

NEWS RELEASE

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Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for Suffolk Visitor Center

SUFFOLK, VIRGINIA (November 19, 2010)—The Suffolk Mayor, City Manager, Council Members, dignitaries and residents were on hand for the official Grand Opening of the Suffolk Visitor Center. The ribbon cutting ceremony marked the rebirth of a historic building which now serves as the information gateway for Virginia's largest city.

The center is housed at the repurposed Nansemond County Courthouse located at 524 North Main Street, one of Suffolk's busiest corridors. The center is within easy walking distance from the Suffolk Conference Center, Riddick's Folly House Museum, restaurants and shoppes.

Suffolk Mayor Linda T Johnson says, "This beautifully repurposed building, whose columns have stood sentry and witnessed much history over the last 170 years, is a perfect ambassador for Suffolk. How fitting that they now will be the

gateway through which people will pass at our new Visitor Center as we “officially” greet guests to our wonderful City!”

The first floor of the Visitor Center provides an exhibit gallery highlighting the history of Suffolk and the Great Dismal Swamp. There is also a greeting and information area, a gift shop, a refreshment area and WIFI access. Visitors and residents alike can gather details about Suffolk’s attractions and events, dining, accommodation and shopping opportunities and purchase tickets to community events. The Department of Economic Development and Division of Tourism occupy offices on the second floor. The Suffolk Visitor Center is open daily from 9 am until 5 pm.

About the former Nansemond County Courthouse

As a courthouse, the building played a pivotal role in the history of old Nansemond County and the City of Suffolk. The 1840 era building is the third such structure built on the site. Two previous courthouses were destroyed by fires during the Revolutionary War and “The Great Fire” on June 3, 1837. During the Civil War, the courthouse was reportedly used as barracks for Union Soldiers. The building remained in use as a courthouse until 1998 when the Mills Godwin Courts Complex was opened.

About the Department of Economic Development and Division of Tourism

The Department of Economic Development provides site location, business consultation and marketing research assistance to new and expanding companies.

The Division of Tourism is the destination marketing organization of record for Suffolk and works with public and private hospitality sectors to develop and implement programs that broaden the local tourism industry and generate increased visitor expenditures, tax revenues and employment.

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