

Requesting the Civil War 150 HistoryMobile Information for museums, organizations, and special events

The Civil War 150 HistoryMobile, an interactive mobile museum sponsored by the Virginia Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War Commission, will travel throughout Virginia and nearby states through early 2016.

Applications for tour stops in 2015 are due September 5, 2014 for the following year. Demand for the HistoryMobile is high; late applications are considered only when remaining dates are available.

There is no charge for a HistoryMobile tour stop, but hosting organizations must provide security, volunteers, lodging for tour staff, and other logistics considerations. For more information, see a sample Host Services Agreement at www.HistoryMobile.org.

I. Applying for the HistoryMobile: Making a strong application

- Show that you are collaborating with local partners (local government and school district, tourism office or visitors bureau, federal, state, and local parks, historical societies, and museums) to plan, coordinate, and maximize your HistoryMobile event.
- Engage participation of local public and private schools and homeschool groups. Include a day of "school-only" tours of the HistoryMobile in your planning, providing details on the school visitation plan.
- Provide plenty of detail: description of event; location of the HistoryMobile; projected number of attendees; plans for overnight security, volunteer coverage, and media coordination.
- Along with the application, send brochures or other promotional materials that depict or describe the proposed venue or event.
- Indicate whether your dates are fixed, or if you have scheduling flexibility and can accommodate a HistoryMobile tour stop at any time. There are often competing requests for the same dates, especially in the spring and fall months. If your schedule is flexible, let us know.
- Give careful consideration to the number of days requested, operating hours, and location of the HistoryMobile to be sure that they will maximize visitation.

Apply online: www.HistoryMobile.org/application

For more information, contact Cheryl Jackson, Executive Director
(804) 786-3591, ext. 276 or by email to info@virginiacivilwar.org

II. Tips for Hosting a Successful HistoryMobile Event: Front-line Advice from Tour Staff

1. Location, location, location – Put the HistoryMobile front and center

Of all of the points to stress, LOCATION is most critical to the success of a HistoryMobile event. Feature it in a prominent place, close to the action (the primary venue, entrance, or main event), making sure that visitors don't have to walk far to experience it. Provide good directional signs and easy parking.

2. Pick hours of operation that will maximize visitation

Almost as important as location is TIME. When setting times for your HistoryMobile event, consider the following: When does it get dark? What is the weather like? Is school in session? Will school groups be visiting, or is this an event geared for families? What else is open during the event, and what are those hours?

3. Make it an even BIGGER event

As a general rule, people come to see the HistoryMobile in greater numbers when it is a part of a larger event like a festival, museum special exhibit, 150th anniversary program, etc. The best turnouts are when there are lots of things to do around the HistoryMobile (and when it is front and center to the action).

If, however, the HistoryMobile IS the main attraction, build events and activities around it. For example, have an opening ceremony with a JROTC color guard, invite local speakers, arrange children's activities, or bring in living history or period musicians. Think about what works best in your community, and use the HistoryMobile to its benefit.

4. Good publicity and local marketing – Get the word out early and often!

Long before the HistoryMobile arrives, start drumming up interest by getting the word out to local newspapers, and television and radio stations. Arrange for broadcasts from the HistoryMobile or interviews with tour staff. Publicize the event widely on websites, online calendars and in social media (Tag us on Facebook: Virginia Civil War Sesquicentennial and Twitter: @virginiacw150)

5. Take good care of your volunteers (and the HistoryMobile staff!)

HistoryMobile staff and volunteers are ambassadors for the event, the locality, and the Commonwealth – take good care of them. Recruit energetic and friendly volunteers who will greet visitors and share information about local sites or local history. Make sure to plan for refreshments, shade, places to sit, and parking for staff and volunteers.

6. Involve schools and homeschool groups

Did you know that the HistoryMobile fully corresponds to the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOLs) and that we provide an SOL curriculum guide for teachers? This is important to point out to schools, because provides an easy field trip that fulfills key SOL requirements. Also get the word out to community colleges and universities - professors will help spread the word and may give students extra credit for visiting.

7. Work closely with your local tourism office, CVB, and history organizations

If you are not already working with local partners, start now! The local convention and visitors bureau, tourism office, historical society, or museum community can work with you to enhance the HistoryMobile visit, provide volunteers, assist with lodging, help get the word out, and much more.

8. Work closely with local police to make security and entering/exiting your location easier.

Be sure to involve the local police department early in your event planning. Not only are their recommendations for security of paramount importance, but it is sometimes necessary to request a police escort to maneuver the HistoryMobile into areas that would be difficult to access due to its size. Include local police at the site inspection.

9. Plan ahead!

The most important advice is to plan ahead, allowing plenty of time to involve partners and work through the details that will ensure a successful visit. Stay in close contact with the HistoryMobile staff – we want your event to be the best yet!



By picking a key location, setting optimal hours, spreading the word throughout your community, and collaborating with local partners, you will have created the right atmosphere for a successful HistoryMobile event. We look forward to seeing you soon!