can be found at [Virginia.org/LOVE](http://Virginia.org/LOVE).

Tourism is an instant revenue generator for Virginia. In 2011, Virginia tourism generated \$20.4 billion in revenue, supported over 207,000 jobs and provided \$1.32 billion in state and local taxes.

In Montgomery County, tourism generated \$121.8 million in revenue, supported over 1200 jobs and provided \$2.1 million in local taxes in 2011.

Love is at the heart of every Virginia vacation. Visit [www.Virginia.org](http://www.Virginia.org) to learn more or call 1-800-VIS-ITVA to request a free, Virginia is for Lovers travel guide.



**Note to media** • Images of the Virginia is for Lovers LOVEworks are available for publication at [www.vatravelstories.com](http://www.vatravelstories.com), the official pressroom of the Virginia Tourism Corporation.

Related events scheduled for April 17 are attached.