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**Hampton Bay Days launches 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with website focused on the Bay**

For Immediate Release, Hampton, VA, February 28, 2007..."There is a new energy at Hampton Bay Days Festival and the momentum is really exciting," says Michael Bell, the Festival's newly elected President for 2007/2008. 2007 marks the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the festival and organizers see the milestone as an opportunity to take the festival to a new level.

Bell adds, "Over the last year we have been gearing up for the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary by asking ourselves many questions. How can we better fulfill our mission to encourage stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay? How can we add more value to the festival for our family audience? What can we do to bring attention to Hampton's crab and seafood industry?"

A step toward the future is the organization's launch of a redesigned website ([www.baydays.com](http://www.baydays.com)) that really brings the festival alive with colorful photos and easy navigation. The site offers a video about the Festival's Chesapeake Bay mission with clips that demonstrate the fun experiences available for the family audience in the Bay Days Children's area. Metro Productions provided multimedia and production services for the video. Virginia Electronic Commerce Technology Center (VECTEC) a non-profit university based organization located at Christopher Newport University developed the Bay Days website.

The long-range plan for the website is to provide a platform for resources about Chesapeake Bay Education. There are plans for more programs like our successful Estuary Essay contest that encourages kids to read and write about the Bay. New options on the site include: "just for kids," a slide show that answers questions about the Bay and "educator's resources," teaching aids for the classroom. In addition, a "links" option gives visitors quick access to other organizations working to improve the condition of the Bay.

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Anyone who attended the 2006 festival could see the results of this thinking. The Children's Area was expanded with fun, non-stop things for kids to do: crab races, a weekend series of environmental "edutainment" and several musical performances on the children's stage. The festival was also named the "Best Waterside Event" in the 2006 Chesapeake Bay Magazine, Best of the Bay competition.

Bell adds, "We will always offer exciting national recording artists, along with another thirty-five musical groups performing, on four stages. The entertainment is provided at no cost to the public. We will offer shoppers an Arts & Crafts promenade down Queen and King Streets and amazing seafood to eat. However, our goal for the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary is to remind people that all this fun has a serious purpose, encouraging stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay."

Hampton Bay Days Festival is held the weekend after Labor Day every September in downtown Hampton, VA. The 2007 Festival will be held on September 7, 8 and 9 and marks the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. The event, one of the largest in the Hampton Roads region, draws upwards of 250,000 people and has an economic impact of \$5,000,000.

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