PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Contact: Charlotte G. Whitted

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**Director to Retire** Russ Hatfield, HCOM Chairman of the Board

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Tazewell, VA—Charlotte G. Whitted, Executive Director of Crab Orchard Museum in Tazewell, VA, is planning to retire later this fall, having informed and consulted with the Board of Directors to formulate a proactive transition plan. After serving in the position for fourteen years, arriving at this decision was difficult for Whitted. “Crab Orchard Museum has been such an important part of my life and will always have my heart and support. The staff and volunteers are incredibly dedicated and passionate about the museum. Making sure they have continuity and outstanding professional leadership moving forward is my top priority.”

According to Chairman of the Board, Russ Hatfield, Whitted’s service to the museum has been exemplary. “We wish Charlotte the best of everything for the future and are sorry to see her go. The Museum has grown in so many ways during her tenure. Her work with the museum staff and the board has been great. She loves the museum deeply and always put it first. She will be missed.”

Crab Orchard Museum began in 1978, established as Historic Crab Orchard Museum & Pioneer Park, Inc. With the determination of Jeff Higginbotham, first Executive Director Nell Bundy, and a visionary initial board of directors, log and stone buildings from the 1800s were brought and rebuilt as the Pioneer Park on land donated by Higginbotham. His assemblage of donated pioneer and Native American artifacts formed the center of the museum’s permanent collection. Funds were raised for the museum center, which opened in 1982. In 41 years, the museum has had only four Executive Directors: Bundy, Ross Weeks, Randy Rose, and Whitted.

Under Whitted’s guidance, the museum has grown significantly beyond the scope of only the pioneer and Native American stories, with exhibits and programs that extend to other topics and periods. The museum added the 1907 Pisgah Store, home to Fisher & Company Restaurant, during her first week on the job in 2005. The administrative wing has been added, the Frog Level Service Station relocated on-site, the Cottage at Crab Orchard guest accommodation created, the Tazewell County Old & Bluegrass Fiddlers’ Convention well-established, and the Crab Orchard Corn Maze developed and expanded. With deliberate efforts to develop the museum as a cultural attraction for tourism, visitation has risen steadily from 16,000 annually to 25,000. Accessibility has been Whitted’s focus, making sure the museum’s artifacts, programs and events are available and affordable to all.

Former Chairman of the Board Martha Hurst adds, “The Museum Board has a difficult job ahead in searching for someone to replace Charlotte.  She is responsible for leading our wonderful staff forward during the past fourteen years.  We appreciate all her contributions and leadership.”

The Board has formed a search committee and will be accepting resumes until October 6th, 2019. A job description with education and experience requirements is posted on the museum’s website, [www.craborchardmuseum.com](http://www.craborchardmuseum.com). Resumes with cover letters should be sent in pdf format to searchcommittee@craborchardmuseum.com for consideration.

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