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VIRginia International Raceway Announces NASCAR Legend Richard Petty as Grand Marshal for the Michelin GT Challenge IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship

Danville, Virginia – July 11, 2017 – VIRginia International Raceway is welcoming NASCAR Hall of Famer and team owner, Richard Petty, to serve as Grand Marshal for the Michelin GT Challenge, the track's largest race of the year taking place Sunday, August 27 during the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship weekend. Petty is the most decorated driver in the history of NASCAR, with a record number 200 career wins and seven Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series Championships.

At the Michelin GT Challenge, Petty will deliver the iconic command, "Drivers, start your engines!" as the competitors prepare to top speeds of 190 miles per hour during the nearly three-hour race on the track's historic 3.27-mile full course. Petty will also be available for fan meet and greets, autograph signings and photo opportunities throughout the day.

"It is an incredible honor to have 'The King' at VIR to kick off our largest and most exciting race of the season," said Connie Nyholm, VIR owner and CEO. "Richard Petty is one of the most accomplished and respected figures in motorsports, and our fans and drivers are in for a race day they will truly never forget. We can't wait to share this amazing experience with everyone in August!"

Throughout his life, Petty has been elected to the National Motorsports Press Association Hall of Fame, International Motorsports Hall of Fame, North Carolina Auto Racing Hall of Fame and the North Carolina Athletic Hall of Fame. He is also a leader in philanthropy, donating 84 acres of his own land to Victory Junction, a North Carolina camp that enriches the lives of children with chronic medical conditions or serious illnesses. The camp honors the life of Petty's grandson, Adam Petty, who tragically lost his life in a racing accident one year after a touching experience visiting ill children at Florida's Camp Boggy Creek. Every year, VIR hosts its Spring Open House and Charity laps event to benefit Victory Junction.

"I am thrilled to serve as Grand Marshal for the Michelin GT Challenge at VIR," said Richard Petty, owner of Richard Petty Motorsports and Petty's Garage high performance speed shop. "I couldn't think of a better occasion to be back on a track than at the only mid-Atlantic stop of this premier North American sports car racing series. VIR is an amazing road course and I'm looking forward to kicking off the big event – it's going to be a day full of excitement!"

Petty knows first-hand how demanding VIR's track can be. He and others had difficulties making a left-hand turn, now unofficially dubbed "NASCAR Bend," during a Trans Am race in the 1960s. This tough third turn of the course also leads drivers further toward the "climbing esses," a section of the track considered by many race drivers as one of the most challenging and intimidating in North America.

Advanced tickets for the Michelin GT Challenge race weekend are \$40 for Friday-only, \$45 for Saturday-only, \$55 for Sunday-only, \$65 for a two-day Saturday and Sunday ticket, and \$75 for a three-day ticket. All tickets will be an additional \$10 if purchased at the gate. Children 16 and under are admitted free of charge with a paying adult and parking is also free. Active military are admitted free of charge and veterans receive a 50 percent discount with valid military ID. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit www.virnow.com or call (434) 822-TIKS.

About VIRginia International Raceway

VIRginia International Raceway is one of America's premier road courses, offering professional and amateur racing for modern and vintage classes while providing contemporary resort amenities. A prominent test facility for the automotive industry, VIR has the distinction of being named one of the top six courses in North America by Car & Driver Magazine, and southern roots and hospitality make it one of the friendliest. Conveniently located at the Virginia/North Carolina border, VIR is just a short two-hour trip from Richmond and about an hour and 15 minutes from both the Piedmont-Triad and Raleigh-Durham International Airports.

VIRginia International Raceway is one of America's premier road courses, offering professional and amateur racing for modern and vintage classes while providing contemporary resort amenities, such as lodging, dining, a spa, an exclusive driver's club, karting, off-road racing, shooting sports, skid pad and more. VIR's hospitality amenities also make the property an unparalleled venue for corporate retreats, team building, special events and other group experiences. For more information, visit www.VIRnow.com, [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#).

About IMSA

The International Motor Sports Association, LLC (IMSA) was originally founded in 1969 and owns a long and rich history in sports car racing. Today, IMSA is the sanctioning body of the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship, the premier sports car racing series in North America. IMSA also sanctions the IMSA Continental Tire SportsCar Challenge and the IMSA Prototype Challenge presented by Mazda, as well as four one-make series: Porsche GT3 Cup Challenge USA by Yokohama; Ultra 94 Porsche GT3 Cup Challenge Canada by Yokohama; Ferrari Challenge North America; and Lamborghini Super Trofeo North America. IMSA – a company within the NASCAR family – is the exclusive strategic partner in North America with the Automobile Club de l'Ouest (ACO) which operates the 24 Hours of Le Mans as a part of the FIA World Endurance Championship. The partnership enables selected IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship competitors to earn automatic entries into the prestigious 24 Hours of Le Mans. For more information, visit www.IMSA.com, www.twitter.com/IMSA or www.facebook.com/IMSA.

About Michelin North America

Dedicated to the improvement of sustainable mobility, Michelin designs, manufactures and sells tires for every type of vehicle, including airplanes, automobiles, bicycles, Earthmovers, farm equipment, heavy-duty trucks and motorcycles. The company also publishes travel guides, hotel and restaurant guides, maps and road atlases. Headquartered in Greenville, S.C., Michelin North America (www.michelinman.com) employs more than 22,650 and operates 20 major manufacturing plants in the U.S., Canada and Mexico.

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