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Virginia Beach Convention Center Certified as a *Virginia Green* Facility

(Virginia Beach, Va., 2009) – The Virginia Beach Convention Center is certified by *Virginia Green*, the Commonwealth of Virginia’s campaign to promote environmentally-friendly practices in all aspects of the Virginia tourism and hospitality industry. The Virginia Beach Convention Center was the first convention center in Virginia to meet the program’s required “core activities,” which include water efficiency, energy efficiency, minimized use of Styrofoam/disposables, recycling, and supporting green conferences and events.

“By conserving energy, reducing waste, and utilizing renewable resources, we are better able to serve our community and meeting planners,” said James B. Ricketts, director of the Virginia Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB). “The Convention Center’s commitment to the environment is consistently sought after by meeting planners who are researching destinations to book their conventions. Recent trends in the tourism and hospitality industry indicate that clients are much more interested in doing business with environmentally conscious organizations.”

The VBCC, which hosted nearly 407 conventions, consumer shows, and community events last fiscal year, was home to the North American Association for Environmental Education’s (NAAEE) annual meeting in November 2007, which brought an estimated 2,000 delegates to the area.

“Our organization looks to work with leaders in the conference field that support the green agenda we bring to the table,” said Brian A. Day, NAAEE executive director. “It has been a pleasure working with the Virginia Beach Convention Center staff.”

The Virginia Beach Convention Center’s sustainability initiatives began during the planning and design stages. Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, LLP (SOM), the building’s architects – in conjunction with their local partner, Norfolk-based Clark Nexsen – incorporated renewable resources into the building including elements such as the Cumaru wood for floors, meeting suite veneers and outdoor decks.

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The building design also integrates an energy efficient glass system that limits ultra violet (UV) light penetration and solar energy in the large pre-function spaces.

The Virginia Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau's commitment to environmental responsibility is conveyed throughout several departments including operations, housekeeping, food and beverage, landscaping, maintenance and administration. The building maintains an active recycling program through Tidewater Fibre Corporation (TFC) for paper, plastic, aluminum and cardboard. Items are collected in pre-function spaces, offices, meeting rooms and all back-of-house spaces. Co-mingled materials are compacted and transported to TFC's off-site sorting facility. The building has begun the process of using recycled paper for select promotional materials.

State-of-the-art lighting and HVAC systems are programmed based on event schedules to minimize usage during non-peak times and conserve energy as well as to permit facility staff to turn heating, air conditioning and lighting on and off at the touch of a keyboard. Many of the lights were switched from incandescent lamps to more energy efficient compact fluorescent lighting. Mercury is captured from proper disposal of fluorescent lamps via an on-site disposal system. Further energy conservation is derived from motion sensors that turn off lighting when no motion is detected after a specified period of time.

The 50-acre site is landscaped with over 2,000 trees and shrubs and the automated irrigation system measures rain accumulation and regulates irrigation demand. Further, storm water is retained on site and mitigates solid surfaces of building and pavement.

The housekeeping staff uses environmentally-friendly housekeeping products and hand towels, "Green Seal Certified" cleaners, vacuums and floor scrubbers. Bathrooms are equipped with sensors for sinks and hand towels to conserve water and paper, and foam soap that requires less water to remove. Microfiber cloths and floor cleaning pads are washed on site for reuse.

The building's food and beverage operator donates food overages to local homeless shelters and uses bio-degradable and recyclable material in their concession stands.

George Efstathiou, managing partner with SOM, commented, "SOM's approach to sustainability and green design has been honed over 50 years and the Virginia Beach Convention Center typifies our holistic design approach for all building systems and materials."

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Chris Stone, president of Clark Nexsen, added, “As engineers, our goal is to provide an energy efficient building envelope and to provide high efficiency, low power usage equipment that will enable the Convention Center owners to save on utility costs which translate into lower carbon emissions into the atmosphere.”

The Virginia Green program certified [Virginia Beach](#) as the first green destination in Virginia. To date, more than 60 Virginia Beach hospitality businesses are certified by *Virginia Green*, including restaurants, hotels, events and attractions.

Virginia Green is a voluntary program sponsored by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, the Virginia Tourism Corporation, and the Virginia Hospitality & Travel Association. *Virginia Green* encourages all aspects of Virginia tourism – hotels, resorts, bed and breakfasts, restaurants, attractions, parks, welcome centers, even golf courses and wineries – to be aware of their impact on the environment and to take steps to reduce these impacts.

Please visit www.deq.virginia.gov/p2/viriniagreen for more information on *Virginia Green*. For a complete list of the Virginia Beach Convention Center’s sustainability initiatives, visit www.vbconventioncenter.com/green.

The Virginia Beach CVB invites meeting planners to “Bring it to the Beach!” Virginia Beach is four hours southeast of Washington, D.C. by car and within a day’s drive or less from two-thirds of the U.S. population. For the latest information and project updates on the new Virginia Beach Convention Center, visit www.vbmeetings.com. Media information and digital images are available at www.vbpressroom.com.

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