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Virginia Tourism Promotes Black History Month

-State invites visitors to experience Virginia's four centuries of African-American heritage-

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RICHMOND, Va. – As Virginia marks the 400th anniversary of Jamestown, Black History Month is a special time to experience and honor Virginia's four centuries of African-American heritage. Across the commonwealth, communities and destinations will celebrate Black History Month with special events and exhibits.

As part of the Jamestown 400th Anniversary commemoration, Tavis Smiley will bring his Annual State of the Black Union to Hampton on February 10. Black leaders from around the nation including the Reverend Jesse Jackson and author Cornel West will examine the future impact of African-Americans on western culture, global image and the social, political and economic future.

Hampton Roads is rich with African-American heritage destinations. Enjoy the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard Museum featuring naval history with artifacts, models and discussions of African-American sailors. The Old Coast Guard Station museum in Virginia Beach also tells of the role of African-Americans in life-saving situations.

A Salute to the Tuskegee Airmen will take place at the Virginia War Museum in Newport News on February 10. Members of the famed Tuskegee Airmen will be on hand to discuss artifacts and memories on display. The Virginia Air and Space Museum in Hampton will also feature a special exhibit to the Tuskegee Airmen.

Virginia's central region is known for African-American firsts. The capital city of Richmond is home to historic Jackson Ward, one of the country's most significant African-American neighborhoods. Attractions include the Maggie L. Walker National Historic Site, home of the nation's first female bank president; a statue honoring Bill "Bojangles" Robinson; and the Black History Museum.

African-American heritage is the focal point of the Virginia Civil Rights in Education Heritage Trail, comprising 41 sites including Virginia State University in Petersburg, St. Paul's College in Lawrenceville and the Robert Russa Moton Museum in Farmville. The Moton Museum is the site of the 1951 student strike that spurred the landmark civil rights case *Brown vs. Board of Education*.

For Civil War enthusiasts, the Pamplin Historical Park and National Museum of the Civil War Solider in Petersburg is hosting Many Thousands Go: African-Americans and the Civil War through May.

In Northern Virginia, visitors can walk in the footsteps of African-Americans escaping slavery at The Underground Railroad event at Leesylvania State Park on February 17 or along the Alexandria Black History Walking Tour on February 10.

These listings are just a sampling of the many offerings for Black History Month in Virginia. For complete information on Virginia's Black History Month events and destinations, go to www.Virginia.org or call 1-800-932-5827.

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