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Virginia Retail Merchants Association Celebrates 100 Years as voice of free enterprise *Be Part of It!*

RICHMOND—The Virginia Retail Merchants Association (VRMA) is celebrating its 100 year anniversary with a lavish, 3-day gala at the historic Jefferson Hotel in downtown Richmond. The celebration will honor VRMA's rich history. VRMA is a not-for-profit trade association representing more than 5,400 retailers and other associated businesses throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia.

“With retail outlets employing nearly 20 percent—fully one in five—employees throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia, it’s imperative to realize that we all have a vested stake in helping ensure that a healthy condition of retail trade exists,” says VRMA President Laurie Peterson. “Business generates nearly \$5 billion in sales tax revenue each year that is pumped right back into our individual communities, benefiting every one of us,” she said.

“Since May 6, 1905, the Virginia Retail Merchants Association has worked to encourage proper and businesslike methods in the conduct of business affairs, said Peterson. “We’ve worked diligently to secure the enactment of reasonable and proper laws that advance the interests of retail merchants and the free enterprise system, but equally as important, protect the consuming public,” added Peterson.

In recent years the VRMA has been in the forefront in efforts to reduce crime in Virginia. The VRMA produced the *Crime Prevention Manual for Virginia Businesses*. The crime prevention manual offers ideas and preventative techniques that improve the security of business establishments and safety of employees and customers. The manual was developed by VRMA and a task force made up of several Virginia governmental offices and was assisted by several law enforcement and crime prevention agencies and organizations from Virginia and North Carolina.

Peterson said, “The VRMA also launched a methamphetamine prevention program in a partnership with the Attorney General Jerry Kilgore. The program helps reduce the production of methamphetamines, one of only two widely abused illegal drugs, that is readily manufactured or capable of being produced by the actual abuser.”

“We have a rich history in giving back to the communities we serve because we are part of the community,” Peterson said, adding, “We look forward to the next 100 years working with our friends and neighbors to build an even better business climate that will help build a stronger and safer community for every one of us.”

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The Virginia Retail Merchants Association was established in 1905. VRMA is a not-for-profit trade association representing retailers to educate, inform, and serve as a resource. VRMA and its retail member associations represents more than 5,400 retailers and other associated businesses throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia.