



**Harrisonburg Downtown Renaissance**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**HDR Partners with Immerge on New Technology for Downtown Businesses**

HARRISONBURG, VA (September 5, 2017) – Harrisonburg Downtown Renaissance (HDR) has partnered with Immerge, a Harrisonburg web design and development firm, to offer 360° online virtual tours to downtown businesses. Immerge is one of the few companies in the nation that is a *Google trusted* photographer and has access to its technology to offer this service.

So far, sixteen downtown businesses have signed up to participate in this initiative. What is 360° photography? Flat photographs are stitched together to create a 360° panoramic view of a space. Using a special 360° camera, Immerge will take photos of a business’ interior, create a virtual tour, and then upload the images to Google StreetView so they are accessible through Google maps.

“360 photography is a great way to display your business online, and make customers feel as if they’re physically at your location,” says James Carter, Director of Quality Assurance of Immerge. “Research shows that 41% of customers who take a 360 “tour” of a business online follow up with an in-person visit. This is a great way to use a new form of media to attract new customers.”

This cutting-edge technology enhances a visitor’s online experience and allows them to take an online tour of a business before they arrive. They can virtually tour a shop, walk through a restaurant, or stroll a downtown street before making the decision to visit Harrisonburg. Mobile users can also enjoy the same immersive experience on their phone and tablets.

Harrisonburg Downtown Renaissance developed a partnership with Immerge to increase web traffic to individual businesses and help sell downtown to new tourists, diners, and shoppers.

“There is strength in numbers,” says Kim Kirk, Chief Marketing Officer of Harrisonburg Downtown Renaissance. “The more businesses that invest in this technology, the stronger our online presence can be for downtown Harrisonburg.”

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**Press Resources:**

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