

Hampton Roads Partnership

HOW DID "HAMPTON ROADS" GET ITS' NAME?



"HAMPTON ROADS" is a condensed version of the original name given by the region's settlers to the harbor in southeastern Virginia known then as: *Southampton's Roadstead*. The term "Hampton" dates from the early 17th century when the first royal governor, Lord de la Ware, named the area in honor of The Earl of Southampton, a major investor of the Virginia Company of London, the financial backers of the Jamestown settlers. And, "Roadstead" is an old English word for a protected harbor.

Some things never change: just as sports stadiums, libraries, and college buildings today are named for major sponsors and donors, so it was then. The third Earl of Southampton, Henry Wriothesley, was not only a Jamestown investor but also a patron of the arts and champion of young William Shakespeare.

"HAMPTON ROADS" refers to the body of water between the Virginia Peninsula (to the North) and Southside, the southern part of southeastern Virginia. It is formed by the confluence of the James, Nansemond and Elizabeth Rivers and flows into the Chesapeake Bay whose watershed covers 64,000 square miles and all or part of six states (NY, PA, WV, MD, DE and VA) and DC.

"HAMPTON ROADS" is one of the world's biggest and deepest natural harbors, the largest in North America, and is home to the world's largest naval base at Norfolk. "HAMPTON ROADS" has been well known within nautical and maritime communities for centuries.

"HAMPTON ROADS" was widely adopted as the name for the surrounding region in 1984 when two planning districts and Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) merged, placing our region in the nation's top 50. As a regional moniker, "tidewater" was just too broad. It is a generic term used to describe a coastal plain with rivers that feed a bay or low coastal land that is inundated by water at flood tide. For instance, New Orleans is also a "tidewater."

There are many "tidewaters" across the nation and the globe, but only ONE "HAMPTON ROADS." Located in the tidewater of Virginia, we are "HAMPTON ROADS."



Contact: *Missy Schmidt, Communication Manager*
Hampton Roads Partnership: Serving "America's First Region"
Missy@HRP.org
Office (757) 625-4696
Toll-Free (866) 325-6252
Mobile/Text (540) 325-3060