

For Immediate Release
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**Chincoteague Chamber of Commerce
Wins Virginia is For Lovers® “Trailblazer Award”**

Chincoteague, VA—March 23, 2015: Chincoteague Chamber of Commerce was honored with the 2015 Virginia is For Lovers® “Trailblazer Award” at the annual Visitor Centers Seminar held in Chincoteague March 18 & 19. The award is open to all Virginia Certified Tourist Information Centers. The Chincoteague Chamber was designated a Certified Visitor Center by Virginia Tourism Corporation in 2008.

The Trailblazer Award was created to “recognize certified visitor centers for excellence and creative accomplishment in tourism marketing and promotion, and to foster the development of imaginative and innovative marketing promotion programs and activities”. Chincoteague Chamber of Commerce’s *Friday Afternoons on the Porch* was initiated in 2014 as a way to interact with community partners and showcase local talent. Each Friday from 2-4 p.m. Memorial Day through Labor Day, someone from the community was the chamber’s guest on the porch demonstrating, talking, painting, knitting, carving, and generally doing fun things. The summer began with a Memorial Day Salute. Chincoteague Bay Field Station, NASA, National Park Service, carver Roe Terry, artist Cindy Faith-Oehm, Chincoteague Pony Drill Team, Chincoteague Volunteer Fire Company, Museum of Chincoteague Island and Ker Place, Eastern Shore Rural Health, Chincoteague YMCA, a group of local knitters celebrating International Knit in Public Day, and VA Hang Gliding were other featured guests providing lots of interaction, hands-on-activities, and information on family-friendly things to do while in the area. Visitation to the Chamber office increased 52% on those Fridays compared to the previous year. The *2015 Friday Afternoons on the Porch* will begin mid-June and end Labor Day weekend. The list of participants is being finalized and will be published on the chamber website, www.chincoteaguechamber.com and Facebook Page.

Executive Director of the Chincoteague Chamber of Commerce Evelyn Shotwell says, “It is indeed an honor to win such an award from the Commonwealth’s Tourism Office. We all had fun, learned something new, and made new friends.” Come by the chamber office at 6733 Maddox Boulevard to see who is “on the porch” this summer.

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