



## Pathfinders For Greenways Named Citizen of the Year

**January 11, 2019** - During the 2018, 85th Annual Salem-Roanoke Chamber Meeting & Awards breakfast at Roanoke College, Pathfinders For Greenways was awarded Citizen of the Year. Building Specialists President, Bob Fetzer was one of three incorporators and founders of Pathfinders For Greenways in 1997. Mr. Fetzer, some current and outgoing board members and mid-week crew attended the breakfast to accept the award. This is the first year, in the Chamber's history, Citizen of the Year has been award to an organization and not an individual.

***Pictured:*** Bud LaRoche, Frank Simms, Blanche Brower, (Midweek Crew members), Mill Miller, (Board of Directors), Roger Holnback (President), Charlie Osterhoudt (Board of Directors), Bob Fetzer (one of 3 incorporators of Pathfinders, signature is on Articles of Incorporation), James Breakell (Board of Directors)

### ***More about Pathfinders For Greenways, Inc.;***

Pathfinders for Greenways, Inc. was established in 1997 to be the non-profit organization (501(c)3) which could help the Roanoke Valley develop a greenway network. Greenways are bicycle and pedestrian trails that provide opportunity for citizens and visitors to walk and ride, travel without a vehicle, exercise in a protected environment and explore the great outdoors and Roanoke River. The greenways program in the Valley is a community effort, with the localities owning and operating the greenways and trails, the Roanoke Valley Greenways Commission serving as an advisory board that coordinates all the efforts, and Pathfinders providing an avenue for citizens, groups, and corporations to be involved. (Continued next page)

The mission of Pathfinders is to promote establishment and management of a network of greenways and trails by: assisting local governments in planning and development of a Valley-wide system of continuous trails; raising money for greenways construction, management, and promotion; marketing and educating citizens, elected officials and leaders on the value and benefits of greenways; providing a pool of skilled volunteers for construction and maintenance of natural surface trails; and sponsoring greenways related activities to further public use and support of the greenways network.

Pathfinders' volunteers have developed a track record of success, building miles of natural surface, multi-use trails, bridges, kiosks, signs, and benches. They have developed and maintain the greenways web site ([www.greenways.org](http://www.greenways.org)), constructed a volunteer database for recording hours ([greenways.org/TrailworkDB/](http://greenways.org/TrailworkDB/)), coordinated marketing, and supported fund raising. Pathfinders has provided 4-5,000 volunteer hours per year for trail construction, hours the localities often use as match to grants. In the ten years ending 12/31/2017, Pathfinders organized 53,800 hours of volunteer service, just on trail construction. Pathfinders' efforts in the adjoining counties of Montgomery, Franklin, and Botetourt were a contributing factor in Botetourt County joining the Greenways Commission in 2016.

Pathfinders works with the Greenways Commission, City of Roanoke, City of Salem, Roanoke County, Town of Vinton, and Botetourt County in fundraising efforts. For example, since the inception of the Bridge the Gap campaign in 2011, Pathfinders has received over \$1,142,234 in donations targeted for construction of Roanoke River Greenways. Pathfinders has passed \$768,733 of those funds to the localities for greenways construction and has committed an additional \$250,000 to right-of-way acquisition and \$80,000 to construction.

Pathfinders is a volunteer organization. It does not receive state or local government funds for operations, but has received several project grants. The board has no full-time staff, but does contract for part-time help for bookkeeping and clerical services. In addition, the Greenways Coordinator, who is staff to the Greenways Commission, assists Pathfinders with day to day activities, grants, and special events.