



Greater Williamsburg CHAMBER & TOURISM ALLIANCESM

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Alliance Unveils New Tourism Strategy for Upcoming Year

• • • • • The Greater Williamsburg Chamber & Tourism Alliance's annual plan for the upcoming year sets out an aggressive and expanded strategy for promoting the destination to its key market segment of leisure travelers and families. The plan reflects an expanded scope of tourism initiatives and a new focus on special emphasis programs that promote the area as a year-round destination, align with current research and advance recommendations made for the destination in the 2005 Nichols "Strategic Vision and Action Plan for the Historic Triangle." The plan, reviewed and approved unanimously by the Alliance's Board of Directors at its September meeting, goes formally into effect on October 1, 2010.

"The Nichols Report, which has provided a long-term vision for our strategic approaches since 2005, recommended efforts be directed to help visitors understand how they can fully "experience" the Historic Triangle, broadening our area's appeal through new market development and promoting our area's diverse offerings during shoulder seasons," noted Alliance President/CEO Dick Schreiber. "The Alliance intends to pursue a number of those initiatives with its marketing efforts this coming year."

The core of the Alliance's new and expanded tourism strategy is focused on:

- Expanding marketing support for three special emphasis programs -- Christmas (late Nov through Dec), Gardens (mid-April through mid-May) and the Arts (September) – to increase visitation during these periods and provide additional reasons for visitors to vacation here;
- Developing and promoting Civil War Sesquicentennial events, programs and itineraries;
- Growing the sports market segment.

Special emphasis programs begin with Christmas 2010. The Alliance is already compiling a comprehensive summary of all holiday-related events, programs and activities scheduled throughout the Historic Triangle for showcasing on its special Christmas in Williamsburg.com site. Marketing plans include radio and television advertising in Washington, DC, reaching more than 90% of target households with a frequency of almost 10 times in a three-to-four week period.

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Plans for mid-April through mid-May center on branding this spring period as Gardens of Williamsburg, expanding our area's Historic Gardens Week to a month-long celebration of the beautiful horticultural sites and programs, promoted on a new website that will be designed and hosted by the Alliance. The month of September will be branded for the arts, with the mission of stimulating new events as well as highlighting the range of visual and performing arts experiences now in the area that now culminate with the popular An Occasion for the Arts weekend.

The Civil War Sesquicentennial provides another opportunity to further broaden the area's tourism product base. Designated as the Historic Triangle marketing coordinator for this anniversary, the Alliance will create both print and online materials promoting local events and locations. A strong web presence, CivilWarWilliamsburg.com, will share stories of the destination – and the people who lived here – during the war, as well as a comprehensive list of themed events during the next several years. Suggested itineraries and packages will be featured, including regional itineraries that position Williamsburg as the ideal base for Civil War travels.

Development of high-potential sports market, formally initiated with the establishment of the Sports Williamsburg committee in March 2010, will be strengthened by the launch of a new marketing grant program that will enhance prospecting for Greater Williamsburg as a destination for sports events, especially youth sports, which bring whole families as well as players.

While expanding the scope of its tourism programs, the Alliance will continue its outreach programs aimed at the group tour and conference market, as well as leisure travel influentials such as AAA trip advisors, all of which are important in bringing business to area attractions and hospitality businesses.

“We believe that our newly expanded and focused tourism marketing can attract more individuals and families to Greater Williamsburg, complementing rather than duplicating the efforts of many others already pursuing general destination marketing,” said Schreiber. “Both our new and existing tourism programs are ones that the Alliance is uniquely positioned to accomplish, and have been developed through our collaborative committee structure involving representatives from more than 100 members.”