



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**USTA Mid-Atlantic Selects Roanoke in Virginia's Blue Ridge to Host
Regional Tennis Tournament for First Time**

Strong local tennis community, new facility driving factors in decision

Reston, Va. – Apr. 5, 2017 — The United States Tennis Association Mid-Atlantic Section (USTA MAS) has selected Roanoke, Va., to host the *Mixed 18 & Over Virginia Regional League Championship* June 2 – 4, 2017 at River's Edge Tennis Complex and North Cross School. Nearly 450 people will participate in the tennis event with additional spectators expected to visit Virginia's Blue Ridge during the three days of the tournament. This is the first time Roanoke will host a USTA League Regional Championship.

Instrumental in USTA Mid-Atlantic's decision to host the Regional Championship in Roanoke was the strong local tennis community fostered by the Roanoke Valley Tennis Association (RVTA), which works to grow tennis participation at the local level.

"Across Virginia thousands of people play tennis recreationally and competitively and are passionate about this lifelong sport," said Tara Fitzpatrick-Navarro Chief Executive Officer of USTA Mid-Atlantic. "Roanoke is one of those passionate tennis communities and put forth a strong value proposition to bring the tournament to the area. With a new 12-court tennis facility, accessible location and experience with large-scale sporting events we are confident and excited to bring this USTA League Regional to Roanoke."

USTA MAS worked closely with Visit Virginia's Blue Ridge to evaluate the feasibility of moving the tournament to the area and will be partnering with them to showcase the region and provide local amenities to those attending. "This tournament would not have been possible without the vision of the RVTA leadership and the completion of six new tennis courts in Roanoke City last fall. We are excited to open the door to this tournament and others incorporating more diverse sporting events in Virginia's Blue Ridge," said Landon Howard, President of Visit Virginia's Blue Ridge.

The City of Roanoke's Dept. of Parks and Recreation completed the River's Edge tennis courts in September 2016, adding six laser-graded courts, resurfacing the existing six courts, and adding sport lighting.

"We made improvements at River's Edge Sports Complex to help support Roanoke's tennis community and to enable River's Edge to become a tournament venue," said Michael Clark, Director of the City of Roanoke's Dept. of Parks and Recreation. "It's very encouraging that within just six months of reopening the courts, USTA Mid-Atlantic selected River's Edge for such a high-profile tournament."

Local USTA Leagues, consisting of men and women 18 and over, are currently playing tennis matches across the state for a chance to qualify. During the tournament, teams will play in a mixed doubles format of men and women grouped by skill level. Winners of the Regional Championship will advance to

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the Section Championship to compete against teams from Maryland, Washington, D.C., and West Virginia, which could lead to a berth to the National Championship in Mobile, Ala.

“I encourage tennis fans from the local community to come out and support the Regional Championships this June,” added Fitzpatrick-Navarro. “It’s a great opportunity to watch matches, have fun and be inspired to work on or start your tennis game.”

Nearly 20,000 people play USTA Mid-Atlantic Adult League tennis each year. Leagues are offered for all ages and ability levels in a fun, social and competitive environment. In 2016, there were nearly 10,000 unique tennis players in Virginia on local USTA Leagues, with 3,123 frequent players in the Mixed 18 & Over division.

For more information about the USTA Mid-Atlantic League Championship events visit, <http://www.midatlantic.usta.com/adult-tennis/USTA-League-Championships/>.

About The USTA Mid-Atlantic

The USTA Mid-Atlantic Section, one of 17 sections of the United States Tennis Association, is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization committed to promote and develop the growth of tennis. The organization offers quality recreational and competitive programs for people of all ages and abilities. Mid-Atlantic has been part of the official governing body for tennis in America since 1923 and serves over 34,000 members in the District of Columbia, Maryland, Virginia and eastern and southern West Virginia. Tennis players of all ages and skill levels are involved in leagues, tournaments and programs sanctioned by the section. For more information about USTA Mid-Atlantic and playing tennis in the Mid-Atlantic visit www.midatlantic.usta.com.

About Visit Virginia’s Blue Ridge

The mission of Visit Virginia’s Blue Ridge (VBR) (formerly the Roanoke Valley Convention & Visitors Bureau) is to promote Virginia’s Blue Ridge as a unique destination, with an outstanding quality of life, for leisure tourism, meetings, sporting events, recreation and business, and to facilitate the financial and cultural growth of the community as an exceptional place to live, work, and visit.

About Roanoke City Department of Parks and Recreation

The City of Roanoke’s Department of Parks and Recreation is a full-service, nationally accredited municipal agency that maintains nearly 14,000 acres of public land and provides the Roanoke Valley with thousands of recreational opportunities each year. With 60 parks, five greenways, four plazas, two outdoor swimming pools and seven recreation centers, the department employs 62 full-time employees and roughly 158 part-time and seasonal employees. For more information, please visit www.playroanoke.com.

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