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## VIRGINIA TOURISM WINS REGIONAL AWARDS

*-Southeast Tourism Society bestows two “Shining Example Awards”-*

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**RICHMOND, Va.** – The Virginia Tourism Corporation has been honored as the inaugural recipient of two new “Shining Example” awards by the Southeast Tourism Society. The awards were presented to VTC on September 3rd at the STS annual meeting in Little Rock, Arkansas.

VTC won the inaugural *Tourism For Tomorrow Award* for its Virginia Green initiative. The award recognizes the “accomplishment of a destination, company or organization in the realm of sustainable tourism,” and Virginia Green’s merits for the award are easily identified through its Web site, [www.Virginia.org/Green](http://www.Virginia.org/Green).

Virginia Green is a partnership between the VTC and the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality and is aimed at reducing the environmental impact of tourism in Virginia. Hotels, restaurants, attractions and other tourism-related businesses can be awarded Virginia Green status by voluntarily meeting certain standards designed to protect the environment, including recycling, optional linen service, and water and energy conservation.

STS also presented VTC with the first *Internet Excellence Award*, given for extraordinary performance in digital communication, for its “Live Passionately” interactive internet marketing campaign. The integrated campaign is headed by a redesign of VTC’s popular travel Web site [www.Virginia.org](http://www.Virginia.org) and new optimization strategies resulting in more than five million unique visits per year. The Web site also features an interactive “Discover Your Passionality” sitelet in which a visitor can determine his or her inner zest for particular types of travel.

The award also includes VTC’s “Portraits of Passion” – real Virginians who represent the best of travel in the Commonwealth and who are featured each month both on the Web site and in monthly consumer e-newsletters. A final component of the campaign is a branded YouTube channel that features Virginia tourism content – [www.YouTube.com/VisitVirginia](http://www.YouTube.com/VisitVirginia).

“The Virginia Tourism Corporation is certainly proud to be the first to receive these awards,” said VTC president and CEO Alisa Bailey. “This affirms that Virginia is indeed a national leader in innovative tourism initiatives that serve to stimulate travel while minimizing tourism’s ecological impact. That, to me, is a win/win situation.”

The Southeast Tourism Society is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting and developing tourism in 11 Southeastern states and among its nearly 600 members. Headquartered in Atlanta, the STS fosters a regional marketing alliance leading to increased tourism among its members.



## NEWS

The Virginia Tourism Corporation is the state tourism agency of Virginia headquartered in Richmond. For more information on travel in Virginia visit [www.Virginia.org](http://www.Virginia.org) or call 800-932-5827.

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