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**Virginia International Tattoo Awarded Prestigious
“Internationally Known Event” Designation by
American Bus Association**

Norfolk, VA - The Virginia Arts Festival is proud to announce the American Bus Association, the nation’s premier representative of the motor coach, tour, and travel industry, has designated the Virginia International Tattoo one of its elite “Top Internationally Known Events” among its annual “Top 100 Events in North America.” The announcement adds the Virginia International Tattoo to ABA’s “must-see” list of top destination events that includes such landmark happenings as Mardi Gras, the Kentucky Derby, and the Indianapolis 500. The Virginia International Tattoo has been placed on the prestigious “Top 100 Events” list three times previously within the short 11 year history of the Festival. For 2008 it has been elevated to the “Top Internationally Known Events” status.

About the ABA’s “Internationally Known Events”

The award highlights the Virginia International Tattoo as “the best of the best” for entertainment-minded travelers. The annual ABA Top 100 Events listing identifies events that offer excellent entertainment value to both tour groups and individual travelers from around the world—and the elite subset of “Top Internationally Known Events” are singled out for their tremendous popularity, quality, and international appeal. The selections are made by a panel of ABA-member bus and tour operators from hundreds of entries nominated by state and provincial tourism offices and local and regional convention and visitors’ bureaus.

“The allure of these entertainment experiences is only part of why they’ve been identified for their global appeal,” said ABA President & CEO Peter Pantuso. “These events have been recognized as magnets for tourism at a time when reorganizing domestic tourism is so important to our economy.” The list of “Top Internationally Known Events” and the “Top 100 Events in North America” are published in the September/October issue of the ABA’s *Destinations* magazine and featured on the organization’s website, www.buses.org.

About the Virginia International Tattoo

For 11 years, the Virginia International Tattoo has been presented by with the Virginia Arts Festival in Norfolk, Virginia. The Tattoo brings centuries-old tradition to thrilling life in an unforgettable show of marching bands, massed pipes and drums, military drill teams, dancers, choruses and color guards—a show that “CBS Sunday Morning” called “a spectacle of music and might.”

Scott Jackson, the Producer and Director of the Virginia International Tattoo, acknowledged the award: “We have welcomed thousands of travelers from across the United States and around the world to the Virginia International Tattoo. Audiences of all ages, from our oldest honored veterans to the thousands of school children who attend each year, tell us that the Tattoo is one of the most awe-inspiring shows they have ever seen.”

Attendance for the Tattoo continues to rise with more than 34,000 people at the 2007 performances. Audience members traveled from 41 states, nine countries, and four continents.

The term “tattoo” is itself more than 300 years old; when the British Army were fighting in the Low Countries (Belgium and The Netherlands) in the 17th century, drummers were sent out with the call “*doe den tap toe*” to order the innkeepers to turn off the taps and send the soldiers back to their barracks. Later shortened to “tattoo,” the reference came to include expanding ceremonies of drumming, piping, bands, and marching.

12th Annual Virginia Arts Festival April 18-May 25, 2008

The Virginia Arts Festival premiered in coastal Virginia in spring 1997. During the annual Festival 20-plus venues in ten cities from the Historic Triangle (Jamestown/Yorktown/Williamsburg) to Norfolk to the oceanfront resort, Virginia Beach, host over 50 performances by world-class artists from around the world in classical music, dance, theatre, and opera. Signature events include the Chamber Music series, led by pianist Andre-Michel Schub; the Dance series featuring Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Martha Graham Dance Company, Noche Flamenca and Black Grace; and the spectacle of music and might, the Virginia International Tattoo. The Tattoo is held in to Norfolk, Virginia’s Scope Arena April 18-20, 2008, will gather more than 800 performers, including military bands, drill teams, and performing ensembles from eight countries, including the United States, Australia, Canada, The Netherlands, South Africa, Tonga, Turkey, and the United Kingdom. Season tickets for groups of 15+ are available now, subscription tickets available in November and single tickets on sale in February, 2008. For information and tickets for the 2008 Virginia Arts Festival visit www.vafest.com or call (877) 741-2787.