



AAA/CAA Auto Travel Counselors and Travel Agents Invited to 5-Day, 4-Night Holiday Familiarization Tour of Region, Nov. 30- Dec. 4, 2016

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

Newport News, VA, Feb. 29, 2016 – 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 **12th 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. 30 in Portsmouth with a night-time visit to the famed **Coleman Nursery Winter Wonderland** collection of animatronic figures among holiday-inspired scenes. Prior to this magical stop, however, our guests will be treated to some interactive fun at the **Virginia Sports Hall of Fame** and the **Children’s Museum of Virginia**, two of Portsmouth’s most popular attractions for “kids” of all ages!

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 (NOTE: While on the motorcoach, don’t forget to look out your window to see the skylines of Downtown Norfolk and Olde Towne Portsmouth illuminated for the holiday season!)

The group will spend Day 2 touring **Naval Station Norfolk** (the world’s largest naval base), followed by Norfolk’s **Chrysler Museum of Art**, **Half Moone Cruise & Celebration Center**, **Nauticus**, **Battleship Wisconsin**, and the **Hampton Roads Naval Museum**.

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 dinner, the group will take a behind-the-scenes tour of the **Virginia Zoo** and at nightfall, they’ll be taken to the **Norfolk Botanical Gardens** for a tram tour of the annual **Garden of Lights** holiday show.

Day 3 will take the group after breakfast back to Portsmouth via the Elizabeth River passenger ferry for a riding tour of the **Olde Towne Historic District** and a stop at the **Portsmouth Naval Shipyard Museum** before leaving for Newport News for lunch and a tour of the **Virginia Living Museum**. It’s here that our guests can catch a holiday planetarium show or just connect to Virginia’s natural heritage – from the mountains to the sea.

Newport News Tourism Development Office

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Prior to checking into their Newport News hotel rooms, the group will tour the world-renowned **Mariners' Museum** and its adjoining **USS Monitor Center**, one of the largest and most comprehensive maritime history museums in the world.

Christmas Town at Busch Gardens is on the agenda for early evening, but not before participants take a walking tour of the historic area of **Colonial Williamsburg**. After their visit to Busch Gardens, the group will cap off the night in **Newport News Park** for a two-mile drive 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*."

Day 4 (Saturday, Dec. 3), will start with breakfast in Hampton, followed by a tour of the **Virginia Air & Space Center**, a spin on the 1920 **Hampton Carousel**, a visit to historic **Fort Monroe** and the **Casemate Museum**, followed by a visit to the nation's oldest African-American museum – **Hampton University Museum**.

After lunch, our guests will tour the **Hampton History Museum** before departing for the **Virginia War Museum** in Newport News. After a quick stop at the hotel to freshen up a bit, followed by dinner in Newport News, the evening will culminate with **Hollydazzle**, a one-of-a-kind holiday show that combines synchronized fireworks, theatrical lighting, ground-based pyrotechnics and special effects all choreographed to festive music. A reception at the Courtyard by Marriott Newport News Airport will cap off the night!

The final day of the FAM tour, a travel day, is Sunday, Dec. 4. 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 (in other words, travel counselors who took the FAM in 2011-2015 are not eligible to attend). Those who took the FAM prior to 2011 and are interested in attending again will be wait-listed until November 1, 2016, 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, Consumer Sales Manager at VisitNorfolk, at 1-800-368-3097, Ext. 627, or via email at dhowe@visitnorfolktoday.com.

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