

NEWS RELEASE
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**NATIONAL TOURISM WEEK HIGHLIGHTS THE
ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE INDUSTRY**

~ Tourism Means Business for Virginia—\$19.2 billion in revenue and 210,000 jobs ~

SUFFOLK, VA (May 10, 2010: Tourism professionals across the Commonwealth are touting the economic impact of visitors as part of National Tourism Week, May 8-16. Tourism is one of Virginia's most powerful industries, generating \$19.2 billion in revenue, supporting 210,000 jobs and providing \$1.28 billion in state and local taxes.

Locally, tourism has a significant impact on the area's economy. Data compiled by the U.S. Travel Association reports that tourism expenditures in Suffolk (2008) brings in \$54 million, supports 560 jobs and generates \$1.7 million in local taxes (up 7 percent). Suffolk will join forces with Chesapeake, Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Smithfield and Virginia Beach along with the Norfolk International Airport to honor travelers on Friday, May 14. Designated as "Thank the Visitor Day," representatives from each Hampton Roads' city will participate in a day-long celebration of the tourism industry at the Norfolk International Airport, providing locals and visitors with information about the region.

"Suffolk's connectivity to the larger Hampton Roads region and the variety of our lodging and dining options is a convenient, great value for business and vacation travelers," said Mayor Linda T. Johnson. The Virginia Tourism Corporation, the state agency responsible for marketing Virginia to travelers from across the globe, is partnering with local tourism offices statewide to shine a spotlight on the power of tourism. "Tourism is an instant source of revenue for Virginia," said Alisa Bailey, president and CEO of the Virginia Tourism Corporation. "Our marketing efforts bring visitors to communities across the commonwealth, in turn supporting local businesses and jobs. The state tax revenue alone generated by tourism is enough to educate 78,000 Virginia students or employ 11,500 state police officers."

Other facts about tourism in Virginia:

- Virginia ranks eighth in the nation for domestic visitor spending.
- Every \$1 Virginia invests in tourism marketing generates \$5 in tax revenue alone.
- Virginia is for Lovers is one of the most recognized and celebrated tourism brands in the country.
- Virginia is within a day's drive or less of 60 percent of the U.S. population, adding to the state's appeal and value as a destination.
- The Virginia Travel Guide is free to anyone by visiting www.Virginia.org or calling 800-VISITVA.

For more information about travel and tourism in Virginia, go to www.Virginia.org. For local trip planning assistance, call the Suffolk Visitor Center at 514-4130. Open daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and around the clock at www.Suffolk-Fun.com.

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