

VIRGINIA SESQUICENTENNIAL OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR COMMISSION
Summary of Workgroup 1 (Coordination)
December 5, 2007

Members Present:

Senator John H. Chichester
Delegate L. Scott Lingamfelter
John P. Ackerly, III
Michael Amyx, Virginia Municipal League
Alisa Bailey, Virginia Tourism Corporation
Mitch Bowman, Virginia Civil War Trails
James Campbell, Virginia Association of Counties
Alleyn Harned (designee of Secretary Patrick Gottschalk), Asst. Sec. of Commerce & Trade
Donna Purcell Mayes, Virginia Department of Transportation
Don Pierce, Civil War Traveler

Staff Report - Cheryl Jackson

In addition to providing brief updates on activity in the other workgroups and the full Commission, staff provided an update on items that are under the purview of Workgroup 1:

Local sesquicentennial committees: As requested by Speaker Howell, localities are beginning to form sesquicentennial committees, with 27 coming on board to date. Representatives of the Richmond, Spotsylvania and Abingdon committees attended the meeting. Staff is making contact with each locality as liaisons are designated, and providing assistance as needed. Staff plans to attend an initial meeting of the committees to offer an overview of the Commission's work and plans for the sesquicentennial.

Staff has been meeting regularly with statewide groups in an effort to publicize the work of the Commission, and is planning to have a presence at upcoming annual meetings of the Virginia Association of Counties, the Virginia Municipal League, Virginia Tourism, and the Virginia Association of Museums.

State commissions: Other states are beginning to join the planning efforts. Committees in Tennessee and Arkansas have started meeting, and North Carolina has launched a website (www.NCCivilWar150.com). In a recent meeting with state history museum administrators, attendees were impressed with the advanced stage of the Commission's plans. It remains clear that Virginia continues to be at the forefront of planning for the sesquicentennial. Other institutions, such as the Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, are eager to collaborate with the Commission on events such as the Signature Conference series.

At its meeting in November, the Commission requested the Virginia Tourism Corporation to develop a marketing plan for the sesquicentennial commemoration. In addition, the Commission continued its support of preservation by unanimously adopting a resolution supporting the Civil War Preservation Trust's Sesquicentennial Battlefield Initiative.

The Commission's website has proven to be quite popular, garnering over 18,000 hits in October. Following last meeting of the workgroup, battle maps were redesigned, incorporating Civil War Traveler Podcasts where available.

Virginia 2007 Community Program: Overview and Lessons Learned

Amy Ritchie, Statewide Program Coordinator for Jamestown 2007, provided an overview of the program, which extended to 181 communities throughout Virginia and beyond. The program encouraged citizens to showcase for the nation how their local culture, heritage, and history contributed to Virginia's key role in the development of modern America. Supporting the communities, the Jamestown 2007 office: published a Resource Guide listing sources for grants, products and consultants; included each on a website, in reports, and on marketing materials; held regional and statewide meetings; communicated through e-mail newsletters; allowed use of the Virginia 2007 Community logo; and provided a certificate from the Governor's office. Successes include: sustainable legacy projects, oral history programs, enhancements to community parks and gardens, and special events, to name but a few. Challenges include: maintaining interest and momentum, training and oversight of volunteer speakers, and limited staff resources.

Established Coordination Programs and Organizations:

1. Virginia Association of Museums: Time Travelers Program

Scott Harris, President of VAM, discussed the Time Travelers Program, which supports Virginia's historic and cultural museums by increasing visitation and visibility through a passport issued to students, encouraging them to visit as many museums as possible. No other state in the nation has a comparable program that links education and tourism, and its success is evident. The Time Travelers passport can be used to link Civil War-related sites and museums, making visitation easy for students and their families. The program is currently administered with an operational budget of \$70,000 per year. However, VAM does not have the resources to support the program as currently constituted, and requests financial assistance from the Commission and other organizations, with a pledge that the program will incorporate a Civil War theme from 2009 through 2015.

2. Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation: Regional Cooperation

Howard Kittell, Executive Director, reviewed the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District, which was named a National Heritage Area by Congress. Its three purposes are preservation, interpretation and economic development. The SVBF serves as the management entity for the Historic District, which comprises eight localities and 10 battlefields. History of the area is interpreted through themes, Civil War Trails signs, reenactments, educational programs, driving tours and orientation centers. The District is promoted through a website, logo and graphics, advertising, entrance signs and a district-wide marketing plan. The Foundation oversees implementation grants and has leveraged \$2.75 million in projects. It promotes local stewardship through clustering localities. The SVBF serves as a model for partnership, and offers its proven leadership in regional coordination for the Commission's assistance.

Roundtable Discussion of Local Sesquicentennial Committees

Staff reviewed comments submitted by members since the last meeting regarding local committees. It was suggested that localities be coordinated regionally, using regions established through the Civil War Trails program (i.e., Central Virginia, Southside, Valley and Mountains, Northern Virginia and Tidewater). Members were asked to continue to send suggestions and comments to staff during the interim.