

For Immediate Release

October 10, 2017

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**Chincoteague Volunteer Fire Company
Annual Pony Penning Wins State Award**

Chincoteague Island, VA—October 10, 2017: The Virginia Restaurant, Lodging & Travel Association (VRLTA) announced the winners of the 2017 VRLTA Annual Ordinary Awards at a dinner in their honor on October 2 at the Westin Hotel in Richmond. The Chincoteague Volunteer Fire Company's Annual Pony Penning Event received the 2017 Attraction of the Year Ordinary Award. Tourism industry veterans from around the state reviewed the nominations, and scored each based on extraordinary contributions to Virginia's hospitality and travel industry, their guests, and colleagues. Eric Terry, President of the Virginia Restaurant, Lodging & Travel Association said "each and every one (nominee) has provided extraordinary service to the industry and their guests."

Far from ordinary, the annual Chincoteague Pony Swim has been delighting visitors from around the globe for 92 years now. Unlike any other event in the world, it was made famous by Marguerite Henry's classic novel, *Misty of Chincoteague*, in 1947 followed by a Hollywood movie in 1961. "The event draws visitors to our small serene fishing village ... and provides a significant economic impact to the tourism industry of the island, the Eastern Shore and beyond" according to the Chincoteague Chamber of Commerce nomination application.

Public Relations Officer Denise Bowden and Chincoteague Chamber of Commerce President Mary Alice Birch were on hand to accept the award on behalf of the Chincoteague Volunteer Fire Company. "The Chincoteague Volunteer Fire Company is truly honored to be the recipient of this prestigious award. We thank the Chincoteague Chamber of Commerce for nominating our event and appreciate all the effort in marketing our event. For 92 years we have worked very hard to keep this tradition alive for the people of the island and all the visitors who love our special island and our ponies. This award is very special to us as we know full well that the competition we were up against is well known and well loved in its own right. Thank you to those who continue to support us and our events" said Ms. Bowden.

To learn more about this very extraordinary event and to make plans to attend the 93rd Annual Pony Swim & Auction in 2018, visit www.chincoteaguechamber.com/pony-swim.

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