

Volume XXXV, Number 2 • November/December 2014

# BUS TOURS

Magazine



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## Check Out Newport News, Virginia

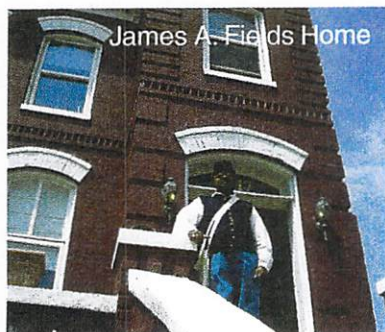
**L**ocated one hour from Richmond and Virginia Beach, Newport News is part of the Tidewater Hampton Roads area of Virginia. It is also in very close proximity to Norfolk and Williamsburg (30 minutes) making it a great home base for a hub and spoke tour of eastern Virginia. However it has enough great historic sites, entertainment venues, parks and museums, it could easily be a stand alone tour destination. Come and explore what Newport News has to offer your group.

### Historic Properties

The Endview Plantation traces its history all the way back to the Revolutionary War. In fact, the three wars fought on American soil have all left traces on this historic property. Three thousand militia found their way to the plantation's freshwater spring during the Revolutionary War and then it was used as a training ground during the War of 1812. During the Civil War, Endview was utilized as a captain's home and a hospital for both Confederate and Union troops. The property was built in 1767 and was home to the Harwood and Curtis families. Guests can tour the home and see artifacts from the ongoing archeological program as well as pictures and memorabilia from the Harwood family.

Tours are by pre-arrangement only and last about one hour. Group rates apply to groups of 15 or more and are \$5 for adults, \$4 for seniors and \$3 for students. Learn more by phoning (757) 887-1862 or visit [endview.org](http://endview.org).

For a look at life from the perspective of someone born into slavery in the South, the James A. Fields Home tells a fascinating tale of triumph over adversity. James Apostles Fields was born a slave in Hanover County, Virginia and found refuge at Fort Monroe during



the Civil War as "contraband of war." In 1871, Fields was one of the first 20 pupils to graduate from Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute (now Hampton University). In 1881, he graduated from the School of Law at Howard University. Fields served as the Commonwealth's Attorney and the first black Sheriff for Warwick County (now Newport News).

Tours of the James A. Fields House are by appointment only and last approximately 45 minutes. For more information visit [jamesafieldshouse.blogspot.com](http://jamesafieldshouse.blogspot.com) or phone (757) 813-6014.

Those who wish to see one of the grandest pre-Civil War residences still standing in the area should be sure to pay a visit to Lee Hall Mansion. Completed in 1859, Lee Hall Mansion was home of affluent farmer Richard Decatur Lee, his wife Martha and their children. One of

the last remaining antebellum homes on the Virginia Peninsula, their home was used by Confederate Major General John B. Magruder and General Joseph E. Johnston during the 1862 Peninsula Campaign.

Tours are by pre-arrangement only and last an hour. Group rates apply to groups of 15 or more and are \$5 for adults, \$4 for seniors and \$3 for students. For more information visit [leehall.org](http://leehall.org) or phone (757) 888-3371.

The African-American community of Newport News has had a strong impact both culturally and socially in the city since the end of the Civil War. At the turn of the century, the J. Thomas Newsome family moved to Newport News. He established a law practice and prospered as part of the postwar South's new, urban, black middle class. Through self-determination and a solid education, Newsome became a respected attorney, journalist, churchman and civic leader. His elegant Queen Anne residence served as the hub of the local black community. Today, this restored 1899 Victorian landmark continues to be devoted to the expression of historical and black cultural themes.

Tours of the house are by appointment only with the rate being a suggested \$2 donation. The duration of the tour is generally 45 minutes to an hour. For more information visit [newsomehouse.org](http://newsomehouse.org) or phone (757) 247-2360.

### Museums

Newport News is home to an important historical museum which pays tribute to one of the most famous ships in American history, the USS *Monitor*. Designated by Congress as America's National Maritime Museum, The Maritime Museum is home to the premier Civil War attraction in the country—the USS *Monitor* Cen-



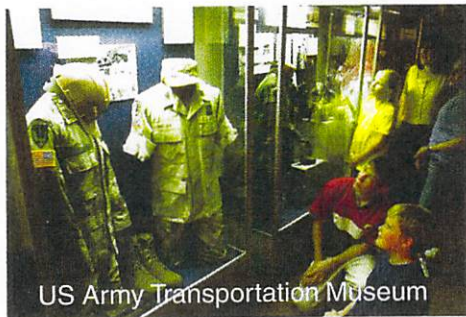


## Special: Newport News

ter. The museum has more than 35,000 maritime artifacts, including ship models, historic paintings and small craft from around the world as well as interactive exhibits that bring American history alive. The museum offers a wide array of educational programs, guided and self-guided tours, and special opportunities such as behind-the-scenes tours a.

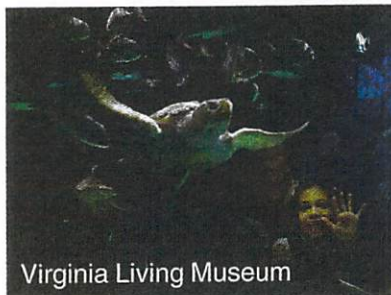
Groups should plan on spending three hours for their visit. The group price for groups of 10 or more is \$10 for adults and \$7 for students. Contact the museum directly for pricing on educational programs and special opportunities such as behind-the-scenes tours, private lectures and more. For more information visit [marinersmuseum.org](http://marinersmuseum.org) or phone (757) 596-2222.

The US Army Transportation Museum is something history and military buffs in your group will delight in. There are exhibits, dioramas, equipment, models and full-scale scenes which portray more than 200 years of Army transportation. The museum tells the story of the Korean War, the Vietnam War and the Cold War with an 18,000-square-foot-exhibit gallery. You can also see an exhibit of



what a soldier's living conditions were like during Desert Storm and see an actual Humvee used in Afghanistan. The museum is located on an active army installation, Joint Base Langley-Eustis, and covers six acres of indoor and outdoor exhibits.

There is no charge for admission; donations are welcome. All visitors must present a valid photo I.D. Tours generally run about two hours. For more information visit [transchool.lee.army.mil](http://transchool.lee.army.mil) or phone (757) 878-1115.



Virginia Living Museum

Another outstanding military museum is the Virginia War Museum. Here you will find collections of personal artifacts, weapons, vehicles, uniforms, posters and more, which trace the development of the U.S. military from 1775 through the present day. Part of the collection includes a section of the Berlin Wall and a portion of the outer wall of the Dachau Concentration Camp. You can also see a very unique propaganda poster collection. There are also galleries, which explore themes such as Visions of War, Women at War and Marches Toward Freedom.

The group rates are \$5 for adults, \$4 for senior and \$3 for students. Tours last approximately one hour. Learn more at [warmuseum.org](http://warmuseum.org) or phone (757)247-8524 for more information.

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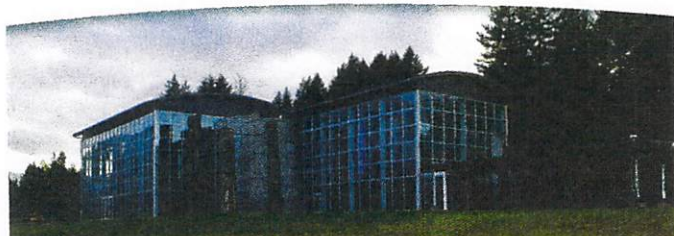
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For a lighter topic, delve into the subject that is life at the Virginia Living Museum. This popular attraction highlights the natural side of Virginia from its mountains to its ocean. Your group can experience life in a cypress swamp and a mountain cove, explore under the Chesapeake Bay, inside a limestone cave and see animals in naturalized habitats all along the boardwalk. Fun for learners of all ages, it is a great venue for performance groups, ice-breakers, evening receptions and dinners.

The group rates are \$16 for adults, \$12 for students. They offer planetarium, classroom, assembly programs and special tours for additional fees. On site dining is available at an additional cost. Visit [thevlm.org](http://thevlm.org) or phone (757) 595-1900 for more information.

**The Arts**

The fine arts are alive and thriving in Newport News and one of the finest showcases of all things artistic can be found at Peninsula Fine Arts Center. The center offers diverse

exhibits which change every few months so things are always fresh and dynamic. Guided tours lead by docents give guests an intimate look at what is on view and encourage guests to explore and ask questions. They can arrange hands-on activities for your group, art classes, special programs and events.

The group rate is \$6 for adults, \$5 for seniors and \$5 for children (age 6-12). Add \$3 per person for a docent-led activity. The touring time will vary depending upon activities or programs chosen. Visit [pfac-va.org](http://pfac-va.org) or phone (757) 596-8175 for more information.

The cultural arts also play a prominent role in Newport News life. The Downing-Gross Cultural Arts Center is a 52,000-square-foot facility which houses the 276-seat Ella Fitzgerald Theater, the Thaddeus Hayes Dance Studio, the Anderson Johnson Gallery, the Newport News Community Gallery and event rooms.

Behind-the-scenes complimentary tours are available upon request and last about an

hour. For more information visit [downing-gross.org](http://downing-gross.org) or phone (757)247-8950.

Another import cultural venue in Newport News is the Ferguson Center for the Arts. This giant 300,000-square-foot facility presents some of the finest artists and entertainers in the world. The center includes a 1,700-seat concert hall, a 500-seat music and theater hall and a 257-seat studio theater. There are also classrooms, practice spaces, scene and costume shops, and more.

For group rates contact the ticket office. They offer complimentary behind-the-scenes tours upon request as well as catering for special events. The ticket office can be reached at (757) 594-8782. For more information visit their Web site at [fergusoncenter.org](http://fergusoncenter.org) or phone (757) 594-8468.

If live theater is what your group craves then be sure to treat them to a show at the Peninsula Community Theatre. The Peninsula Community Theater offers live stage productions that include musicals, comedies

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## Special: Newport News

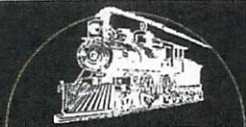
and mysteries in their five-production season which runs from August to May. It is a great showcase for local talent.

For group rates contact the ticket office at (757) 595-5728 or go to their Web site at [pctlive.org](http://pctlive.org). They can also give your group a complimentary behind the scenes tour of the art-deco movie house building which is home to the theater with prior arrangements.

### And There Is More

Newport News is close to many other great attractions in eastern Virginia and the Hampton Roads area. It is home to more than 4,000 hotel rooms as well as scores of group-friendly dining establishments with something for every budget and taste. Their helpful CVB staff can help with itinerary planning, escort notes and much more. The Web site [Newport-News.org](http://Newport-News.org) has lots of great information on attractions, dining and lodging, plus a free visitors guide and free group planner for order or download. You can phone the CVB at (888) 493-7386. □

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