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Virginia Tourism Wins Top Honors for Marketing Excellence

-Virginia is the only state to receive multiple awards from prestigious national tourism group-

Media Only

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RICHMOND, Va. – Virginia’s tourism leaders have reason to celebrate after taking home multiple awards for marketing excellence from the country’s most prestigious tourism organization.

The Travel Industry Association of America (TIA) honored the Virginia Tourism Corporation and the City of Alexandria for excellence in marketing and promotion at the annual Educational Seminar for Tourism Organizations in Minneapolis, Minnesota on August 22. Virginia was the only state to receive multiple Mercury awards from the National Council of State Tourism Directors (NCSTD), a TIA industry council.

“Tourism is a major contributor to Virginia’s economy and the quality of our communities,” said Secretary of Commerce and Trade Patrick Gottschalk. “However, the competition for tourists on a national and international level is fierce. Our state and local tourism partners have done a great job of leveraging the limited dollars available for marketing into creative and effective campaigns that are being honored on a national level.”

The Virginia Tourism Corporation’s *Meet Virginia* campaign received the Mercury Award for Best Overall Marketing Program, the top award from NCSTD. *Meet Virginia* is a dynamic, coordinated campaign featuring television ads using the Dave Matthews song, *Stay*, vibrant print advertising, and a matching Web site that bring Virginia’s personality and diverse regions to life. The \$2.5 million campaign leveraged \$11 million in media through 100 industry partners, major attractions, and corporate partners. Print inquiries increased 200 percent and unique visitors to www.Virginia.org increased by 107 percent as a result of the campaign.

Competition judges agreed that Virginia’s *Traveling with Pets Campaign* was dog-gone good marketing and awarded the Virginia Tourism Corporation the Mercury Award for Niche Marketing. The campaign recruited 79 statewide partners to promote pet friendly destinations and activities such as the Old Town Dog Spa, state parks, and free dog food and bowls at Virginia welcome centers. The \$75,000 budget for print, promotions, electronic advertising, PR, and welcome center demonstrations produced \$390,000 in publicity and increased unique visitors to the pet site on www.Virginia.org by 150 percent.



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The Alexandria Convention and Visitors Association (ACVA) received a Destiny Award for Marketing from the National Council of Destination Organizations, a TIA industry council. ACVA's ***Of Pubs and Patriots Media Weekend*** created a historical dining experience for travel and lifestyle writers. The resulting value of media coverage from the event was 14 times greater than the amount invested in the event.

“What an honor for Virginia to accept three awards from TIA and our national tourism partners,” said Alisa Bailey, president and CEO of the Virginia Tourism Corporation. “We look forward to maximizing the power of our creative advertising and promotions to further enhance Virginia’s reputation as a top travel destination and a wonderful place to visit.”

To learn more about visiting Virginia, go to www.Virginia.org or call 1-800-932-5827 to request a free travel guide and state map.

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