

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## Explore Other Regional Attractions in Hampton Roads during a Virginia Beach Vacation

(Virginia Beach, Va., 2009) – While planning your Virginia Beach vacation itinerary, don’t forget about the myriad of activities in the Hampton Roads region, all located within a short drive from Virginia Beach. How about getting your adrenaline pumping on exciting roller coasters, observing an African lion or simulating computerized warfare? Explore the following day trip ideas when “Living the Life” in Virginia Beach.

**Colonial Williamsburg – Williamsburg, Va.**



The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation operates the world’s largest living history museum in Williamsburg, Virginia—the restored 18th-century capital of Britain’s largest, wealthiest, and most populous outpost of empire in the New World. In Colonial Williamsburg’s 301-acre historic area stand hundreds of restored, reconstructed, and historically furnished buildings. Costumed interpreters tell the stories of the men and women of the 18th-century city—black, white, and Native American, slave, indentured, and free—and the challenges they faced. In a town once recognized as Virginia’s capital, Colonial Williamsburg is also home to the College of William and Mary and championship golf courses.

**Busch Gardens Europe – Williamsburg, Va.**

Feel the rush as adrenaline fills your veins while you roll into a double loop of roller coaster bliss at Busch Gardens. The theme park boasts dozens of thrilling rides and attractions, 10 main stage shows, a magical children’s area, authentic food, and a variety of unique shops. Busch Gardens has been voted the world’s “most beautiful theme park,” by the National Amusement Park Historical Association for 15 consecutive years.

**The Virginia Living Museum – Newport News, Va.**

Get up close to a grey wolf while strolling along an elevated boardwalk at the Virginia Living Museum. The museum is home to many animals native to the mountains and coastal plains of Virginia including coyotes, bald eagles, gray and red foxes, beavers, river otters, deer and aquatic animals as well. Kids will love to touch sea stars and horseshoe crabs from the Chesapeake Bay in the museum’s hands-on centers or gaze up at stars in the planetarium.

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**The Mariners’ Museum – Newport News, Va.**

One of the largest international maritime history museums, The Mariners’ Museum is filled with prized artifacts celebrating the spirit of seafaring adventure. Explore over 60,000 square feet of gallery space with rare figureheads, handcrafted ship models, Civil War ironclad USS Monitor artifacts, paintings, small craft from around the world, and much more. In March 2007, The Mariners’ Museum opened one of the premier Civil War attractions in the country - the USS Monitor Center - focusing on the 1860s and the events, experiences and lifestyles of the time. On March 9, 1862, the Civil War battle of Hampton Roads between the ironclads *USS Monitor* and *CSS Virginia* heralded the beginning of a new era in naval warfare. Though indecisive, the battle marked the change from wood and sail to iron and steam. The Mariners’ Museum is set on a 550-acre woodland park with the five-mile Noland Trail around tranquil Lake Maury. Discover the plant and animal life, enjoy a picnic, or climb on the wooden play-ships.



**Water Country U.S.A. - Williamsburg, Va.**

Plunge into a wet and wild time at Water Country USA. The mid-Atlantic’s biggest water play park offers more than 30 slippery slides and water rides. Twist into a water flume, float down a lazy river or just relax by the wave pool.

**The Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge – Suffolk, Va.**



The Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge is located in southeastern Virginia and northeastern North Carolina. The refuge consists of over 111,000 acres of forested wetlands. Lake Drummond, a 3,100 acre natural lake, is located in the heart of the swamp. Visitors may participate in a variety of activities including hiking, biking, nature photography, wildlife observation, hunting, fishing and boating. The refuge was established for the purpose of protecting and managing the swamp's unique ecosystem which includes wildlife and habitat.

**Virginia Sports Hall of Fame & Museum – Portsmouth, Va.**

An interactive adventure for the whole family is available at the Virginia Sports Hall of Fame and Museum. Choose a position in hands-on basketball, football, baseball and soccer activities. Check out golf and Redskins exhibits or go for a ride around the track on an auto racing computer simulator. The museum also has an exhibit honoring Virginia sports heroes like Arthur Ashe and Ricky Rudd. With 35,000 square feet of space there is plenty to see and do.



**The Children’s Museum of Virginia - Portsmouth, Va.**

Blast off to Mars on a space shuttle, make a life size bubble or discover the world of trains. The Children’s Museum of Virginia, the state’s largest interactive children’s museum, is currently undergoing an expansion, and will feature 20,000 additional square feet of exciting, hands-on exhibits for your child to explore in early 2010.

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**The Virginia Zoo – Norfolk, Va.**

From the plains of Africa to your own backyard, the Virginia Zoo is a world of discovery. Explore the African savannah - home to giraffes, rhinos, mandrills, bongo and more. The boardwalk through Africa allows you to take a walking safari and experience the animals in their naturalistic habitats. Wildlife from around the globe continues just around the corner - tigers, squirrel monkeys, ocelots and slithering snakes. You can even come nose to nose with a prairie dog in the interactive prairie dog habitat. A behind-the-scenes tour with zookeepers offers you an up close and personal look at some of the zoo's most interesting animals – lions, giraffes, tigers, elephants and even rhinos!

**Botanical Gardens - Norfolk, Va.**



Take a moment to stop and smell the roses at the Botanical Gardens. Explore over 155 acres of flora, including one of the largest collections of roses, camellias, azaleas and hollies. Take a tour by boat or tram to explore bridges, coastal waterways and 12 miles of trails. The World of Wonders Children's Adventure Garden is a 3-acre garden, dedicated to families, offering interactive areas such as jet sprays, bubblers, an oversized treehouse and a kid-powered water fountain.

**Virginia Air & Space Center – Hampton, Va.**

Take flight to the Virginia Air & Space Center, the visitor center for NASA Langley Research Center and Langley Air Force Base. Your imagination will soar as you launch a rocket, pilot a space shuttle, come face-to-face with the Apollo 12 Command Module, and a DC-9 passenger jet. Experience a 3D IMAX film in the Riverside IMAX Theater.

**Nauticus - Norfolk, Va.**

Nauticus is a spectacular maritime-themed science center featuring over 150 exhibits, including interactive theaters, aquaria, digital high-definition films, and an extensive variety of educational programs. A gift shop and restaurant complement the experience. While you're there, explore the Battleship USS Wisconsin. Berthed at Nauticus, the Battleship Wisconsin is one of the largest and last battleships ever built by the U.S. Navy. Explore its deck through a self-guided or audio tour that will take you back in time to experience this majestic ship that earned five battle stars during World War II.



*Virginia Beach entices visitors to “Live the Life” every season of the year! Located in the southeastern corner of the state, 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 visitor information, call 1-800-VA-BEACH (800/822-3224) or visit the Web site [www.vbfun.com](http://www.vbfun.com) for online trip planning and more information about Virginia Beach's new \$202.5 million convention center. For media information and digital images, click on [www.vbpressroom.com](http://www.vbpressroom.com).*