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-NEWS RELEASE-

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Date: June 11, 2010

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**VIRGINIA TRANSIT ASSOCIATION AWARDS CHARLOTTESVILLE TRANSIT SERVICE
WITH MARKETING AWARD**

Richmond, Virginia: The Virginia Transit Association (VTA) is pleased to announce that it selected Charlottesville Transit Service of Charlottesville as the recipient of the 2010 Outstanding Public Transportation Marketing Award for their Community Outreach at its award luncheon held in Richmond, Virginia on June 11. While this honor is awarded annually, recognizing transit systems which have implemented unique and innovative marketing campaigns that promote transit and advance outreach to riders, Charlottesville received special accolades because of two programs that were significant in community outreach.

The first, completion of a rider-focused website upgrade to charlottesville.org/transit makes the user-friendly format more readily accessible. Reorganized menus simplify browsing of CTS information, and prominent links place real time trip planning and facts on routes, schedules, and fares literally at riders' fingertips. A new How to Ride section provides important basics on reading transit maps, schedules, and bus stop signage that were not previously available. Schedule and route information has been redesigned to improve access for persons with disabilities. A budget-neutral project completed entirely with existing resources, the new website has had a greatly increased audience since the upgrade. Unique views of CTS pages have risen by 35%, attesting to the site's demand and usability. By improving online tools and making the system easier to navigate and comprehend, CTS will convert those who investigate the service via the web into passengers, and enhance all customers' transit experience.

The second initiative, collaboration between Charlottesville Transit Service (CTS) and graduates of the City of Charlottesville's Neighborhood Leadership Institute (NLI), included in the award is the Bus Lines Community Poetry Initiative. This program engages area poets from schools and within the community through a unique

opportunity to display their work publicly. Since summer 2009, Bus Lines has installed 228 poster cards featuring 89 original poems by 81 local poets on board CTS buses. Promotion for Bus Lines has been non-paid, and CTS has experienced no budgetary impact for participating in the initiative. New audiences and riders have been brought to CTS who might not have ridden public transit previously, and the program has attracted the attention of Special Collections at the University of Virginia Library through their interest in permanently preserving the poems. By showcasing local creativity, Bus Lines has enhanced the overall image of public transit in Charlottesville, offering it as a venue for literary expression.

For additional information on these initiatives, contact Kristen Gleason at 434.970.3349 or gleasonk@charlottesville.org

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