



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

CONTACT:  
Ryan Barber  
(276) 666-8659

### **“Feathered Dinosaurs of China” exhibit to open at VMNH Research and Collections Center**

*Rare specimens from China to be displayed in conjunction with  
“Chinasaurs” exhibit*

**MARTINSVILLE, Va.** (December 7, 2006) – The special exhibits “Feathered Dinosaurs of China” and “Chinasaurs: The Great Dinosaurs of China” will open January 3, 2007 at the Virginia Museum of Natural History Research and Collections Center at 1001 Douglas Avenue in Martinsville. The exhibits were originally scheduled to open at the new world-class VMNH facility nearing completion at 21 Starling Avenue, but a recent brownout in the city of Martinsville caused significant damage to the new facility’s computer infrastructure, impairing the museum’s ability to obtain a certificate of occupancy in time for a January opening at the new facility. The highly anticipated opening of the new world-class Virginia Museum of Natural History facility will become a reality with a ribbon cutting and dedication ceremony on March 30, 2007, followed by the VMNH Foundation Gala beginning at 7 p.m. that evening. The new facility will open to the public with a Grand Opening on March, 31, 2007.

The “Feathered Dinosaurs of China” exhibit will feature a rare feathered dinosaur and other spectacular specimens from the National Geological Museum of China. These loaned specimens rarely leave China, and are the result of an ongoing research partnership between the Virginia Museum of Natural History and the National Geological Museum of China.

Visitors to the VMNH Research and Collections Center will also experience the special exhibit “Chinasaurus: The Great Dinosaurs of China”, featuring the largest collection of Chinese fossils to tour North America. “Chinasaurus” features fossils rarely seen outside of China, including 65 million-year-old dinosaur eggs, a large dig-pit for children, touch fossils and hands-on activities for all ages.

To highlight the opening of the “Chinasaurus” exhibit and the “Feathered Dinosaurs of China” exhibit, VMNH will host its 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Dino Day on January 20, 2007 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the VMNH Research and Collections Center. The event will feature music, games, food, and fun activities for all ages. Don Lessem, one of the world’s leading presenters of dinosaur science, will be on hand at the event.

The Grand Opening of the new world-class VMNH facility on March 31, 2007 will feature the permanent exhibit galleries “Uncovering Virginia”, “How Nature Works: Rocks”, and “How Nature Works: Life”, offering visitors an interactive, walk-through experience that few museums present. The Harvest Foundation of the Piedmont Great Hall, which features a 14 million-year-old fossil whale skeleton and the skeleton of an *Allosaurus*, and the Hooker Furniture Corporation Theater, which is the first site in Virginia to offer CineMuse high-definition digital cinema, will also be available to visitors. The VMNH Store and New Moon Café will be available to both museum patrons and the general public.

## **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. A new, \$28 million museum currently is being built in Martinsville. When fully completed in early 2007, the new Museum facility will offer five times the exhibit and public space of the current facility.

The Museum is a member of the Association of Science-Technology Centers, Virginia Association of Museums, Heritage Preservation, and an agency of the Secretary of Natural Resources for the Commonwealth of Virginia. With over 22 million objects in its collection, 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 Virginia Museum of Natural History Research and Collections Center will re-open January 3, 2007 with the special exhibits “Feathered Dinosaurs of China” and “Chinasaurus: The Great Dinosaurs of China”. A ribbon cutting and dedication ceremony for the opening of the new world-class VMNH facility will be held March 30, 2007, followed by the VMNH Foundation Gala beginning at 7 p.m. that evening. The new facility will open to the public with a Grand Opening on March 31, 2007. Both facilities will be 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 \$7 for adults; \$6 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 276-666-8600 or visit the museum’s Web site at [www.vmnh.net](http://www.vmnh.net).

###