

For Immediate Release

December 21, 2009

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**Kilmarnock Chamber of Commerce and Lancaster County Chamber of Commerce
Vote to Create One Chamber**

Kilmarnock, Virginia – Representatives of the Kilmarnock Chamber of Commerce and the Lancaster County Chamber of Commerce voted on Friday, December 18, 2009 in favor of the merger of the two chambers.

The chambers have the same mission – to help members and all businesses thrive and expand. The new chamber will be offering more opportunities and programs, and focus on the valuable resources by merging the organizations. The new chamber will become the “One Stop” resource for businesses of all sizes and be one voice for the business community of Lancaster County.

“Linking the two chambers just makes sense. As a merchant I can join one chamber and get the best of both worlds. As a tourist I now have continuity, one brochure, one website, one identity for the entire area. The merger is good for everyone,” said Vice President of the Kilmarnock Chamber of Commerce, David Nichols.

By unifying the business communities throughout Lancaster County the chamber hopes to attract businesses and opportunities, therefore strengthening our economy and quality of life. The new chamber will be working in cooperation with local economic development offices, tourism and regional business organizations to leverage the experience of its members, thus providing constituency services including business-building resources, networking and advocacy for its membership.

The numerous events both chambers host will be enhanced and new ones added, to provide effective visibility for which members will have the opportunity to promote and grow their businesses.

A core group of six members representing both chambers have met over the past six months to envision the new organization. A focus group of local business owners met to create and name for the new chamber, “Lancaster by the Bay Chamber of Commerce - serving the communities of Irvington, Kilmarnock, Lively and White Stone”. The past several months the core committee has been working on the organizations structure, which will be made up of four directors from the Kilmarnock business community, four directors from Lancaster County and two directors each from Irvington, White Stone and Lively. Four directors will be at large. The transition is now underway and the core committee anticipates completion by the first quarter of 2010.

“Throughout the process, the needs of the members have been foremost in our minds. The timing was right for this merger, a time to step forward and be ready when the economy turns around” said Lancaster County Chamber President, Emerson Gravatt. “We feel confident that one chamber will provide the expanded resources and services to benefit both the smallest businesses as well as our larger organizations”.

Members of both chambers are encouraged to contact the Lancaster by the Bay Chamber office at 506 N. Main Street or call 804-435-6092 to obtain further details on the merger.

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