

Virginia Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War Commission

**CIVIL WAR 150 LOCAL COMMITTEE
ROUNDTABLE MEETING**

November 6, 2008, 1:00p.m.

General Assembly Building

Speaker's Conference Room 6th Floor, Richmond, Virginia

1. Welcome
Cheryl Jackson, Executive Director

Ms. Jackson welcomed participants in the conference room and those participating by conference call.

2. Discussion

Ms Jackson presented an update on Commission initiatives via a powerpoint presentation and also provided a brief background for those new to the meeting on the establishment and background of the Commission. There is an extremely high level of State support with both Speaker Howell and President Pro Tempore Senator Colgan as Chair and Vice Chair respectively. Virginia is well ahead of every other state in terms of preparation and organization.

Ms. Jackson urged participants to put a link the '*America on the Eve of the Civil War*' conference to be held on April 29, 2009 at the University of Richmond on their websites and to promote the Conference wherever possible.

There are now 94 local sesquicentennial committees out of 134. Committees were encouraged to include their local libraries and seek educational advisers. Mike Shaffer of Washington County stressed how valuable it was to include local chambers of commerce and local visitors' bureaus as this helps moves the process forward. Other topics for discussion included:

- Museum exhibition (*'America's Great Turning Point: The Civil War in Virginia'*)
- Civil War 150 HistoryMobile
- Educational DVD to be distributed to schools, libraries, archives and historical societies among others
- Legacy Project: Document Digitization and Access
- Internet Battlefield Tours
- Sesquicentennial license plates (they can be converted over from personalized plates)
- National Sesquicentennial kick off event - Harper's Ferry (June 25, 2009) which will be a media event
- Updating the "Then/Now" map
- Other events & activities

3. Sesquicentennial Marketing Tourism Grants

Hollis Sullivan, Tourism Development Manager, Virginia Tourism Commission
HSullivan@Virginia.org

Ms. Sullivan outlined the draft marketing leverage program and said they are looking for ways to form new partnerships. Ms. Hollis referred the meeting to the handout provided '*Sesquicentennial Tourism Marketing Program*'. Emphasis was made on the need for a Federal Employer ID number and Ms Sullivan outlined other necessary requirements regarding the grants.

There were some questions from the group regarding funding and partnerships and discussion on what sort of performance measures would be used for the civil war trails and the question of whether there would be benchmarks on visitation levels.

Ms. Sullivan referred to Page 5 of the document which outlined the Scoring Guidelines and said it was very important that applications followed the process thoroughly and that the Program Description was paramount. There was clarification on the date for the funding process to begin but Ms. Sullivan said it will occur some time in January 2009 and grants will take two months to process. Ms. Sullivan said she is available to answer questions regarding the marketing program and provided the meeting with her email address (above).

4. Local Committee Updates and Roundtable Discussion; Q & A

John Hennessy (Fredericksburg/Stafford) said both committees have joined resources and there are around 30 people actively involved. The committee works with Spotsylvania also. Mr. Hennessey said that he and the committee wanted to make their contribution more than just a collection of events, mentioned the committee's blog and said there are more than 48 different things linked in the latest plan. Projects are broken down into two groups: (i) getting others to assist and (ii) doing it themselves as a committee.

Rachel DeLooze (Spotsylvania) said the committee was hosting a film festival featuring three movies on the War. There will also be a 1859 County Fair showcasing what life was like at that time. There will be speeches and contests among other things.

Jack Berry (Richmond Regional Committee) said they are working with both Petersburg and the National Parks. They are taking a motorcoach on November 17th to Gettysburg to see what they are doing to prepare for the 150th, following an article in the Richmond Times-Dispatch. All are welcome to attend and further information can be obtained from Mr. Berry at jberry@richmondva.org. The committee will take lessons and observations learned from Gettysburg and present a full report.

John Verrill (Prince William & Manassas) said the committee is producing, printing and promoting a brochure to attract people to the sites.

Sarah Latham (Danville) outlined their pilot project and said the committee received a \$150,000 grant last year for podcasts which will include oral histories. They are also designing a lecture series which is due to commence in 2009 and be ongoing. Dr. James Robertson of Virginia Tech. will be the first speaker. This will be advertised heavily. The committee is obtaining historical interpreters and using the Richmond firm of Arnett and Associates. There was some discussion as to the cost.

John Hennessy then suggested that committees wishing to obtain speakers with expertise on the Civil War should offer to pay them some sort of fee and not expect them to do it gratis. He said many would participate for around \$1000.

Chris Ruth (Chesterfield) said the committee has a Heritage Alliance Group who meet regularly and a designated Preserve America community and are going for the grant. They are also providing a notebook for the Board of Commissioners that presents information about the sesquicentennial and the opportunities available for the county. Meghan Coates offered to share the notebook with anyone who would like to see it.

5. Next Roundtable; Adjournment

Ms. Jackson thanked the attendees who attended the meeting and those who participated via conference call. She urged everyone to publicize the April conference, keep their website and maps up to date and spread information about the Commission and its activities widely. Ms. Jackson said the date of the next meeting of the roundtable was yet to be decided but it could take the form of a possible conference call on the road.

Ms. Jackson encouraged local committees to keep the Commission posted on plans and activities either by phone (804) 786-3591 or email cjackson@dls.virginia.gov.