

*NEWS RELEASE*

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***Official Opening of Ellis Acres Memorial Park, Dillwyn Virginia 11-11-11***

As the rainy clouds rolled away at the dawning of a cool crisp November day with the bright sunshine streaking through the array of colorful fall leaves, a wonderful event unfolded at the abandoned Buckingham Training School Campus. The hustle and bustle of residents and guests gathered and worked to celebrate the Official Opening of Ellis Acres Memorial Park, Inc. on November 11, 2011. Many families, individuals, former students and visitors enjoyed and participated in the Official Opening activities. The joyous celebration paused as Reverend Jimmy Dunn offered a prayer of thanks to God for the showers of blessings so bountifully given. The audience enjoyed two beautiful musical renditions, the Stars Spangled Banner by Brenda H. Absher and How Great Thou Art by Linda V. Paige. Ben Montano and the students of Bear Creek Academy gave living testimony of the statement of purpose for Ellis Acres. Extremely informative reflections of experiences as a student at Buckingham Training School [1924-1954] were offered by Dr. Harvey Shelton. The "hallowed ground" enlightenment and education as a student of Stephen J. Ellis Elementary School [1954-1964] were shared by Brenda Spencer.

Recognitions, acknowledgements and comments were rendered to those whose contributions and support made this great day possible. Special appreciation was expressed to many individuals, churches, businesses, and organizations who donated time, equipment, services, skills, abilities, talents and funds. For their immense support acknowledgements were offered to the Town of Dillwyn, the Bama Works Fund of Dave Matthews Band, the Community Design Assistance Center and the Interior Design, both of Virginia Tech; the Charlottesville Area Community Foundation; the Lowe's Charitable and Educational Foundation and the National Trust for Historic Preservation; the Tobacco Indemnification Commission, and the Walmart Corporate Office and Headquarters.



**Opening Ceremony Ribbon Cutting** [L to R] **Mr. Walter Oddo**, Lowe's Store Manager Farmville, VA; **Mrs. Peggy W. Williams**, Assistant to the President and Associate Director, Communication and Event Planning, Charlottesville Area Community Foundation; **Mr. Lacy Ward**, Director, R. R. Moton Museum, Farmville, representing National Trust for Historic Preservation Representative; **Mr. Joe N. Chambers**, Supervisor Buckingham County; **Mr. David 'No Problem' Reed**, Prime Contractor, Quality Service, Farmville, VA; **Mr. Ben Montano**, Director, Therapeutic Services, Bear Creek Academy, Cumberland, VA; **Mr. Harold Walker**, Walmart Store Manager, Farmville, VA; **Mrs. Diane Holman James**, Executive Director, Ellis Acres Memorial Park, Inc.; **Mr. Frank Braxton**, Booster Ellis Acres Team; **Mr. J. Ervin Toney**, Mayor, Town of Dillwyn, VA; **Dr. Elizabeth Gilboy**, Director, Community Design Assistance Center, Virginia Tech; and **Ms Olivia E. Branch**, representing Bama Works Fund of Dave Matthews Band.

**Arrangements for the use of the classrooms, the conference room and the covered pavilion may be made by call 434 983-5600.**

*Ellis Acres Memorial Park, Inc., Dillwyn, Virginia*  
*Official Opening Ceremony*  
*November 11, 2011, 11:11 AM*

*Welcome ----- Mrs. Mary Alice Eldridge*  
*Chair, Ellis Acres Boosters*

*Invocation---- Reverend Jimmy Dunn*  
*First Baptist Church, Dillwyn*

*National Anthem ----- Mrs. Brenda H. Absher*  
*Program Technician, Farm Service Agency*

*Pledge of Allegiance ----- Mr. Clarence L. Davis*  
*Sergeant at Arms, American Legion 134*

*Statement of purpose ----- Mr. Ben Montano*  
*Director, Therapeutic Services, Bear Creek Academy*

*Remarks ----- Mr. J. Ervin Toney,*  
*Mayor, Town of Dillwyn*

*Remarks ----- Mr. Joe N. Chambers, Jr.*  
*Supervisor, Buckingham County*

*Musical Selection ----- Mrs. Linda V. Paige*  
*Vice-Mayor, Town of Dillwyn*

*Reflections ----- Dr. Harvey Shelton*  
*Former Student, Buckingham Training School*

*Reflections ----- Ms Brenda Spencer*  
*Former Student, Stephen J. Ellis Elementary School*

*Recognitions and Acknowledgements-----Mr. Wilbert M. Dean*  
*Executive Board, Ellis Acres*

*Ribbon Cutting ----- Mrs. Diane Holman James*  
*Executive Board, Ellis Acres*



*\*Acknowledgements*

*Town of Dillwyn*

*Community Design Assistance Center & Interior Design, Virginia Tech*

*Charlottesville Area Community Foundation*

*Lowe's Charitable and Education Foundational & National Trust for Historic Preservation*

*Tobacco Indemnification Commission*

*Walmart Corporate Office & Headquarters*

*\*\$50,000 and above in contributions or services*