FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Public Invited to Dine and Define Sussex County Heart & Soul

Last month, the Heart & Soul project launched a local, public invitation to participate and share, using their words and images, the elements that they feel best portrays the Heart & Soul of Sussex County.

One thing is for certain, Sussex Countians have a lot to say.

“Well, we’ve listened to the community,” says Bill McGowan, University of Delaware extension agent who leads the Heart & Soul initiative. “Folks have given us hundreds of comments and many pictures of what they feel best defines the Heart & Soul of Sussex County.

Now McGowan would like to invite the public to a complimentary barbecue followed by a town hall meeting and discussions. Public input is crucial in going forward. “They will see what the community has generously shared and help decide the Heart & Soul elements of Sussex County,” McGowan said.

“Attempting to identify the tangible and intangible characteristics that comprise Sussex County is no easy task,” McGowan points out. “As our community continues to evolve, the ability to articulate what is important to us as a community will be vital.”

McGowan has traversed the county retrieving replies stuffed into response boxes, and eliciting written comments whenever he encounters Sussex Countians participating in social or community groups:

“Dollies on the boardwalk,” Apple Scrapple,” “small town fellowship,” “rural lifestyle,” “the great smell of farms and manure,” “Nassau Orchards,” “Great Blue Herons stalking prey,” “chicken farms,” and “the raw beauty of the shore,” are just a small sample of the diverse opinions and feelings about Sussex County that have been collected so far.

“We still need the communities’ help,” McGowan adds. From now through June 20, “we hope the public will continue to send us their pictures of special places, vistas, events and any image or sentiment that captures the spirit of Sussex County.” Contributions of images and thoughts can be e-mailed to McGowan at billmcg@udel.edu or the public may visit and participate through the Heart & Soul Web site at [www.ccei.udel.edu].
The Heart & Soul town hall meeting and barbecue will be held on Wednesday, June 25, 2008 at the Elbert N. & Ann V. Carvel Research Education Center on Route 9, just west of Sussex Technical High School. Dinner will begin at 6 p.m. at the adjacent Grove picnic grounds (on the east lawn of Carvel). After dinner, discussions will follow inside the Carvel facility.

Space is limited and reservations by June 20, 2008 are required. There is no charge for this event. For more information or to make a reservation, please contact Michele Walfred at 856-2585 ext 544 or by e-mailing: Walfred@udel.edu. Please include a return phone number.

This Heart & Soul project is sponsored by the Coastal Community Enhancement Initiative of the University of Delaware. This initiative brings together three colleges and their outreach arms that work at the community level. They are Cooperative Extension, Institute for Public Administration and the Sea Grant Marine Advisory Service.

-30-

Cutline for photo: Bill McGowan administers the Heart & Soul Web site and makes daily updates with contributions he has received throughout Sussex County.