

# Grant Given to Market Civil War Globally

## International citizens will visit battle sites, museums on their guided tour

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WOODSTOCK - The sesquicentennial of the Civil War just went international.

The Shenandoah County Department of Economic Development and Tourism learned earlier this week that it is the recipient of a \$5,000 grant from the Virginia Sesquicentennial Commission to market the war's 250th anniversary globally.

The county partnered with tourism officials in Richmond and Fredericksburg in applying for the grant.

Susie Hill, the county department's director, said the Civil War Circle Tour of Virginia will guide international visitors to battle sites and museums in addition to popular spots unrelated to the war.

Groups will spend three days and two nights in the county, Richmond and Fredericksburg.

"I'm such a proponent of partnerships and regionalism," Hill said.

"To bring in, literally, Shenandoah County, Richmond and Fredericksburg is just a wonderful way to showcase this state."

The grant requires a local match, so the three recipients are responsible for their portion of the additional \$5,000.

The tour will be promoted at an international marketplace event known as POWWOW in Orlando in May, Hill said.

The number of people who eventually sign up to visit will be based on the requirements of the various tour operators from foreign countries.

Hill said this is the first sesquicentennial initiative aimed at the international market.

Her relationship with Janie Lawson, of the Richmond Convention and Visitors Bureau, resulted in the county being asked to join.

Tours will likely begin in 2011, but could start earlier, Hill said.

Scott Harris, director of the New Market Battlefield State Historical Park, said the biggest benefit for tourist attractions will be reaching a wider audience. At the battlefield, international visitors represent 5-8 percent of its travelers in the "best years," he said. Canada, Great Britain, France and Germany are some of the usual places people come from.

"People from a number of countries find the Civil War very interesting," Harris said.

"A number of nations have gone through similar problems."

The itinerary for tourists includes them flying into Washington and then visiting the Museum of the Shenandoah Valley in Winchester before making stops in the county, Richmond and Fredericksburg.

"We hope to have lots and lots of groups," Hill said.