

Minutes of the Marketing Committee of the VMNH Board of Trustees - Saturday, August 25, 2007 – 8:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.

Present: Pamela A. Armstrong, Carol C. Hooker, Carolyn A. Davis, Timothy J. Gette, Ryan Barber, Nancy Bell

Staff reviewed status of the “Make a Lasting Impression” capital campaign, with \$3.3 million of the \$5 million goal pledged. Strategy for completing the campaign includes a three-pronged approach: (1) completing outstanding major donor asks, (2) hosting a series of receptions for potential donors who have not yet been approached, and (3) hosting a series of morning business roundtables to discuss the economic impacts of the Museum and remaining funding needs of the capital campaign.

Membership totals include: 644 individuals and 22 corporate. Foundation staff continues to sell individual memberships at family festivals and other events. Corporate membership rates were increased to reflect additional perks offered by the new facility.

Strategy for gaining corporate sponsorships was discussed. The sponsorships will support the Museum’s marketing, exhibits and program efforts and create opportunities for companies to put their marketing dollars to a unique and effective use. Levels of sponsorship were created so that small businesses can participate, not just larger corporations. Categories of sponsorship include: special exhibits, family festivals, research expeditions, and publications.

Staff shared a matrix of grant requests to Virginia companies and foundations in support of the capital campaign, along with the status of those requests.

The Museum has received excellent news coverage following the grand opening.

Marketing and External Affairs staff are working to continue the pr momentum generated by the grand opening. Staff members are following up with media to update them on the status of the Museum since the grand opening. Marketing and External Affairs staff are pitching Museum articles from various angles, including economic development, education, scientific research and collections, and tourism.

A special section on the Museum's Web site is being developed to promote VMNH Research Expeditions. The new section will highlight past, current, and upcoming VMNH Research projects, with articles, photos, etc. Museum members who log into the Web site will be able to sign up to receive emails from curators in the field. This will help to emphasize VMNH’s unique status as a natural history museum with a strong research and collections focus.

The Museum continues to be rented by groups of all sizes, for parties, meetings, and other gatherings.

The Museum Store continues to generate record sales, with average sales of \$1.72 per visitor since the March 31 grand opening of the new facility. That is a 79% increase from the 99 cents average sales per visitor in the old museum facility. Expected sales per visitor for museums the size of VMNH are \$1.28, according to Museum Store Association studies.

Reviewed major upcoming Museum events:

Indian Festival - September 14 and 15

Smithsonian magazine's Museum Day - September 29

Beyond Jamestown exhibit lecture, presented by Dr. Helen Rountree - November 13

Alien Earths exhibit – February 1 through April 30, 2008

Amazing Feats of Aging – May 24 through September 7, 2008