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**NORFOLK'S PREMIER SOCIAL & MEETING DESTINATION, THE MAIN, INVITES GUESTS TO
PAINT THE TOWN WITH ITS PRIVATE ART-FOCUSED OPENING WEEKEND MARCH 24 - MARCH
26**

Ticketed Fundraising Sneak Peek Weekend to Raise \$1 Million for Virginia's Visual & Performing Arts Programs; Events to Feature Live Performances, Interactive Art Installations, Films, Lectures, Galas, VIPs Including Special Guest Governor McAuliffe, Celebrity Performances & More

March 2017 Norfolk, Va.- THE MAIN in Norfolk, sets the stage to become the premier cultural destination in downtown Norfolk with **THE MAIN Event: A Celebration for the Arts**, presented by TowneBank, taking place March 24 – March 26, 2017. The series of weekend-long private events will benefit the local arts community and showcase THE MAIN as Norfolk's newest social and meeting destination before it officially opens to the public on April 1. Gold Key | PHR, along with presenting partners Virginia Arts Festival and the Business Consortium for Arts Support will celebrate the arts community with the goal of raising more than \$1 million for local arts institutions and programs, making it the Commonwealth's largest arts fundraising event on record.

Special guests Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe and Virginia First Lady Dorothy McAuliffe will attend **THE MAIN Event**, which will include a variety of ticketed, art-focused experiences from pop-up art exhibits to a performance from a Tony award-winning Broadway superstar plus the area's top local visual and performance artists, lectures, film screenings, exclusive dining experiences and a black-tie gala. **THE MAIN Event** tickets will be offered for both individual events along with weekend hotel packages granting guests full access with all proceeds to benefit local arts organizations.

Governor McAuliffe is the special guest at a VIP reception followed by dinner and live entertainment. A Tony award-winning Broadway performer will take center stage performing with the Virginia Symphony Orchestra, at the weekend's black-tie gala while screenings and after parties will take place at each of THE MAIN's signature restaurants. **THE MAIN Event** will showcase art exhibits from around the world including the Chrysler Museum of Art, Virginia Museum of Contemporary Art, The Governor's School for The Arts, Hermitage Museum and Gardens, d'Art Center and others. The weekend continues with exclusive dinners, film screenings, lectures and private tours of the property. A Sunday brunch featuring live entertainment from the Virginia Opera and the Virginia Symphony Orchestra is also planned.

“From the very early stages of this project, we have wanted to infuse different art experiences throughout THE MAIN not only to enhance the building’s contemporary design but to encourage conversation around art and culture,” said Gold Key | PHR’s CEO Bruce Thompson. “This launch preview event gives us an opportunity to solidify Norfolk as the cultural center for the region while supporting our creative communities and programs. With a stroke of a pen, we can help future artists with a stroke of their brush.”

Since 1997, the [Virginia Arts Festival](#) has enriched the cultural scene in southeastern Virginia, presenting great performers from around the world to local audiences and making this historic, recreation-rich region a cultural destination for visitors from across the United States and around the world. The Festival has presented numerous U.S. and regional premieres, and regularly commissions new works of music, dance, and theater from some of today’s most influential composers, choreographers and playwrights. The Festival’s arts education programs reach tens of thousands of area schoolchildren each year through student matinees, in-school performances, artists’ residencies, master classes and demonstrations.

“Virginia Arts Festival is honored to play a producer role in this great endeavor,” said the Festival’s Perry Artistic Director Robert W. Cross. “Working with our fellow arts organizations and the leadership and staff of Gold Key | PHR, we look forward to putting on a spectacular weekend!”

The Business Consortium for the Arts Support assists arts and cultural groups in funding organizations through grants. To date they have contributed more than \$20 million to over 45 arts and cultural organizations since their beginnings in 1987. With each grant, The Business Consortium for the Arts Support guarantees that arts programs can continue to thrive and bring the highest quality art and performance to the region.

“We are grateful to businesses like Gold Key | PHR and to leaders like Bruce Thompson, who understand the value of the arts in our community. It is vital that arts programs continue to inspire our children with hands-on education, keep our theatres, stages and museums filled with extraordinary art and performances, and make our region attractive to businesses and industries needed to grow and prosper. We are thrilled at this amazing and generous opportunity to strengthen the community,” said Lisa Doud, Executive Director, Business Consortium for Arts Support

For tickets, updates and a full schedule of events, please visit:
www.themainnorfolk.com/special-event.aspx

ABOUT GOLD KEY | PHR

Gold Key | PHR was founded in 1986 by CEO Bruce L. Thompson in Virginia Beach, Virginia as a modest hospitality management company. Today, with \$500 million in asset value and \$170 million in annual revenue, Gold Key | PHR boasts over 1,300 keys under the Ramada, Hilton and Marriott flags, multiple award-winning restaurants and is the Commonwealth of Virginia’s

largest hospitality employer. Adding to Gold Key | PHR's list of noteworthy hospitality brands are two highly anticipated projects, The Cavalier, Virginia's first Marriott Autograph Collection Hotel, and the Hilton Norfolk THE MAIN Hotel and Conference Center both slated for completion in 2017. Gold Key | PHR is also active in the development of commercial and luxury residential projects in the mid-Atlantic region. For more information on Gold Key | PHR, visit www.goldkeyphr.com.

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