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**Tamarack Foundation study details economic impact of Tamarack
*Artisans and state see employment, revenue benefits***

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (Feb. 24, 2009) – The Tamarack Foundation (www.tamarackwv.com/foundation) today released an extensive study that shows Tamarack contributed \$18.6 million to the West Virginia economy, \$5.9 million in income and supported 236 jobs during the fiscal year July 1, 2007, to June 30, 2008. The study, prepared by the Marshall University Center for Business and Economic Research, also concludes that Tamarack supports tourism and promotes a positive image of the state.

“It is vital that our state’s government and business leaders know how much artisans contribute to our economic development as West Virginia moves toward establishing a creative workforce where entrepreneurs in every field, including the arts, are as important as traditional businesses to West Virginia’s economic success,” said Sally Barton, executive director of the Tamarack Foundation.

“The Foundation undertook the study to establish the economic impact Tamarack has and to identify how that translates into income and jobs throughout the state, not just in Beckley,” she continued. “We found that every one of West Virginia’s 55 counties receives benefit from the production of handcrafted products and art and performance art supported by Tamarack.”

Since Tamarack opened in 1996, the retail Caperton Center has

- Generated gross sales revenue in excess of \$89 million,
- Collected state sales tax revenue exceeding \$4.5 million,
- Provided a marketplace for more than 3,000 West Virginia artisans, and
- Attracted more than 5.6 million visitors.

As the money earned at Tamarack’s Caperton Center is spent and respent within the state, additional output, income and jobs grow by a multiple of the original spending.

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Dr. Cal Kent, Marshall University's Vice President for Business and Economic Research and a principal author of the report, said, "The new economy is based on creative people from all types of enterprises. As the most recent research shows, this generation of highly skilled and tech-savvy individuals is flocking to those places which offer arts." Further, Kent said areas of the country that are showing the fastest growth are those with strong arts industries. This report confirms that Tamarack is enhancing arts and arts communities in West Virginia.

"It is important not to overlook the positive image that Tamarack creates for those visiting the state," said Jennifer Price, one of the Marshall University researchers. "The Caperton Center enhances perceptions of the state's hospitality and its creative community."

The research found that Tamarack is unique among the fifty states. While other states have artist centers and programs, Tamarack provides the most comprehensive and extensive program, primarily under the auspices of the Tamarack Foundation. Activities such as professional skills training, business advice, scholarships and networking opportunities are offered to artisans around the state.

"Our study confirms what national studies show: the arts and related cottage industries are important to a growing community and have a continuing positive effect on the communities and the states in which they operate," Barton said. "This study will help us make our case for continuing support of this industry."

The Tamarack Foundation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to funding support programs for the artists, craftspeople, literary and performing artists and specialty foods producers of West Virginia. Donor support provides educational and training opportunities to help strengthen artisans in the development of their craft, opportunities to expand economic potential, and assistance for artisans who face critical needs or are suffering hardships and career-threatening events beyond their control.

"The mission of the Tamarack Foundation is to advocate and expand artisan entrepreneurship in order to create a vibrant economy for West Virginia. We do this by developing and training artists and artisans providing them with business development skills, exploring new markets, communicating success stories and raising funds to promote these efforts. The Foundation celebrates West Virginia's cultural heritage in the context of Tamarack's brand of excellence."