

## Campaign stresses history to boost our region to outsiders

By TOM HOLDEN, The Virginian-Pilot

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If doubts exist about what the term Hampton Roads means, then the Hampton Roads Partnership hopes its announcement today will help clear up the matter.

Building on a name that helps define the region to itself, the partnership will introduce a new variation - Hampton Roads, America's First Region - during the annual meeting of the Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce.

The campaign is an attempt to build on what regional leaders think the outside world already knows about southeastern Virginia and its storied connection to the country's history - the Jamestown settlement.

"If you're on a ski slope in Colorado, there is no reason for people there to know about Hampton Roads," said E. Dana Dickens III, the partnership's president.

The partnership is a nonprofit organization composed of business, military, civic and educational leaders who focus on regional issues with an eye toward enhancing Hampton Roads' competitiveness.

"Part of what we're about with this campaign is raising the awareness level of Hampton Roads through our historical significance," said Dickens, the former mayor of Suffolk.

The effort is tied to the coming anniversary commemorative events surrounding the Jamestown settlement in 1607. The events are scheduled to kick off in the spring.

Dickens said recent work by companies specializing in corporate relocation suggests the region has done a good job within the nation's business community of helping identify where Hampton Roads is, but it has work to do because many ordinary people outside the region don't know exactly what Hampton Roads is.

"Part of what we're trying to accomplish here is to create a brand name in Hampton Roads," he said. "By adding the tag line 'America's First Region,' we want to build a source of pride in our region and a pride in our common history."

The slogan was developed through a series of discussions that included whether the term Hampton Roads had enough cachet by itself. The partnership hopes the new logo will be incorporated on official vehicles, stationary, e-mail signatures and business cards.

An outdoor advertising campaign also will help spread the word, Dickens said.

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