

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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There Was No "Double-Dipping"

Pittsylvania County, at the direct request of Purpose Driven Events, managed all elements of the Blue Ridge Rock Festival outside of the festival grounds beginning on Friday morning. Due to the failure of Purpose Driven Events' vendors and a lack of management between them, the County quickly procured vendors from the public and private sectors and coordinated their response. All elements of festival went much smoother once we took over.

Many executive-level County employees put their usual duties on hold to work to the sole benefit of Purpose Driven Events. In particular, Mr. Smitherman stepped out of the role of County Administrator to manage many aspects of the festival in the interest of public safety and at the promoter's request. Because of this unique circumstance and for transparency, we publicized the invoices we sent.

There has been widespread confusion about these invoices, which have since been paid out from a cash bond that was put in place before the festival began. I want to clarify a few things. First off, none of our staff "double-dipped." Our executive-level staff, including Mr. Smitherman, were not personally compensated and did not personally bill for their time, as has been widely circulated in the media and on social media. The County billed for these individuals' time, which was given to the sole benefit of a for-profit event, but these individuals did not personally benefit or receive ANY extra payment.

Bills were sent to the promoter because it sets a dangerous precedent for public employees to work for the sole benefit of a private corporation without the County being compensated. To put it simply: It would be unfair for the citizens – i.e. the taxpayers – of Pittsylvania County to cover the costs of our employees helping to correct the problems of a private company like Purpose Driven Events.

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I also want to address the prices included in the bills. All of these costs were approved by Purpose Driven Events staff as they were being procured. Given the extreme circumstances and short notice, these charges were well below market rate. For instance, the week after the festival, Mr. Slye of Purpose Driven Events told us that one transportation vendor's single-day rate was four times the county's procured transportation fees, which covered three days.

Logistical failures and an imminent public safety risk led Pittsylvania County employees to work to the direct and sole benefit of a private, for-profit organization. For us not to recoup those costs and bill for the time of our employees would be a mismanagement of the funds and resources we are entrusted.

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