

Newport News Virginia

AAA/CAA Travel Counselors/Agents Invited to 5-Day, 4-Night Holiday Familiarization Tour, Nov. 29- Dec. 3, 2017

~ Tour includes Newport News, Hampton, Norfolk and Portsmouth ~

Newport News, VA, July 27, 2017 – From the Virginia Peninsula to Southside Hampton Roads, staff members from the American Automobile Association (AAA) and the Canadian Automobile Association (CAA) are invited to experience an incredible assortment of drive- and walk-through holiday light shows, historic homes decorated for the season and live entertainment during the **13th Annual Hi-Lite Hampton Roads Holiday Familiarization Tour**.

This 5-day, 4-night tour is designed to familiarize AAA/CAA counselors and travel agents with not just the holiday events in the region, but also the attractions and wide variety of lodging, dining, and shopping options available in the Coastal Virginia cities of Newport News, Hampton, Norfolk and Portsmouth.

The tour starts Nov. 29 with a short ferry ride from Norfolk to Portsmouth to marvel at the historic homes that make up the **Olde Towne Historic District**, to visit the **Portsmouth Naval Shipyard Museum**, and to become a kid again at the **Children’s Museum of Virginia**. At nightfall, guests will visit the famed **Winter Wonderland** collection of animatronic figures among holiday-inspired scenes at the **Portsmouth Art & Cultural Center**.

After dinner at the **Renaissance Portsmouth Hotel**, which includes a “Meet & Greet” presentation by the **Virginia Arts Festival**, guests will return to Norfolk for a good night’s sleep. While on the motorcoach, don’t forget to look out the window to see the skylines of Downtown Norfolk and Olde Towne Portsmouth illuminated for the holiday season!

The group will start Day 2 (Nov. 30) with breakfast at the **Norfolk Waterside Marriott**, followed by a riding tour of **Naval Station Norfolk**, the world’s largest naval base. Prior to lunch at **The Main** in Downtown Norfolk, guests will tour Norfolk’s expanded **Chrysler Museum of Art**. After lunch, the itinerary includes tours of the **Half Moone Cruise & Celebration Center**, **Nauticus**, and the **Battleship Wisconsin**.

The afternoon will include a sweet treat featuring **Doumar’s** famous original hand-rolled ice cream cone, first sold in 1904 at the St. Louis Exposition. Prior to a special holiday dinner at the **Doubletree Norfolk Airport**, the group will take a behind-the-scenes tour of the **Virginia Zoo**. The night will end with a stroll through **Norfolk Botanical’s “Garden of Lights” Million Bulb Walk**.

Day 3 (Dec. 1) will take the group to Newport News to experience the world-renowned **Mariners’ Museum** and its adjoining **USS Monitor Center**, one of the largest and most comprehensive maritime history museums in the world. After lunch, guests will tour the

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Virginia Living Museum, where they can catch a holiday planetarium show or just connect to Virginia's natural heritage. From Newport News, the motorcoach will travel to Hampton so guests can check into their host hotel. **Christmas Town: A Busch Gardens Celebration** is on the agenda for early evening, but not before participants take a walking tour of the historic area of **Colonial Williamsburg**.

Day 4 (Dec. 2), will start with breakfast in Hampton, followed by a tour of the **Virginia Air & Space Center**, a visit to historic **Fort Monroe National Monument** and the **Casemate Museum**, followed by a visit to the nation's oldest African-American museum and its holiday bazaar at **Hampton University Museum**. After lunch and a visit to the **Hampton History Museum**, guests will take a spin on the **1920 Hampton Carousel**.

Before departing for the hotel to re-charge before dinner, participants will tour the **Virginia War Museum** in Newport News, concentrating on its WWI and WWII galleries (in commemoration of the 100th and 75th anniversaries, respectively, of these two wars). After dinner in Newport News, the evening will continue with **Hollydazzle**, a one-of-a-kind holiday show in City Center at Oyster Point, which combines synchronized fireworks, theatrical lighting, ground-based pyrotechnics and special effects all choreographed to festive music.

After Hollydazzle, the group will venture into **Newport News Park** for a two-mile ride through **Celebration in Lights**, Virginia's first drive-through light show. In this 7,711-acre park, more than 200 displays, including 70 animated ones, are set up in themed areas, such as "*Forest Friends*" and "*Battle of the Ironclads*."

The final day of the FAM tour, a travel day, is Sunday, Dec. 3. After breakfast, participants will board the motorcoach for airport transfers or car retrieval and return to their AAA/CAA offices with knowledge of the many year-round attractions in Coastal Virginia so they, too, can **Hi-Lite Hampton Roads!**

The invitation is limited to AAA/CAA travel counselors who have not attended the Hi-Lite FAM in the last five years (i.e. travel counselors who took the FAM in 2012-2016 are not eligible to attend). Those who took the FAM prior to 2012 and are interested in attending again will be wait-listed until November 1, 2017, with acceptance subject to space availability.

Because space is limited, early registration is highly encouraged. A \$150.00 participation fee is required from those AAA/CAA staff members whose applications are accepted. A companion rate of \$100 is available for those who would like to bring one guest and share his/her room. For additional information, contact Dana Howe with Visit Norfolk at 1-800-368-3097, Ext. 627, or via email at dhowe@visitnorfolktoday.com.

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