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SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 617

Offered June 17, 2024

*Commending Dennis M. Ellmer.*

Patrons—Craig, DeSteph, Diggs, Jordan, Locke, Lucas, Obenshain, Peake, Reeves, Stanley and Williams Graves

WHEREAS, Dennis M. Ellmer, president of Priority Auto Group based in Chesapeake, will be presented the First Citizen of Chesapeake award by the Rotary Club of Chesapeake and the Chesapeake Rotary Foundation on September 12, 2024; and

WHEREAS, raised in the Ocean View area of Norfolk and a graduate of both Norview High School in Norfolk and Old Dominion University, Dennis Ellmer has resided most of his life in the Hampton Roads area; and

WHEREAS, after several years in sales, Dennis Ellmer purchased his first car dealership in Chesapeake in 1998 then worked tirelessly to grow the business into an organization that today consists of 20 dealerships staffed by more than 2,500 employees; and

WHEREAS, Dennis Ellmer has generously supported various Hampton Roads charities and initiatives over the years, including the YMCA, Special Olympics Virginia, the Chesapeake Sports Club, the Chesapeake Virginia Wine Festival, the Chesapeake Jubilee, Chesapeake Regional Medical Center, the Priority Toyota Cancer Center, and the Boys and Girls Clubs of Southeast Virginia; and

WHEREAS, in the spirit of helping others, Dennis Ellmer established the “Priorities for Change” volunteer program at Priority Auto Group to encourage his employees to become agents of change in their communities; and

WHEREAS, in 2018, Dennis Ellmer and the Priority Auto Group partnered with Tidewater Community College and the Norfolk Sheriff's Office to create the Priority Automotive Inmate Training Program, an endeavor that has provided many nonviolent felons with the opportunity to acquire automotive repair skills, find gainful employment, and make a fresh start; and

WHEREAS, since 2010, Dennis Ellmer and Priority Auto Group have sponsored and hosted the Priority Charity Bowl at Old Dominion University, raising millions of dollars for more than 40 charities dedicated to assisting children in need throughout the region; and

WHEREAS, in addition to his recent accolade, Dennis Ellmer has received numerous honors over the years, including the Robert G. “Buddy” Bagley Sportsman of the Year award from the Chesapeake Sports Club, the Distinguished Virginian Award from the Virginia Sports Hall of Fame, and the First Citizen of Norfolk award from the Cosmopolitan Club of Norfolk, all of which serve as testament to his profound impact on the Hampton Roads community; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate of Virginia, That Dennis M. Ellmer hereby be commended for being named the 2024 First Citizen of Chesapeake by the Rotary Club of Chesapeake and the Chesapeake Rotary Foundation; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Dennis M. Ellmer as an expression of the Senate of Virginia's admiration for his contributions to Hampton Roads and the Commonwealth.