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VA Partners with Richmond International Raceway to Increase Veterans' Access to Benefits

RICHMOND, Va. – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) today announced a partnership with the Richmond International Raceway (RIR) to promote greater access and awareness to VA benefits and services at the upcoming NASCAR races on Sept. 11 and 12 in Richmond. The partnership with RIR is part of VA's "Summer of Service" initiative designed to encourage and grow the number of individuals and organizations serving Veterans in their communities.

As part of a series of activities beginning this summer to reach Veterans, Servicemembers and their families, VA will honor past and present military members during the Pole Qualifying and Federal Auto Parts 400 NASCAR Sprint Cup Series. VA's Mobile Vet Center will be onsite with a team of health and benefits experts who can answer Veterans' questions, share information and help Veterans and family members' access VA benefits and services. As part of the collaboration, RIR will offer Veterans and their families a 70-percent discount on tickets for the Sept. 11 race, as well as their traditional military discount on tickets for the Sept. 12 race.

"The best way to reach Veterans is to involve partners that engage Veterans in the communities where they live," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert A. McDonald. "Through innovative partnerships like this and our Summer of Service initiative, we have the opportunity to reach Veterans and their families who may not realize they are entitled to VA benefits and services or who may not know where to go for assistance," said McDonald.

Prior to the Richmond race, VA and RIR will hold a "Driving VA Benefits and Services Home" event Sept. 10 at the Richmond VA Medical Center featuring NASCAR drivers, RIR representatives, VA benefits and services outreach staff, and a NASCAR pace car. These outreach events are part of the larger MyVA initiative, which is dedicated to improving the Veteran experience and increasing customer-service access points in communities where Veterans live.

"Richmond International Raceway is proud to partner with such an important organization as the Department of Veterans Affairs," said RIR President, Dennis Bickmeier. "NASCAR is a very patriotic sport, and we pride ourselves on supporting the men and women who have served and are currently serving our country. There's no better way to do that than by partnering with VA to set the field for the Federated Auto Parts 400 'Last Race to Make the Chase.'"

These outreach activities at NASCAR events expands VA's community footprint and increases awareness of benefits and services available to Veterans, Servicemembers and their families. As the

number one spectator sport in the country, NASCAR has more than 75 million race fans, one third of which are active duty Servicemembers or Veterans.

In addition to the upcoming RIR activities, VA participated in six other NASCAR events and will conduct outreach at three more during the remaining 2015 race season. VA's health and benefits experts will be onsite to bring VA benefits and services directly into the community. Look for VA at Michigan International Speedway (Aug. 15-16), Darlington Raceway (Sept. 5-6) and Chicagoland Speedway (Sept. 18-20).

For more information about tickets and to learn more about the September RIR event, visit www.benefits.va.gov/benefits/nascar-outreach.asp.

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