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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SAMPSON COUNTY CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU ANNOUNCES OPEN ENROLLMENT FOR THE CAPITAL GRANT PROGRAM

Capital Grant Program developed to grow tourism assets in Sampson County

(Sampson County, NC) -- The SCCVB Capital Grant Program (CGP) was developed to stimulate economic growth by supporting non-profit visitor attractions in Sampson County, NC. The program allows the SCCVB to award capital grant funding to organizations whose projects are designed or developed to attract visitors to Sampson County. The program allows eligible organizations to receive funding for the development of new visitor attractions or to organizations that are working to enhance or restore existing structures and other projects whose primary mission is to serve visitors to Sampson County.

Capital Grant Funds may be granted for projects such as new brick and mortar construction, maintenance and preservation of historic attractions, cultural and historical acquisitions, conservation of artifacts, or other infrastructure that improves the CVB's ability to promote tourism and that assists in attracting visitors to Sampson County. "Primary consideration will be given to those projects that have the greatest potential for positive economic impact for tourism within the County. Highest priority will be given to those projects which are more likely to promote and generate travel from outside Sampson County and that lead to overnight stays among our local lodging establishments" stated Sheila Barefoot, Director of the Sampson County CVB.

CVB Board Member and Chair, Julie Stadig stated, "We welcome all that have projects that fit in these guidelines to apply. Projects must be for travel and tourism development only. All projects approved for funding must prove that they attract and serve visitors to Sampson County as their primary purpose."

Organizations that may apply for CGP funding include any legally chartered 501-(c3) non-profit Sampson County organization or chartered municipality representing a visitor attraction, which includes tourism promotion among its major activities. Documentation of legal status, tax exemption, federal identification number, budget, and organizational purpose are required with all applications. The organization applying for funds must show that they own the property, and it is not leased by the organization. However, if an

organization making a request does not own the land or the structure to be preserved or built on a particular site, the organization may provide properly executed documents that state the organization has a permanent easement for the site, including ingress and egress.

The Sampson County Convention & Visitors Bureau CGP will use a matching grant formula whereby organizations may be awarded one grant dollar for each dollar spent by the organization, up to \$50,000 per project. Due to the potential number of grant applications that may be received annually, the full amount of an organization's grant request may not be awarded. It is anticipated that typical grant awards may average between \$5,000 and \$10,000. The SCCVB Capital Grant Program has a cap of \$50,000 per organization. Once this amount has been distributed to an organization, the organization must sit out of the grant application process for a period of three (3) years from date of final funding from the CVB. In addition, multiple non-profits may not apply to receive funding for the same project.

SCCVB Executive Director, Sheila Barefoot stated, "With each cycle, I get excited about how the CVB can now help in tourism related projects by funding these projects throughout the county". There are two application cycles. The first cycle may be submitted from July 1st until July 30th and must be postmarked later than July 30th for consideration during the August cycle. Applications for the second cycle may be submitted from November 30th to December 31st and must be postmarked no later than December 31st for consideration during the January cycle. Capital Grant applicants must contain the written approval or a formal resolution of the organizations governing board, and include relevant municipal government endorsement, and a list providing other individual or organizations that have made contributions to the proposed project.

Funding for the SCCVB Capital Grant Program is provided through room occupancy taxes (ROT) that are collected by Sampson County's lodging establishments which are generated because of overnight lodging by visitors to Sampson County. The SCCVB will allocate 33% of all room occupancy taxes collected to the Capital Grant Program on an annual basis. Sheila Barefoot, Executive Director of the CVB stated: "We have funded three project since the unveiling of the Capital Grant program in 2017, which are The Sampson County History Museum, The Sampson Arts Council for the Victor R Small House and The Sampson Community College."

The Sampson County CVB was approved and enacted to be a public authority established through legislation by the General Assembly of the State of North Carolina and adopted, approved, and enacted by the Sampson County Board of Commissioners with the purpose of promoting the development of travel and tourism related activities in Sampson County, through state, regional and national advertising, marketing and promotional activities and campaigns.

For more information or details about the SCCVB Capital Grant Program or to receive grant guidelines and applications, contact Sheila Barefoot, Executive Director at 910-592-2557 or via email at sbarefoot@visitsampsonnc.com. The Sampson County CVB's offices are inside the Sampson County Exposition Center located at 414 Warsaw Road, Clinton, NC.

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