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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Virginia Beach Named Active Base Community of the Year

In 2005, Naval Air Station (NAS) Oceana, for the first time ever, was included in the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission's list of recommended base closures. In order to preserve the base and its enormous contributions to the community, the City of Virginia Beach developed an unprecedented plan to roll back encroachment in the area surrounding NAS Oceana, known as Accident Potential Zone 1 (APZ-1) and the Clear Zone. As a result, the Association of Defense Communities (ADC) recently named Virginia Beach as the 2010 ADC Active Base Community of the Year. This award recognizes an active defense community whose efforts in building partnerships with a military installation have enhanced military value and the overall economic development of the community.

The city's plan not only meets the BRAC Commission's mandates, but also the needs of the military and the local community. It focuses on three components – zoning changes, property acquisition, and a conformity program, which reduces incompatible development while promoting conforming uses in APZ-1 and the Clear Zone.

“The military is an integral part of life here. The roar of the jets, the annual air show, and the defense contracting industry all contribute to making Virginia Beach a great resort city with a patriotic edge,” said Virginia Beach economic development director Warren D. Harris. “Even more than that, NAS Oceana, the East Coast Master Jet Base, serves as an economic engine for the community, generating 16,000 jobs with a total payroll of more than \$1.18 billion, and produces more than \$400 million each year in goods and services.”

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To date, the City of Virginia Beach has acquired or reached agreement to acquire 447 dwelling units through its residential property acquisition program, and has eliminated 385 residential dwelling units in APZ-1 and the Clear Zones. By doing so, the city preserves the integrity and economic stability of surrounding neighborhoods while also reducing density and incompatible development.

It also launched YesOceana.com, an aggressive incentive program geared specifically for commercial real estate.

“The program helps relocate nonconforming businesses from APZ-1 to other areas of the city and conforming businesses to APZ-1,” said Michelle Chapleau, business development manager at the Virginia Beach Department of Economic Development. “Twenty-eight nonconforming commercial properties have been eliminated from APZ-1 and 12 conforming businesses have been granted incentives for participating in the program.”

“This program has helped the city spur economic development compatible with the mission of NAS Oceana,” said Virginia Beach Mayor William D. Sessoms, Jr. “Virginia Beach’s plan serves as a model for other cities grappling with the issue of encroachment around a military installation. Everyone involved in the program emerges as a winner – the program is good for the Navy, good for our citizens and good for the business community.”

The mission of the City of Virginia Beach Department of Economic Development is to attract and retain national and international business and industry that results in the creation of new capital investment and jobs that increase the per capita income in the community. The City of Virginia Beach is the most populous city in the Commonwealth of Virginia with a population of 434,000 and is the 42nd largest city in the United States. Virginia Beach has been recognized as having one of the 10 best economic development groups in the nation by Site Selection magazine. In 2006, Virginia Beach was named one of the 10 best big cities in America by Money magazine. In 2008, the Department of Economic Development received re-accreditation through the International Economic Development Council, one of only 25 economic development organizations in the world to have this recognition. For more information, visit yesvirginiabeach.com.

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