Community Design Assistance Center receives Graham Foundation Grant

By Heather Riley Chadwick

BLACKSBURG, VA., August 8, 2006 -- Virginia Tech's Community Design Assistance Center, of the College of Architecture and Urban Studies, has been bestowed a grant by the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts.

This grant will help to fund the final stages of the Lost Communities of Virginia manuscript preparation. The manuscript examines and documents Virginia towns that time has all but swept away. Featuring 30 communities from throughout the Commonwealth that once thrived economically and socially, but now reveal the physical evidence of decline, Lost Communities of Virginia uses contemporary black-and-white photographs, maps, and interviews with long-time residents to introduce the reader to each community.

The project is also made possible by funding from the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, an earlier grant from the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts, the College of Architecture and Urban Studies at Virginia Tech, CDAC, and private sponsors. Former CDAC intern Kirsten Sparenborg photographed the communities, collected the oral histories, and drafted the book. CDAC Outreach Coordinator Terri Fisher is revising the manuscript. Included are company and courthouse towns, community substitutes, transportation hubs, farming and resort communities, and cultural enclaves representative of the regional types significant in the settlement of Virginia. Lost Communities of Virginia is expected to be published in 2007. Photographs from the project are available as notecards and matted prints to help defray publication costs.

Cards and prints can be viewed and purchased at the Community Design Assistance Center at 101 South Main Street, or at Fringe Benefit on Main Street in downtown Blacksburg. For more information, call (540) 231-5644 or send a message to lyons@vt.edu.

The mission of the Graham Foundation is to nurture and enrich an informed and creative public dialogue concerning architecture and the built environment. Graham Foundation grants support individuals and institutions in the United States and abroad working in the field of architecture and the built environment.

The College of Architecture and Urban Studies is one of the largest of its type in the nation. The college is composed of two schools and the departments of landscape architecture, building construction, and art and art history. The School of Architecture + Design includes programs in architecture, industrial design and interior design. The School of Public and International Affairs includes programs in urban affairs and planning, public administration and policy, and government and international affairs. The college enrolls more than 2,000 students offering 25 degrees taught by 160 faculty members.

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