



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:
Ryan Barber
(276) 634-4163

**VMNH Hosting Fun, Educational Events During
Museum Day, September 29**

*Free admission for Smithsonian magazine readers and Smithsonian.com
visitors*

Martinsville, Va. (September 27, 2007) - The Virginia Museum of Natural History in Martinsville is participating in Smithsonian Museum Day on Saturday, September 29. Museum Day, presented by Smithsonian magazine and Hyundai Motor America, is a day when museums and cultural institutions nationwide open their doors free of charge to Smithsonian magazine readers and Smithsonian.com visitors. Celebrating culture, learning and knowledge, Museum Day reflects the spirit of the magazine, and emulates the free-admission policy of the Smithsonian Institution's Washington, DC-based facilities. This year's Museum Day is also supported by CITGO Petroleum Corporation and, for the third consecutive year, TIAA-CREF.

"The Virginia Museum of Natural History is excited to be a part of Museum Day 2007," said Timothy J. Gette, executive director of the Virginia Museum of Natural History. "We are especially proud to be the only Smithsonian Affiliate in Virginia to be taking part."

Special activities will take place throughout the day at the museum. From 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., special screenings of the films "Stories from the Vault" and "Loose at the Zoo: Golden Lion Tamarins" will be shown in the Mr. and Mrs. L. Dudley Walker Lecture

Hall. From 9 a.m. to noon, a volunteer cleanup event is taking place at J. Frank Wilson Park located behind the museum. The museum's September Special Saturday program "Flower Power" will take place from 10 a.m. to noon. The program focuses on flowers and plants up close as participants learn about the variety of benefits these organisms have on our environment. The program fee is \$5, and pre-registration is required. To conclude the day, acoustic soloist Timothy Seaman will present a free, live music performance at the museum at 6:30 p.m. Seaman's cds are available for purchase in the Museum Store. The New Moon Café, located next to the Museum Store, will be open during the evening performance, with Starbucks coffee, sandwiches, wraps and snacks. The first 25 visitors who join VMNH at the "Smithsonian" membership level or higher on September 29 receive a free Museum Day tote bag.

Visitors to the museum will also have the opportunity to experience the permanent exhibits "Uncovering Virginia" and "How Nature Works." Other current exhibitions include "Beyond Jamestown: Virginia Indians Yesterday and Today," open through January 20, 2008, and "Minerals: Near and Far, Fancy and Functional," open through October 21, 2007. Other galleries include The Harvest Foundation of the Piedmont Great Hall, with a 14-million-year-old balaen whale suspended from the 40-foot ceiling, and the cast of an imposing *Allosaur*. Additional information about exhibits and special activities can be found at the museum's Web site at www.vmnh.net.

Last year, approximately 30,000 people attended Museum Day. Forty-nine states were represented by 448 participating museums, including 55 Smithsonian affiliates. Attendees must present Smithsonian magazine's Museum Day Admission Card to gain free entry to participating institutions. The Museum Day Admission Card is available in the September issue of Smithsonian magazine and a downloadable version is available on the Museum Day Web site at www.smithsonian.com/museumdaycard. The general public is welcome to participate by going to the Smithsonian.com Web site and downloading the Museum Day Admission Card. Listings and links to other participating museums' and sponsors' sites can be found at www.smithsonian.com/museumday.

ABOUT THE VIRGINIA MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

The Virginia Museum of Natural History in Martinsville seeks to increase understanding of and appreciation for the natural history of the Commonwealth through education, research, collections, publications and exhibits. The Museum – an affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution – is accredited by the American Association of Museums, a distinction earned by fewer than 10 percent of museums in the United States. The Museum is a member of the Association of Science-Technology Centers, Virginia Association of Museums, Heritage Preservation, and is an agency of the Secretary of Natural Resources for the Commonwealth of Virginia. With over 22 million objects in its collections, the Museum reaches nearly 1 million people annually through on-site and traveling exhibitions, classroom outreach programs, the Museum's Web site, public events and publications.

The Museum is open Monday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and Sundays from Noon to 5:30 p.m. Members are always admitted free. Admission is \$9 for adults; \$7 for senior citizens and college students; \$5 for children and youth 3-18; members and children under 3 free. For more information about membership or volunteer opportunities, please call 276-634-4141 or visit www.vmnh.net.

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