

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
07.14.09

CONTACT:
Marisa Chioini
410.290.6800

media@marylandrestaurants.com

Maryland Restaurants Compete In 'Buy Local Cookout'

Governor Martin O'Malley Invites Local Foodservice Professionals and Farmers to Help Kick-Off the Buy Local Challenge Week

Columbia, MD - In early May, Governor Martin O'Malley invited teams made up of a chef and one or more farmers, watermen, or producers to submit recipes using local ingredients for Maryland's annual "Buy Local Cookout," to be held at Government House in Annapolis on Thursday, July 16, 2009. The cook out is the signature kick-off event for the statewide Buy Local Challenge Week (July 18-26), during which all Marylanders are encouraged to eat at least one local product each day of the week.

Maryland restaurateurs across the state have rallied behind the "Buy-Local" movement purchasing directly from independent and family farms. "Our restaurateurs see and taste the benefits of offering local products to diners: exceptional freshness, local business support, a stronger economy, health-conscious food options and a protected environment," commented Paul Hartgen, President and CEO of the Restaurant Association of Maryland. "A number of our chefs have taken the Challenge's 'Buy Local Pledge' developing top-notch recipes that showcase what Maryland's bounty has to offer. **Tilghman Island Inn** in Talbot County has already created an amazing oyster recipe they can't wait to unveil! That contagious enthusiasm is what our industry exudes and diners across Maryland will reap the benefits" Hartgen added.

Cookout participants are required to submit recipes using local ingredients. Recipes that represent Maryland's best bounty will be chosen in each of the following categories: appetizer, main dish, side dish or salad, dessert, beverage and table decor.

In a recent release at www.buy-local-challenge.com Governor O'Malley shared his support of the Buy Local Challenge Week. "We are very excited to feature local chefs, farmers and products at the cookout. The bounty of our land and water along with those Marylanders who harvest them are key's to Maryland's unique character. When we purchase and eat fresh, local products, we are putting our families first by providing strong nutrition, keeping money in the local economy, and ultimately preserving open space by keeping farmers on the land. Buying locally moves us toward a smart, green and growing future for all Marylanders."

Love Local Maryland, a grassroots initiative designed to stimulate economic vitality in the state of Maryland also informs Marylanders of the advantage of spending their money locally. The Restaurant Association of Maryland is a founding partner of the statewide program designed to promote and educate the public about the significant economic and environmental benefits derived from supporting our local businesses. LoveLocalMaryland.com, the online home for the initiative, provides an interactive way for consumers to search for local businesses and begin building a strong and sustainable Maryland economy.

###

The Restaurant Association of Maryland (RAM) has remained relevant to restaurateurs for over 80 years by maintaining core principles born out of the first national financial crisis. In 1927 a small group of Baltimore area restaurateurs met to deal with some of the challenges facing the economy and the Foodservice Industry. Today, RAM is a 2,000 member strong statewide trade association operated for the purpose of promoting, protecting and improving the foodservice industry in the State of Maryland. Since the very beginning, the Association has been run by restaurateurs and suppliers working not only for the benefit of dues paying members, but also for the restaurant industry as a whole. For more information about the restaurant industry in Maryland please visit our website at www.marylandrestaurants.com.