

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

| | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|
| 2101 Parks Avenue, Suite 500 | Virginia Beach, VA 23451 | www.vbfun.com |
| | ph (757) 385-4700 | fx (757) 437-4747 |

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Ron Kuhlman Virginia Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau | 757.385.4700
Jessica Kraft BCF | 757.497.4811 | jkraft@boomyourbrand.com

Explore the Wildlife and Choose Your Sport during an Outdoor Adventure in Virginia Beach

(Virginia Beach, Va., 2009) — The wildlife roams. The birds sing through the trees in raucous melody. The sand finds its way between your toes. The majestic ocean challenges even the bravest adventurer. For those who long to strap on their running shoes, throw the kayak in the ocean or sleep under the stars, nature’s gifts await you in Virginia Beach.

Although Virginia Beach beckons to sunbathers and sandcastle-builders, the resort city is a wonderland for sports enthusiasts and those desiring more physical adventures. More than 18,600 acres of state parks and wildlife refuges, over 121 navigable miles of waterways and 35 miles of ocean and bay beaches give visitors a variety of landscapes for exploring the great outdoors and testing their skills. A virtually undiscovered ecological treasure, Virginia Beach is home to one of the last great salt marsh habitats on the East Coast. The miles of waterways take the form of rivers, bays, lakes, marsh areas and fingers of water that all flow into the Atlantic Ocean and Chesapeake Bay.



Virginia Beach's famous three-mile oceanfront boardwalk is a great place to expend some energy. It has a separate bike path, and the rest of the boardwalk is perfect for rollerblading and walking. Bike, rollerblade and surrey rentals are available along the boardwalk.



No matter where your outdoor interests lie – whether it’s hanging ten, shouting "Fore!" or reeling in a mighty marlin – the resort city provides that heart-thumping rush that sports enthusiasts crave. In Virginia Beach, savor the thrills of kayaking, hiking, golf, sportfishing, surfing, bird watching, soccer, swimming, biking, camping and much more.

Camping — Love staying in a rustic environment? Virginia Beach is home to five campgrounds containing over 1,800 campsites and more than 70 cabins, with amenities including restrooms/showers, guest laundry, bicycles, playgrounds, pools, and boat ramps.

Exploring the Parks – Biking, Hiking and Kayaking -- Virginia Beach's parks offer great biking and hiking trails, as well as 121 navigable miles of waterways. **First Landing State Park**, a 2,888-acre park that fronts the Chesapeake Bay, features 1.25 miles of beach front and more than 19 miles of interpretive hiking trails through protected salt marsh habitat, freshwater ponds, beach, dunes, forest, tidal marsh and cypress swamp. A registered Natural Landmark, First Landing is the most visited state park in Virginia and contains one of the most endangered habitat types in the world, the maritime forest community.



Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge is a 9,108-acre refuge made up of barrier islands, dunes, beach woodland, freshwater marshes, maritime forests, ponds and ocean beaches. Sharing a border is the 4,321-acre **False Cape State Park**, featuring six miles of unspoiled beaches in an ocean-to-freshwater bay habitat, as well as dunes, woodland, farm fields, salt marsh, maritime forest and wooded swamps. Together, the parks offer numerous hiking trails. The extensive wildlife boasts over 300 species of nesting and migratory songbirds, shorebirds and ducks (inclusive of a returning snow geese population of 10,000), otters, white-tailed deer, red fox, loggerhead turtles, American bald eagles, feral pigs, wild horses, and a number of interesting reptiles. From April through October, visitors may travel into the heart of the parks on a tram and explore by foot from there.



The **North Landing River Natural Area Preserve**, featuring 2,907 acres and an interpretive canoe trail, is owned and operated by the Nature Conservancy. The preserve is one of the largest and most significant natural area preserves in Virginia, harboring more rare plants, animals and natural communities than any place east of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

Dolphins and Whale Watching – The resort city is situated where the Chesapeake Bay meets the Atlantic Ocean, creating the perfect playground and feeding spot for dolphins and whales. Each year, bottlenose dolphins migrate off the Virginia Beach coast during the warmer months, while fin and humpback whales migrate past the coastline during the cooler months. Virginia Beach offers relaxing **dolphin and whale watching cruises** sponsored by the Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center. For the more adventurous, several outfitters feature **dolphin watching kayaking trips** through the ocean swells. Observe dolphins as they feed, tail slap and jump among the waves, or the whales as they feed and breach. Humpback whales can weigh up to 40 tons and ranging up to 52 feet long, while fin whales, the “greyhounds of the sea” are known as the second largest animal on the planet after the blue whale, ranging up to 85 feet long and weighing up to 70 tons.



Running – Whether it's making footprints in the sand or journeying to Virginia Beach to pound the pavement in a marathon, the cool breezes of the Atlantic make Virginia Beach the perfect destination for running enthusiasts. The resort city hosts several professional and amateur races, like **Rock 'n' Roll Half Marathon**, that draws more than 20,000 athletes. The Rock 'n' Roll Half Marathon features musical talent along every mile for both participants and spectators to enjoy. Virginia Beach also hosts the **Shamrock Sportsfest Marathon, Half Marathon and 8K** - another event where records are shattered.



--more--

Fishing –Known as the “Striped Bass Capital of the World,” Virginia Beach and its neighboring waters are home to a multitude of freshwater, brackish and saltwater fishing opportunities. With the food-rich Chesapeake Bay adjoining the Atlantic Ocean in Virginia Beach, croaker, spot, flounder, striped bass, tautog, sea bass, trout, bluefish, skipjack, cobia, mahi-mahi, Spanish and king mackerel, puppy and red drum, yellowfin and bluefin tuna, marlin, amberjack and wahoo are abundant at various times of the year. Tow your boat and choose from several different put-in locations or opt for a company that specializes in half-day or full-day private charters. Group party boats are also available. If you choose to stay near shore, cast a line from one of the four piers. Try your hand at one of Virginia Beach’s annual fishing tournaments, including the **Striped Bass World Championship** and the **Waterman’s Rockfish Shoot-out**. Freshwater and saltwater fishing licenses are required.



Water sports — With the warm Atlantic Ocean and the calm Chesapeake Bay, the options for water sports abound. Swimming, surfing, boogie-boarding, windsurfing, paddle boarding, jet-skiing, parasailing, kayaking and boating are all available. Recreational equipment can be rented near the beach. Several outfitters offer surf camps for those wanting to learn how to “hang 10” in a safe environment. For a different view of the water, try your skill at an ancient surfing technique known as paddle boarding, or stand-up surfing. In August, more than 100 of the world's top professional surfers and an estimated 400 amateur surfers travel to Virginia Beach

to “ride the curl” in North America’s oldest surfing contest, the East Coast Surfing Championships.

Golf — With nine public courses in Virginia Beach and 20 in the surrounding region, players will experience intriguing, challenging greens for all handicaps, from beginner to novice to pro. Miles of bent Bermuda grasses, hardwood forests, and challenging layouts create the perfect setting for an incredible day on the links. With designs by Arnold Palmer, Rees Jones, Pete Dye, George Cobb, Gene Bates and others, golfers are certain to find a course to test their game. The quality of the city’s golf product is underscored by its endorsement from national publications like *Golf* magazine that have lauded courses, including Heron Ridge, Signature at West Neck and Hell’s Point Golf Club. Year-round affordable golf package opportunities are offered. The resort city's mild weather permits play virtually year-round. Check out www.vbfun.com for details and to book golf packages.



Birding — The **Seashore-to-Cypress Loop** is part of the Coastal Phase of the statewide Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail, opened by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries. The Seashore-to-Cypress Loop traverses Virginia Beach and extends into the neighboring city of Norfolk. It contains 12 viewing sites teeming with flocks of migrant shorebirds, songbirds and raptors, winter wetlands filled with waterfowl and whales swimming offshore and summer swarms of dolphins, butterflies and dragonflies. Popular stops include the Chesapeake Bay-Bridge Tunnel, First Landing State Park, Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge, False Cape State Park and the Virginia Aquarium.

-more-



Horseback Riding - East Coast Equestrian Training Center is a great place for riding lessons. Situated on 100 acres in Pungo, it is one of the largest attached indoor riding arenas in Southeastern Virginia. The facility hosts national and local equestrian events, symposiums, clinics and horse shows. Each summer, horse camps are hosted for beginner and seasoned riders.

Tennis — Close to 200 free public tennis courts dot the city, with most courts lighted. In particular, **Owls Creek Municipal Tennis Center** has tournament seating for 1,300 and offers lessons.

Participatory Sports and Recreation – Virginia Beach’s quality sports facilities make it an ideal choice for amateur and professional competitions, from soccer to field hockey and gymnastics. Virginia Beach’s sports venues include the **Virginia Beach Convention Center**, boasting more than 500,000 sq. ft. of column free space, the **Virginia Beach Sportsplex** and the 19-field **Hampton Roads Soccer Complex**. The city has hosted the USA Rugby Collegiate National Championship, AAU Junior Olympic Games, NCAA Division II Men’s and Women’s Soccer Championships, National High School Coaches Association Wrestling Championship and USA Gymnastics US Classic.



Beach Volleyball — April through May, Tidewater Volleyball Association and the city set up more than a dozen nets for open play along the Virginia Beach shoreline from 2nd-6th Streets. Oceanfront tournaments thrive, including Virginia Beach Slam, Sand Spike and the Summer Freedom Fest.

Sand Soccer — In June, Virginia Beach is home to the world's largest single-weekend sand soccer tournament – the **North American Sand Soccer Championships** (NASSC). It takes place on 20 oceanfront blocks. This "Grand Prix" of international amateur beach soccer events attracts almost 10,000 youth and adult players from 950 teams from nearly 20 states and as far away as Germany, Brazil, Norway and Canada. The U.S. Open, routinely attracting several thousand spectators, presents the top Pro/Am men’s beach soccer teams competing in a 3-day format for cash prizes. Other events during the weekend include beach wrestling, rugby, tennis, co-ed football, lacrosse and cornhole. The NASSC is a 501c3 charity event, promoting youth and adult development at the Hampton Roads Soccer Complex, located in Virginia Beach.

Virginia Beach entices visitors to “Live the Life” every season of the year! Located in the southeastern corner of the state, Virginia Beach is four hours southeast of D.C. by car and within a day’s drive or less from two-thirds of the U.S. population. For visitor information, call 1-800-VA-BEACH (800/822-3224) or visit the Web site www.vbfun.com for online trip planning and more information about Virginia Beach’s new \$202.5 million convention center. For media information and digital images, click on www.vbpressroom.com.

###