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Contact: Cindy Mackey, 757-754-4553, cindymackey@cox.net

DOWNTOWN NORFOLK COUNCIL WINS HIGHEST PINNACLE AWARD AND MERIT AWARD FROM THE INTERNATIONAL DOWNTOWN ASSOCIATION

NORFOLK, Va. – (October 2018) – Downtown Norfolk Council received the highly coveted Pinnacle Award from the [International Downtown Association](#) (IDA) in the economic and business development category for its first retail incubator, [Selden Market](#). The Pinnacle Award represents the most creative and inspiring innovations in the industry. Additionally, DNC won a Merit Award in the category of marketing and communication for its 2017 Facebook Live and television broadcast of the Grand Illumination Parade.

“This is the most prestigious award in our industry,” says Mary Miller, president and CEO of Downtown Norfolk Council. “This award is extremely meaningful for DNC and the City of Norfolk as we celebrate the first anniversary of Selden Market. We are extremely proud to be recognized as an international leader among other downtown associations, and we hope that other downtowns can replicate the energy and momentum for new businesses that we have been able to create through Selden Market.”

“These innovative projects set an outstanding example for cities around the world,” said David Downey, IDA president and CEO. “IDA members continue to champion livable, vital and thriving urban centers. Each of these projects has made its particular city a better place for the people who live and work there.”

Selden Market serves as Downtown Norfolk’s first retail incubator for new and emerging businesses. It opened in October 2017. Selden Market creates a constantly changing environment with diverse storefront tenants and pop-up businesses that operate on daily-to-yearly lease schedules. The goal of the market is to stimulate street-level activity with low rent, short-term leases, business education and mentorship to help businesses shape their model, learn from each other and build community in a low-risk environment.

Selden Market’s results are impressive. It launched with 12 retail tenants and 20+ pop-up businesses. The six-week call for entry drew 50 applications, more than half of which the selection committee was interested in pursuing. Since opening, the market has garnered more than 14,600,000 media impressions and more than \$224,000 in earned media value. In the first year, the market gave 100+ pop-up businesses a platform to test their retail model, had 17 storefronts and hosted 62 events highlighting original and creative programming for visitors and consumers. A previously vacant 13,000-square-foot historic Downtown property is currently leased with a fresh and inspired makeover.

The Selden Market fits Downtown Norfolk Council's vision and mission and provides a resource not previously available to small retail businesses. The initiative develops small businesses to fill vacant street-level spaces in Downtown and elsewhere in Norfolk, a guiding principle from the original Vibrant Spaces program. Selden Market's success is measured by a very low storefront vacancy rate in the market, a high number of monthly pop-ups and ultimately, by how many businesses move on to independent spaces.

Downtown Norfolk Council also received a Merit Award for its Grand Illumination Parade 2017 Facebook Live and television broadcast. DNC has produced the Grand Illumination Parade, the premier holiday parade in the region and a Southeast Tourism Top 20 Event since 1985. With a tight budget, an increasingly competitive landscape for raising sponsorship dollars and changes in the way people consume media, DNC evaluated and revamped the parade broadcast program and its objectives.

DNC developed a comprehensive promotional and communications plan. For the Facebook Live broadcast, DNC had a team monitor comments and respond live, which added an audience engagement aspect like never before. It was also able to secure a technical sponsor to accommodate the additional band-width needed to support the live feed. DNC developed a three-minute sizzle reel in advance of the parade broadcast to promote the parade, generate excitement and give people an idea of the caliber of the new and improved parade broadcast that would air at a later date. When combining all the broadcast airings, Facebook Live and teaser views, DNC saw a 78.10% INCREASE in total parade views and an 89.94% DECREASE in cost to reach per thousand. Social media highlights include: 482 shares, 727 interactions, 75,028 minutes viewed, equal to 52 days of parade, and 116,652 people reached.

IDA is the premier organization for urban place professionals who are shaping and activating dynamic city center districts. Its members are city builders and downtown champions who bring urban centers to life, bridging the gap between the public and private sectors. The organization represents an industry of more than 2,500 place management organizations, employing 100,000 people throughout North America and growing rapidly around the world. Founded in 1954, IDA is a resource center for ideas and innovative best practices in urban place management. For more information and a full list of winners, visit ida-downtown.org.

Downtown Norfolk Council (DNC) is a private, not-for-profit membership organization comprised of businesses and individuals working toward a dynamic, attractive and prosperous Downtown. DNC also manages the Downtown Norfolk Improvement District, a 48-block special services district with enhanced services that keep Downtown friendly, safe and spotless. Connect with Downtown Norfolk on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram or visit downtownnorfolk.org.

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