

 VIRGINIA ARTS FESTIVAL
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AMERICAN BUS ASSOCIATION NAMES

Virginia International Tattoo

IN LIST OF TOP INTERNATIONALLY KNOWN EVENTS



Norfolk, VA – The American Bus Association released its 2009 listing of the Top Internationally Known Events (IKE), an adjunct to its annual Top 100 Events in North America, released in September.

Parades, races, flowers, music and theater top the list of Internationally Known Events. The annual listing identifies events that offer excellent entertainment value to both tour groups and individual travelers from around the world.

The Internationally Known Events list consists of 32 perennial favorites such as the Tournament of Roses in Pasadena, CA., the Indianapolis 500 Festival in Indianapolis, IN, the National Cherry Blossom Festival in Washington, DC, and the Kentucky Derby in Louisville, KY. This elite status is awarded to these distinguished events because of their tremendous popularity, quality and international appeal. The Top 100 list is published as a supplement to the Sept./Oct. Destinations.

The **Virginia International Tattoo** in Norfolk, Va. draws thousands of spectators to Norfolk's Scope Arena each year. Dating back to 17th-century Europe, a Tattoo is a ceremonial

performance of military music by massed bands. The 2009 Tattoo is a tribute to those who serve which includes an exhibition of marching bands, massed pipes and drum teams, gymnasts, Scottish dancers, choirs and more. With 850 performers, it's the largest tattoo in the United States.

"The attractiveness of **the Virginia International Tatoo** as a don't-miss entertainment value is only part of why its selection this year is such a distinction for **Norfolk**," said Peter J. Pantuso, ABA's president and CEO. "The real news here is that **the Tattoo** has been recognized as a potential magnet for tourism dollars, at a time when reenergizing domestic tourism is so important to our spirit and our economy. The honor gives Norfolk an important boost in visibility among professional tour planners."

According to studies recently completed by researchers at The George Washington University and Dunham and Associates, one overnight visit by a motorcoach group can leave from US \$5,000 to more than US \$13,000 in a local destination's economy. Those dollars are spent on lodging, meals, admissions, fees, shopping, souvenirs, services and local taxes.

"Simply put," said Pantuso, "motorcoach groups spend more and stay longer. That's why the **Virginia International Tattoo** is truly a local economic asset. There is no better way to jump-start tourism than to attract motorcoach groups to a great event and convince them to extend their stay."

ABA's 2009 Top 100 Events Selection Committee selected the Virginia International Tattoo from among hundreds of U.S. and Canadian events nominated by state and provincial tourism offices and convention and visitors bureaus. Judges considered the event's broad appeal, its accessibility to motorcoaches and skill at handling large groups, and a variety of other relevant criteria.

The 2009 Top 100 Events in North America, along with the 2009 Internationally Known Events is located on ABA's website, www.buses.org.

For additional information on the Virginia International Tattoo visit **www.vafest.org**.

The American Bus Association is the trade organization of the intercity bus industry with more than 1000 motorcoach owner and tour company members in the United States and Canada. Its members operate charter, tour, regular route, airport express, special operations and contract services. Another 2,600

members are travel and tourism organizations and suppliers of bus products and services who work in partnership with the North American motorcoach industry. Visit www.buses.org for more information.