

Notes from March, 2023, Va250 meeting, Williamsburg, Va.

Cheryl Wilson, Executive Director of the VA250 Commission welcomed the gathering, which consisted of 34 Directors from other states, at the invitation of the Virginia Commission. Also present were various local Committee chairs, Va 250 staff, and interested parties.

- *The Va250 Commission has strong support from the state's General Assembly, with \$7 million in funding to date, and a promise of more to come

- *Not all states are "up and running" yet, but 50 states are expected to be established, with strong collaborative partnerships

- *The website, VA250.org, sets out the Commission's priorities, focusing on showcasing and maximizing our history

- *Experience based upon 3 past historic commemorative events, shows great economic impact to the Commonwealth: \$1.5 billion economic impact and \$50 million local tax revenues

Cheryl offered a "sneak peek" as to what is planned:

- *There will be traveling panels that will visit communities, free of charge

- *A traveling "museum on wheels" bus will provide a classroom-for-the-day

- *Signage will be provided with an assist from the Va Tourism Corp (VTC).

- *VA250 is planning a series of events every year from now through to 2026

Local committees are forming up, having meetings

A RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT IS NEEDED FROM THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS ASAP.

Stacy Martin, from VTC spoke to marketing and promotion issues:

Each location/committee will have its own portal on VA250, which we will need to have updated with announcements of the events/activities that are occurring in our venue.

VA250.org is the website. A micro website can be created for us, with assist from Trevor Grimm. There will be a statewide Calendar of Events, which will include any of our events.

There is a #250 logo; @VaRevolution; lapel pins are available.

Stacy reminded the group of the large marketing effort, with BrandUSA, which is focusing on bringing in foreign visitors. She reminded us that our events will bring in tourists from other states as well and that we need to focus on providing sites that will be enticing and interesting. **She said that VTC focuses on rural areas, to help them with their numbers**, and, that they have marketing data that could be

helpful to us as we design our requests for financial support. **She can schedule a visit with our team to discuss developing our proposals, etc, but asks for 6 weeks lead time.**

She offered information regarding grants schedules:

*May –there will be a 2nd round

It will be a 1-1 match, up to \$10k (we could use this money, for example, to get our signs up)

*Next year we could apply for marketing dollars

*There will be opportunities 2 x per year to apply. (We will be allowed to have one request for funding pending, while we launch a second request)

* There will be money for micro-businesses on a 1-1 match

*There will be money for marketing leverage grants, that could pay for, for example, **“Road to Revolution”** signs.

* **There will be money for Special Events in 2026, for those entities who have established events, with a track record of 2 years experience This could be used to pay for tents, entertainment, artisan shows, performers, with allowances for in-kind match. (This speaks, I think, to support for Market Days as well as May Faire)**

NOTE: Stacy said that she would post her remarks on the website! (thank heavens, because she spoke so fast that I know I did not record everything accurately!)

***Stacy noted the importance of collecting data, such as how many people come through our doors at the Museum.** There will be money for in-kind matches for tourism. Grants will allow a 6-month lookback. We need to develop our requests, create a timeline, decide what stories we want to tell, create a catalogue of stories, and plan a budget.

*There will be a giant calendar published, showing the grant timing, 2 more this year, and 6 in 2024

*There is new legislation being created for **TOURISM INVESTMENT DISTRICTS**

*We must use the VIRGINIA IS FOR LOVERS for any marketing

*The Va250 campaign will continue for 5 years after 2026 (she did not mention how much \$ would be available)

David Gruber.—Spoke to the campaign, **“Road to Revolution.”**

*His experience is based on creating the Civil War Trails which began in Virginia with 14 sites and has now stretched to 1,400 sites and 6 states.

“Road to Revolution” will take that approach for Va250.

*Interpretive signs will be sited at places of interest which we recommend

*They must be 24 x 36; We are told that VDOT will be cooperative.

*1 new sign costs \$3,000