



VIRGINIA RETAIL MERCHANTS ASSOCIATION  
THE VOICE OF FREE ENTERPRISE SINCE 1905

# News

**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **VRMA Celebrates Centennial** *At Festive Gala Set for Oct. 1*

**(RICHMOND)** — The Virginia Retail Merchants Association will celebrate 100 years of service to the retail industry Oct. 1 during a grand gala at the Historic Jefferson Hotel. The VRMA, founded in 1905, is a not-for-profit trade association representing more than 5,400 retailers and other associated businesses throughout the state.

“We’ve been the only statewide voice of retailers before the Virginia General Assembly for 100 years, and we’re still going strong,” said Laurie Peterson, president of VRMA. “This gala celebrates the impact of our efforts to protect the interests of retail merchants and the free enterprise system. It also honors retailers’ contributions to the Virginia economy and local communities.”

The event is part of a lavish, three-day celebration featuring a silent auction, a vintage fashion show and musical entertainment. The theme of the association’s centennial is *Celebrating a century of service - Be a part of it!*

Speaking at the celebration is Senator Bill Bolling, candidate for Lt. Governor. Senator Bolling represents the 4<sup>th</sup> Senatorial District in the Virginia State Senate. He is a strong supporter of Virginia business and he recently received the Guardian of Small Business Award from the Virginia Chapter of the National Federation of Independent Businesses.

Dr. Robert D. Holsworth, famed political analyst for WTVR-NEWS 6 in Richmond, will also help celebrate the VRMA centennial. Holsworth is the director of the Center for Public Policy and a professor of political science at Virginia Commonwealth University. He is an author on American politics and a principal at Decision Research, a planning, research and forecasting firm.

“Senator Bolling like VRMA, have helped shape the Virginia business climate,” said Peterson. “The gala will provide an excellent opportunity for members to interact with the leaders that directly impact their businesses and everyday lives.”

VRMA will also honor their Retailer of the Year and Legislator of the Year at the gala. James R. Wilkins, Jr., president of Wilkins’ ShoeCenter, Inc., in Winchester, is the 46<sup>th</sup> honoree of the Virginia Retailer of the Year Award. VRMA selects the Retailer of the Year from stores of all sizes across the Commonwealth. Senator H. Russell Potts, Jr., nominated Wilkins for his outstanding customer service and contributions to the local community.

(more)

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VRMA named Delegate Morgan Griffith, 8<sup>th</sup> House District representative, Legislator of the Year for his record of voting with the business community. Delegate Griffith served as Chief Patron on behalf of VRMA this year for House Bill 2393 to eliminate the archaic Day of Rest laws.

“We work closely with legislators, associations and business owners to accomplish our mission,” said Peterson. “It’s important to honor the retailers and legislators that help make a positive impact on the business climate and communities of the state.”

In the past year, VRMA led the fight against the Day of Rest Statute and negative pharmacy and meth bills. The association successfully lobbied to recover the sales tax on bad debts and reduce the impact of the accelerated sales tax. VRMA also submitted bills to address credit card skimming as a form of identity theft and taxing on gift transactions. The organization influenced legislators to amend or strike harmful bills related to sales restrictions of certain products and duplicative information on return policies.

Recently, two resolutions commending VRMA for its service passed on the state and federal levels.

VRMA provides services and publications to keep members informed of changing laws and their impact on retail. Members also receive discounts on business technology and a free crime prevention manual.

“We try to provide retailers in the state with the information and tools they need to be effective,” said Peterson. “We know that when business succeeds, Virginians benefit.”

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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 represent more than 5,400 retailers and other associated businesses throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia.*

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