



**For immediate release**

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**Inaugural Blue Ridge Marathon on the Parkway Announced**

*Event promises to be both strenuous and beautiful*

**Roanoke, Va. (August 12, 2009)** – The inaugural Blue Ridge Marathon on the parkway will be held on April 24, 2010, beginning and ending in downtown Roanoke, with a tour of the region’s highest peaks in-between. The event is being held in conjunction with the Parkway’s 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Organizers have designated Friends of the Blue Ridge Parkway to receive proceeds.

Congressman Bob Goodlatte of Roanoke, Va., who helped organizers achieve their goal of holding part of the race on the Blue Ridge Parkway, made the announcement at the news conference held in the office of the Roanoke Regional Partnership.

“I am so proud that Roanoke has found yet another way to show the world that we are truly a jewel in the mountains,” said Goodlatte. “This race course will be like running through a post card.”

The Blue Ridge Marathon on the parkway is mapped out to connect the Roanoke Valley with the popular roadway and the tourists that travel it. “It will be beautiful, it will be difficult – even for experienced marathoners -- and it will give people a chance to use the Blue Ridge Parkway differently than they’ve historically been able to do,” said event co-chair Pete Eshelman, director of outdoor branding for the Roanoke Regional Partnership.

Race director Ronny Angell is owner of Odyssey Adventure Racing in Salem, Va. Angell brings years of experience in organizing adventure races with an emphasis on difficulty. “We wanted to make this more than just another small city marathon,” smiles Angell. “The difficulty of this course makes it special. It will attract people from across the country.”

In addition to the mountains, runners will also pass numerous other Roanoke attractions. The course begins in front of the Taubman Museum of Art and ends at the Hotel Roanoke directly in front of the O. Winston Link Museum. The course also travels through South Roanoke, passes in front of the Virginia Museum of Transportation, and crosses the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Bridge.

A half marathon will be held simultaneously with the marathon. Those covering the 13.1-mile distance will see many of the same attractions, but will not face the climb up Roanoke Mountain.

For more information please visit [www.blueridgemarathon.com](http://www.blueridgemarathon.com).

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