



GLOUCESTER PARKS, RECREATION, & TOURISM

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For Immediate Release

Whitley's Peanut Factory Store becomes state certified Visitor Center

Gloucester County Parks, Recreation & Tourism is pleased to announce that the Whitley's Peanut Factory retail store has been certified by the Virginia Tourism Corporation as a Tourist Information Center. George Washington Memorial Highway 17 will have the directional blue & white signs installed north and south bound. Whitley's familiar Peanut Factory sign now has the Tourist Info Sign designating the information center. Inside the store, guests will find sections devoted to free maps, brochures and other information about Gloucester and the rest of the state.

Hilton Snowdon, County Tourism Coordinator, said for several years the county had wanted to have a visitors center closer to the Yorktown/Williamsburg area where a great deal of tourists come from. But rents for existing buildings that needed renovation or the purchase of property to build on was cost prohibitive. So for a long time guests traveled 12 & ½ miles to the Gloucester Visitors Center located in the historic Main Street district, only to find they had already passed by some incredible historical and resourceful sites. With limited options, the Parks, Recreation & Tourism Department put out a request for proposals to see if an existing business that could handle the requirements to offer this service.

Todd Smith, President of Whitley's Peanuts, made an offer to share some of his retail space to facilitate the needs of Gloucester tourism. Whitley's offerings included high visibility from HWY 17, being open 7 days a week, handicap parking and access, and the ability to accommodate tour buses. This has become a win-win partnership for Gloucester County and Whitley's. An added benefit has been that local residents, many of whom never stepped into the courthouse visitors center, are now shopping at Whitley's and discovering information on historical sites and other natural resources of Gloucester. Being a state certified Tourist Information Center, there will be a brochure space that showcases Gloucester Point available at every Virginia Interstate Welcome Center.