



Greater Williamsburg CHAMBER & TOURISM ALLIANCESM

**For Immediate Release
September 4, 2009**

Media Contact: Linda Stanier
757.253.2967/ 848-3425
stanier@williamsburgcc.com

Student & Youth Travel Operators Get First-Hand Historic Triangle Experience – Alliance Hosts 11 SYTA Group Leaders for Familiarization Tour –

Williamsburg, VA — The Greater Williamsburg Chamber & Tourism Alliance capped its participation in the Student Youth Travel Association (SYTA) 2009 Conference by hosting 11 SYTA group tour operators for a jam-packed, two-day familiarization tour of the Historic Triangle this week. The annual SYTA conference, the premier student travel marketplace event, convened this year on August 27 - September 1 in Norfolk under the theme of “Navigating the Future.” Alliance staff participated in the conference to promote Greater Williamsburg as the ideal educational destination, conducting 29 personal appointments with tour operators as well as attending networking sessions and exhibiting to more than 400 student travel professionals.

The Alliance’s post-conference familiarization tour, “Celebrate the Centuries,” escorted the tour operators to Busch Gardens, Colonial Williamsburg, Great Wolf Lodge, Historic Jamestowne, Jamestown Settlement, Historic Yorktown and Riverwalk Landing, Yorktown Battlefield and Yorktown Victory Center on September 2 - 3. The tour concluded on September 4 with activities and attractions such as Mariners’ Museum in Newport News, in partnership with the Newport News Tourism Development Office.

“This is a dynamic market segment and important conference for our destination,” notes Bob Harris, VP of tourism at the Alliance. “SYTA’s active tour operator members account for almost \$1.55 billion in student and youth travel, providing trips for more than 2.2 million participants each year. We’re proud to be a leading factor in ‘Historic Virginia’s’ ranking as one of the association’s top five U.S. travel destinations, as voted by the SYTA membership.”

- 30 -

Note: Images attached of SYTA member tour operators visiting Jamestown Settlement and Colonial Williamsburg; caption information on following page.



SYTA tour operators step aboard the Susan Constant at Jamestown Settlement in a visit hosted by the Alliance. The comprehensive tour of Jamestown Settlement included the indoor galleries, riverfront discovery area, the Powhatan Indian Village and a talk with historical interpreters aboard the ships.



SYTA tour operator members, led by a representative from Colonial Williamsburg, visit Duke of Gloucester Street, learning about Colonial Williamsburg's educational and interactive experiences. Among the spots the group leaders toured were the Wigmaker, the Governor's Palace and the Capitol, speaking with many historical interpreters along the way.