

August 1, 2007

Memo for Workgroup 2: Signature Events and Activities

Subject: Some Signature Event Suggestions

Based upon experiences during Signature Events conducted during the Lewis & Clark Bicentennial, the following suggestions have been advanced by a member of the Bicentennial Council:

Things to do:

- Begin planning now. Insure that the concepts for Signature events and major activities are developed, scheduled, and sponsored not later than 2009. This is especially true for those Signature events envisioned for 2011 and 2012.
- Bring motor coach tour operators, school group tour operators, academic advisors, and representatives of the VTC and regional convention and visitors bureaus into the planning prior to 2009, so that they can engage their planning staffs 2 years before the opening of the Sesquicentennial in developing/advertising tour packages.
- Insure that the Sesquicentennial has a sophisticated, imaginative, and appealing presence on the internet. Websites supporting the Civil War Sesquicentennial in Virginia should adhere to a standardized format that enables them to highlight Signature events and activities.
- Plan effectively to absorb increased traffic during the event.
- Remember that Signature events should be designed to offer visitors an experience that they cannot have elsewhere or on the Web.

Things to avoid:

- Don't schedule too many Signature events. Too many of these events/activities will lessen the impact of properly scheduled and supported Signature events.
- Don't let Signature events last too long. One Lewis & Clark "event" lasted 30 days. Organizers/participants were worn out long before it was over and visitation declined after the first 10 days.
- Planning effectively to absorb more traffic is important. But avoid scaring people off by repeatedly warning visitors about potential traffic/parking problems. Accentuate the positive aspects of the event, or people will stay away.

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