

**Civil War Sesquicentennial Commission  
Virginia Historical Society  
November 28, 2007**

**PARTNERSHIPS AND STATEWIDE INITIATIVES**

- In 1996, the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation (JYF) was appointed the state agency to coordinate Virginia's role in Jamestown's 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemoration.
- In response to this legislative directive, the JYF Board of Trustees appointed the Jamestown 2007 Steering Committee for planning for the commemoration. The steering committee is chaired by Stuart W. Connock.
- 30-member steering committee comprised of
  1. representatives of state and local government (Governor's Cabinet)
  2. leaders in education
  3. community leaders
  4. cultural leaders (APVA-Preservation Virginia, NPS)
  5. As planning progressed, new members were added and the Steering Committee grew to over 40 people
- From the beginning of the 10-year planning period, a major emphasis has been the involvement of the citizens of Virginia in the commemoration planning. Several strategies were used:
- In 1998-99, 20 half-day roundtables involving over 1,000 Virginians were held around the Commonwealth and generated more than 500 suggestions for commemorative programs, activities and projects;
- Three subcommittees—Programs and Events, Marketing and Communications, Logistics—were created involving 90 Virginians to review and revise the citizens proposals and carry out the Steering Committee's work plan tasks;
- As work progressed, more than eleven working groups were created to support specific areas of planning:
  1. Historic Triangle
  2. Joint Technology
  3. Statewide/Regional Facilities
  4. Logistics Transportation
  5. Operations
  6. Community Based Programs
  7. The Virginia Cultural Network
  8. International & Commemorative Activities
  9. Organizational Partnerships
  10. Educational Outreach Curricula & Products
  11. Interpretive Research
  12. Heritage Groups

- Several of these subcommittees and working groups remained active throughout the commemoration. Others either evolved to meet the changing needs, or dissolved as professional staff assumed the responsibilities. A few never really activated. However, through this committee and working group structure, hundreds of Virginians became involved at some level in the commemoration planning.
- Another early strategy for creating awareness, building support and involving Virginians statewide was the development of a Speakers Bureau. Volunteers were recruited first to tell the story of the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Later the Speakers Bureau became a useful tool for building the most extensive of the statewide programs, the very successful Virginia 2007 Community Program.
- 181 Communities joined the Official Community Program, several were in the U.K., one in Georgia, one in Colorado, but the vast majority are Virginia based, include all but one Virginia county (Buckcannon) and incorporate 99% of the population of Virginia.
- These communities all formed their own committees and adopted legacy projects that they believed would have a lasting impact on their community. The projects varied as widely as did the communities, from new visitor centers and museums to festivals, exhibits and more. In my community, Williamsburg, we developed a new city park, Redoubt Park, built around redoubts one and two that were constructed during the Peninsula Campaign. In several communities these projects went international through Sister Cities programs. One community, Falls Church, actually linked with a city in Africa to send aid in the form of school supplies, clothing and other goods.
- It is important to note that the Community Program was built over time with much staff effort. The initial step was to conduct regional meetings around the state with tourism and local government representatives, museums and parks and recreation department staff, and other community leaders. The initial goal was to identify and recruit a core group of pilot communities that were geographically diverse and of varying sizes. In 2003, the Community Program was officially launched in Richmond at the State Capitol with 20 pilot communities that served as models for those that followed. To encourage other communities to sign up, a brochure and a short recruiting video featuring Willard Scott and Katie Curic were created.
- Another valuable strategy for involving Virginians and Virginia organizations and businesses was the recruitment of partners. Over 100 agreements were signed with a range of local, state, national, public and private organizations. These partnerships served many different purposes. They helped promote events through articles in their own publications, doing email blasts to their lists, and co-branding materials.
- Organizations like the VML and VACO helped built the Community Program.
- Other partners assisted with the production of Signature Events. For example, education partners like Department of Education, VEA, NEA, NCSS, and others helped with curriculum and with *Jamestown Live!* the national webcast that reached over one million school children for one hour in November 2006.

- Virginia Tech helped take the Anniversary Garden program not just state-wide but national inspiring a Weekly Reader contest won by a group of Georgia school children.
- Other partner organizations extended the reach of the commemoration by producing their own commemorative events or themeing annual events. Fest Events Sail Virginia and the Shenandoah are two good examples of producing a new event or themeing an existing one. Mutual promotion was the outcome.

## PLANNING STEPS

- In the discussion of the Partnerships and Statewide Programs I have talked some about the Planning Steps: the creation of the Steering Committee, subcommittees and work groups; the development of the Community Program, and the Partnership Program.
- To be more specific, we define three distinct phases of the eleven year commemoration period. 1996 to 2003 was planning the time. One essential accomplishment of this phase occurred in 2000, when the staff of the NPS, APVA, JYF, and Jamestown 2007 began to implement the *Joint Jamestown Mission Statement*. The mission statement was adopted by these partners in order to guide their work in creating a “One Jamestown” visitor experience, to create for the visitor a complete, comprehensive, seamless, and interactive experience at Jamestown Settlement and Jamestown Island.
- The planning phase was also the time when the possibilities for the commemoration that had been brainstormed through the statewide roundtables and other meetings were vetted by committees against the dual standards of addressing the commemoration goals and whether or not they were feasible. Finally, when the concepts were shaped (in 2001) by the Steering Committee and a team of major event consultants into a Critical Pathways Report, the report outlined recommendations for implementing marketing, communications, commemorative events and fundraising activities.
- That plan organized tasks around four, distinct major program pillars: the Jamestown Legacy—projects and activities to enhance the visitor experience at the Jamestown sites; the Virginia Legacy--commemorative activities involving communities and cultures throughout the Commonwealth; Educational Programs—activities to raise a new awareness and appreciation of the history of Jamestown and Virginia, and the Signature Events Program –major celebratory events to attract world wide attention.
- 2003- to 2006 was the second phase of the commemoration, developing the concepts and related program pillars into programs and events; defining a development program; and creating a marketing communications program. During this phase the Jamestown 2007 staff resources were built and specific consultants contracted. A

critical decision during this phase was the clarification and simplification of the commemoration message. America's 400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary resonated with people and businesses across the Commonwealth and the country in a way that Jamestown 2007 didn't. The lasting legacies of Jamestown, democracy, free enterprise, and cultural diversity were less complicated, more compelling and easier to identify with than the four pillars. The goals of the four pillars were not abandoned, but the universal importance of Jamestown was elevated to great success and acceptance through the articulation of the legacies of Jamestown. All Signature Event development incorporated the legacies.

- During this second phase relationships with important stakeholders were solidified. Specifically, longstanding ground work to build trust and mutual goals with the Virginia Indian tribes and the African American community bore fruit with the creation of the Virginia Indian Advisory Committee and the African American Advisory Committee. The work and advice of these groups were invaluable and continue to strengthen relationships. One important part of this was the ability of Jamestown 2007 to hire two Visiting Specialists, one from the African American community, and one from the Virginia Indian community to provide assistance, advice and serve as a liaison to their respective communities. Their contributions to the development and implementation of Signature Events and the tone of the Commemoration can not be over estimated.
- 2006-2007 was the third phase of the commemoration, the implementation or the production of the Signature Events and programs of the Commemoration, an 18 month period of intense activity with results that are widely acclaimed.

### **Lessons Learned**

- As the staff works on the final report of the commemoration, other comments will no doubt emerge, but here are some lessons learned that we have identified so far.

#### **Speakers Bureau**

- Oversight difficult but essential, guiding what they say and keeping them trained in a quickly changing environment.
- Need to monitor and evaluate.
- Equipment an issue if using powerpoint.
- Transportation an issue.
- Teach why the Sesquicentennial matters

#### **Community Program**

- Involves people throughout the Commonwealth and brings new organizations to the table (Martinsville health organization produced the community walk)
- Can stimulate new regional and statewide partnerships (Southern Virginia Tourism region a direct outgrowth of the Commemoration)

- Vehicle for encouraging important projects and enhancing valuable resources (new museums, visitors centers, Redoubt Park)
- Requires oversight to achieve potential

### **Partnerships**

- Needs dedicated staff to recruit and then to activate
- Agreements should not be too open-ended (distribute emails, link to web site, no cost but minimal involvement)
- Very valuable to extend the message and the reach (CSB syndicated program touched about 60% of population)
- Bring valuable resources to the table (education partners, National History Day, The History Channel, NEA, NCSS)
- Great source of volunteers
- Bring partners on early

### **Statewide Participation**

- Two grant programs will support effective statewide participation: matching grants to communities and partner organizations to assist them in achieving their program goals; and cooperative advertising dollars administered by VTC.

### **Planning Steps**

- Important to be inclusive (20 roundtables generating over 500/1000 ideas)
- For every five good ideas only one will work
- Plans evolve; goals, vision should remain constant
- The business case for raising private money and recruiting partners must be made
- Keep the commemoration simple
- Spend time to develop clear messaging
- Recruit people with certain skill sets and let them do their job
- Coordination of different agencies is the biggest challenge
- Another challenge is sustaining momentum (pacing and emphasis)
- Launch with a bang and end with a bang

### **National Exposure/Attention**

- What made the Commemoration a true success was the ability to nationalize participation through partnerships, media coverage, celebrity spokespersons, and a message that resonated with all Americans. One indication of our success is the number and diversity of the forthcoming anniversaries that are seeking our advice. The list includes St. Augustine, Pensacola, New York (competing groups), Vermont, Quebec, Santa Fe, Pittsburgh, Maryland, Bermuda, the Lincoln Bicentennial and more. As the say when then call, many call repeatedly, Jamestown 2007 is the standard of excellence for anniversaries.

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