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**VRLTA Launches ‘Ordinary Awards,’ The First Statewide Hospitality And Tourism Awards,
That Are Far from Ordinary**

Awards Open to All State Restaurants, Lodging Establishments, Travel Attractions, and more.

Richmond, Va. – July 20, 2016 – The Virginia Restaurant, Lodging & Travel Association (VRLTA), the leading association for Virginia’s hospitality and travel industry, today announced the launch of the first, and only, awards program open to all of Virginia’s Hospitality and Tourism Industry. Named the Ordinary Awards, all Virginia restaurants, hotels, B&Bs, travel destinations, travel attractions and DMOs/CVBs are eligible for nominations.

The history of the term Ordinary in Virginia dates back more than 300 years. Merriam-Webster defines the term as a meal served to all comers at a fixed price or a tavern or eating house serving regular meals. In or around 1728, Chinn’s Ordinary was built near the mid-way point between Alexandria and Winchester, in what is now Middleburg, catering to travelers between the two popular regions. Though Chinn’s Ordinary has undergone several renovations and name changes—known today as the Red Fox Inn—it has been continually operated as an Inn and Tavern since its original construction, making it a truly unique destination.

“We are extremely excited to be bringing back this revamped and rebranded awards program that allows us to recognize all of Virginia’s hospitality industry, not just our members,” said Eric Terry, president of VRLTA. “Our goal in rebranding our program the ‘Ordinary Awards’ was to honor the history of one of America’s longest continually run Inns and Taverns and to create a unique name that, we believe, will grab the attention and curiosity of our industry.”

“The name is such a contradiction for what the awards stand for, a prestigious honor to those in our industry who are truly *extraordinary*,” said Debbie Donehey, chair of VRLTA. “It’s that paradox, coupled with the idea that the original Chinn’s Ordinary speaks to every facet of our Association—lodging, restaurants, and travel, that led us to branding the program after this unique piece of Virginia history.

The 2016 Awards program features 13 awards across four categories. Two Awards, the Attraction Employee of the Year and the Restaurateur of the Year, are named in honor of Charlie Buser and Jim Wordsworth, respectively. The Jim Wordsworth Restaurateur of the Year Award is accompanied by a \$1,000 continuing education scholarship that the winner may use for him or herself or an employee.

Other awards include DMO/CVB Employee of the Year, Hotelier of the Year, Chef of the Year, and Bartender of the Year. Nominations for all the awards will be accepted through September 16, 2016.

At the Awards Dinner, scheduled for October 24, in Richmond, Va., VRLTA will honor Jim Ricketts, and his family, with the first Golden Pineapple Lifetime Achievement Award for his more than 40 years of service to the Virginia Beach tourism industry. Additionally, the program will honor one High School or Collegiate level student, who has shown a commitment to the hospitality and travel industry with the Rising Pineapple Award.

For more information or to submit a nomination visit OrdinaryAwards.com.

About Virginia Restaurant, Lodging & Travel Association (VRLTA)

The Virginia Restaurant, Lodging & Travel Association is the only unified voice for the restaurant, lodging, travel and hospitality suppliers associations. VRLTA creates value for members by promoting the legislative interests of the industry, networking, educational opportunities, and protecting free enterprise. Inquiries about membership and VRLTA services should be directed to VRLTA at (804) 288-3065 or VRLTA.org.

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