



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Chincoteague Chamber of Commerce Receives Virginia Tourism Corporation DMO WanderLOVE Recovery Grant for Tourism Marketing**



**Chincoteague Island, VA—July 23, 2020:** The Chincoteague Chamber of Commerce has received \$10,000 from the Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC) DMO WanderLOVE Recovery Grant Program, a new grant made available to Virginia's Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) across the Commonwealth that have been heavily impacted by the novel coronavirus pandemic to fund recovery marketing initiatives. \$866,504 in marketing grant funds were awarded to 90 Destination Marketing Organizations as part of the DMO WanderLOVE Recovery Grant

program.

The Chincoteague Chamber of Commerce will use the VTC WanderLOVE grant funds to create road trip itineraries based on nature, outdoors, the iconic Chincoteague Ponies, delectable coastal cuisine and that awesome small town charm we are famous for. Chincoteague Island was recently honored as being chosen USA Today's Best Coastal Small Town by popular vote.

Chincoteague Island, Virginia's only resort island, is perhaps the most beautiful island on Virginia's Eastern Shore. World famous for its oyster beds and clam shoals, Chincoteague is the gateway to the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge which is located on the Virginia side of Assateague Island. Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge is also home to the world-famous Chincoteague Ponies and an award-winning beach at Assateague Island National Seashore. In addition to the unparalleled beauty of tranquil beaches with spectacular sunrises and sunsets, our islands offer diverse wildlife, fantastic woodlands and marshes, scenic water views and wild Chincoteague Ponies. Our mild year round climate is perfect for hiking and biking with miles of trails to explore. Guided and self-guided history tours and museums offer glimpses into our fascinating past while explaining our culture and heritage. Summer months are spent on or near the water.... and we have plenty of it. Boating, fishing, crabbing or clamming, kayaking, swimming, or just strolling in the surf of the Atlantic Ocean are preferred activities. When you have had enough physical activity, unwind with a little retail therapy. Small town shops beckon along Historic Downtown Main Street where you will find beautiful hand-crafted jewelry, whimsical decor, or one-of-a-kind artwork from our very talented artists as a keepsake of your memorable stay in Chincoteague Island. End your day with a fabulous seafood feast from one of our many restaurants featuring the best coastal cuisine in Virginia. Oysters are what we are known for, but clams, shrimp, drum and rockfish run a close second. Each chef has their specialty.

Executive Director of the Chincoteague Chamber of Commerce, Evelyn Shotwell, says "Chincoteague Island is open for business and we can't wait to see you!"

As Virginia begins reopening, there is a lot of pent-up demand for leisure travel and people are seeking safe, close-to-home destinations that allow for social distancing and access to open spaces. With this in mind, the WanderLOVE campaign provides travel inspiration for road trips, outdoor recreation, hidden gems, small towns, and Virginia's signature LOVEworks program. Chincoteague Island boasts a set of 4 very large Adirondack chairs spelling the word LOVE in Robert Reed Downtown Waterfront Park awaiting your next photo op.

"Virginia tourism is a critical sector of our economy and has been heavily impacted by the coronavirus pandemic," said Governor Ralph Northam. "Getting travelers back on the road and spending money in our cities and towns is one of the fastest ways to inject dollars back into our economy and our communities. The Virginia Tourism Corporation's DMO WanderLOVE Recovery Grants gives localities the ability to market their destination as safe and welcoming when visitors are ready to resume travel."

Tourism is one of the Commonwealth's largest economic engines. The tourism and hospitality industries have also been among the hardest-hit by the pandemic, experiencing decreased revenue and job loss, along with the temporary closure of many tourism-related businesses. A revived tourism economy can help spur new economic activity and inject critical funds back into Virginia communities.

#### **About Virginia Tourism Corporation**

Virginia Tourism Corporation is the state agency charged with marketing the Commonwealth as a premier travel and film destination. In 2018, visitors to Virginia spent \$26 billion, which supported 234,000 work opportunities and contributed \$1.8 billion in state and local taxes. In 2019, Virginia is for Lovers celebrates its 50th anniversary. To learn more, visit [virginia.org](http://virginia.org)

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#### **About Chincoteague Chamber of Commerce & Certified Visitor Center**

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The Chincoteague Chamber of Commerce is an organization whereby many different business interests have joined together in a combined manner to maximize their ability to attract and increase the number of visitors to Chincoteague Island. The ultimate goal of the organization is to communicate the message that Chincoteague, the "Beautiful Land Across the Water," is the most desirable location to visit and/or vacation with family or friends.

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