



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 4, 2016

----- MEDIA ALERT -----

**Virginia Green Travel Conference & Travel Star Awards to Recognize
Virginia's Leaders in Green Tourism!**

February 23-24, 2016 at the Renaissance Arlington Capital View

ARLINGTON, VA. – On February 24, 2016, the Virginia Green program will present the *Virginia Green Travel Star Award* to twenty-one (21) Virginia tourism businesses for their outstanding commitments to green tourism practices at the third annual Virginia Green Travel Conference and Travel Star Awards Celebration in Arlington, VA. Twenty-one (21) additional tourism businesses will also be recognized and receive the *Virginia Green Travel Leader Award* for their exceptional efforts to protect the environment and promote green tourism in Virginia.

The larger Virginia Green Travel Conference & Mid-Atlantic Green Tourism Business Expo is being held on February 23-24, 2016 at the Renaissance Arlington Capital View Hotel & Conference Center. The conference will feature presentations by sustainability leaders for Hilton, Marriott, EcoLab, & Sodexo; the *Green Restaurant Association*[™]; and a wide variety of green tourism topics, including the recent UCI Road World Championships & the concept of bike-friendly tourism.

“The Virginia Green Travel Conference is a great opportunity for hotels and other tourism businesses to learn more about how to run an effective green program,” said John Cario, General Manager of the Hilton Richmond. “It is also wonderful that the awards recognize the accomplishments of the state’s leaders in this effort.”

The Virginia Green program is run through a partnership of the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality; the Virginia Tourism Corporation; the Virginia Restaurant, Lodging & Travel Association; and the Virginia Green Travel Alliance. The program encourages green

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Supporting Green Tourism in Virginia

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practices throughout Virginia's tourism industry, and nearly 1,700 tourism operations have self-certified their green commitments through the program. The Virginia Green program helps its partners reduce environmental impacts and save money, while hopefully becoming more profitable through the support of green-minded consumers.

"The growth of the Virginia Green program statewide has been remarkable, and this event is a celebration of that progress," said Tom Griffin, Executive Director of the Virginia Green Travel Alliance. "Virginia Green Travel partners are committed to reducing their impacts on the environment, and they are helping to increase green tourism business in Virginia."

The *Virginia Green Travel Star Awards* are presented to recognize the most outstanding green tourism efforts in 2015. This year, Travel Star Awards will be given to 21 tourism operators in 12 sector categories and in an additional category for *Most Innovative Green Projects*. The 2015 Virginia Green Travel Star Award winners are:

- Green Attraction of the Year: Burnham Guides, Onancock
- Green Brewery of the Year (tie):
 - Hardywood Park Craft Brewery, Richmond
 - Wild Wolf Brewing Company, Nellysford
- Green Event of the Year: 2015 UCI Road World Championships, Richmond
- Green Hotel of the Year: Renaissance Arlington Capital View Hotel
- Green B & B of the Year: Oak Grove Plantation Bed & Breakfast, Cluster Springs
- Green Cabins of the Year: Shadow Mountain Escape, Luray
- Green Restaurant of the Year: Caffé Amouri, Vienna
- Green Visitor Center of the Year: Virginia Beach Visitor Information Center
- Green Winery of the Year: North Gate Vineyard, Purcellville
- Green Supplier of the Year: Lumen Energy, Richmond
- Green Convention Center of the Year: Virginia Beach Convention Center
- Green Conference Center of the Year: Airlie Conference Center, Warrenton
- Most Innovative Green Projects of the Year:
 - *Green Weddings* by Khimaira Farm, Luray
 - *Dark Skies Initiative* by Staunton River State Park, Scottsburg
 - *Zero Waste Project* by Xanterra Kingsmill Resort, Williamsburg
 - *Composting & Urban Garden* by the Hilton Downtown Richmond
 - *Electric Vehicle Charging Station* by Croc's 19th Street Bistro, Virginia Beach
 - *Recycling and Sustainability* by Richmond International Airport
 - *Pollinator Habitat Program* by the Virginia Department of Transportation Welcome Centers
 - *Green Procurement for the 2015 UCI Road World Championships* by Echelon Event Management, Richmond

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The Virginia Green program also presents *Virginia Green Travel Leader Awards* to recognize additional green tourism operators for their outstanding commitments to reduce the environmental impacts of their operations. The 2015 Virginia Green Travel Leaders are:

- Adventure Kayak Tours, Chesapeake
- Back INN Time Bed & Breakfast, Kilmarnock
- Birdsong Pleasure Garden, Luray
- Capital Ale House, Richmond
- Cary St. Cafe, Richmond
- Clay Corner Inn, Blacksburg
- Green Leaf and Pebble Tea Spa, Virginia Beach
- Go Green Distributors, Newport News
- Hungry Mother State Park, Marion
- Keep Virginia Beautiful – UCI Richmond Beautification Projects
- Lansdowne Resort
- Lickinghole Creek Craft Brewery, Goochland
- Mountain Song Inn, Willis
- Oystoberfest, Richmond
- Peabody's 'Hip Little Stay', Luray
- Port City Brewing Company, Alexandria
- Stonewall Jackson Inn Bed & Breakfast, Harrisonburg
- The Westin Reston Heights
- Virginia Aquarium Sensible Seafood Program, Virginia Beach
- Virginia Tech Dining Services, Blacksburg
- White Flint Farm, Keeling

The awards will be presented during the Virginia Green Travel Star Awards Luncheon which will be held from Noon until 1:15pm on Wednesday, February 24, 2016. **Virginia's First Lady Dorothy McAuliffe and Rita McClenny, President/CEO of the Virginia Tourism Corporation, will be attending the luncheon and presenting the awards.**

Members of the news media are invited to attend the conference & awards at noon at the Renaissance Arlington Capital View Hotel. If you would like to attend or have any questions, please contact Tom Griffin of the Virginia Green Travel Alliance at (804) 986-9119 or VirginiaGreen@Virginia.org.

- Information about featured speakers and other details about the conference can be found at www.VirginiaGreenTravelAlliance.org.
- Information about Virginia Green is available on the Virginia DEQ website at www.deq.virginia.gov/Programs/PollutionPrevention/VirginiaGreen.aspx.

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- Marketing of the Virginia Green partners is handled by the Virginia Tourism Corporation and is available at www.VirginiaGreenTravel.org.



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