



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Jefferson Center's Appalachian Jams series debuts with bluegrass superstars Blue Highway, the Kenny & Amanda Smith Band and Sandy Ridge.

Jefferson Center's Appalachian Jams series, presenting home-grown music from southern Appalachia and beyond, will kick off Saturday, March 29 at 8:00 p.m. with a concert featuring bluegrass superstars Blue Highway, the Kenny & Amanda Smith Band and local band Sandy Ridge.

Blue Highway

Since bursting on the scene in the late '90s, Blue Highway has all but dominated the bluegrass charts. One of the most esteemed and influential groups in contemporary bluegrass, Blue Highway excels at every facet of music, from instrumental dexterity to impeccable vocal interplay to literate, powerful songwriting. Individually, the band members are at the forefront of their respective roles having worked with Alison Krauss & Union Station, Ricky Skaggs, Larry Sparks and Doyle Lawson. Together, they merge their talents into a seamlessly brilliant group sound.

The Tennessee-based group has released six acclaimed albums, received a Grammy nomination, topped the Bluegrass Unlimited radio charts, won a Dove Award and an astonishing 11 International Bluegrass Music Association awards, individually and collectively.

Kenny & Amanda Smith Band

Winners of the International Bluegrass Music Association's prestigious Emerging Artist of the Year award in 2003, the Kenny and Amanda Smith Band combines gutsy, heartfelt vocals, brilliant instrumental talents and a powerful, contemporary sense of song choice and arrangement into one of the most compelling new sounds in bluegrass today. Born of the intensely personal musical and romantic connection between husband and wife Kenny and Amanda Smith, the band shares an all-too-rare sense of intimacy and cohesion. Of local note, the most recent member to join the band is Aaron Williams, a fifteen-year-old mandolin player from Blacksburg, Virginia, who caught the band's eye at the Galax Fiddler's Convention.

Sandy Ridge

Sandy Ridge members have toiled in the shadows as sidemen to numerous bluegrass, gospel, country and blues bands for years, and now have come together to create their own bluegrass sound. The five members, all from southwestern Virginia have played with the likes of Herschel Sizemore, Jimmy Martin, Jesse McReynolds, Upland Express, The Lonesome River Band, Roland White, The Bolt Brothers, Hallelujah Ride, Appalachian Trail and The McPeak Brothers.

Tickets for this Appalachian Jams concert range from \$15-20 and are available through the Jefferson Center box office at (540) 345-2550 or online at www.jeffcenter.org. Tickets for children and students are half price. The Appalachian Jams series, sponsored by Appalachian Power, continues on Wednesday, April 9 with Carolina Chocolate Drops, and concludes Saturday, May 3 with bluegrass from southwestern Virginia featuring, Whitetop Mountain Band, Mac & Jenny Traynham and Elizabeth LaPrelle.

Jefferson Center is a non-profit performing arts center that enriches and educates Western Virginia by producing high quality performing and visual arts programs including concerts, dance parties, exhibitions, lectures and artist residencies.

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