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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

American Evolution™, Commemorates the 398 Anniversary of America’s First Official English Thanksgiving

Virginia Thanksgiving Festival features reenactment of the landing at Berkeley Plantation

Berkeley Plantation, VA (November 3, 2017) – This weekend Virginia’s [2019 Commemoration](#), American Evolution™ joins the re-enactment of America’s first official English Thanksgiving at Berkeley Plantation. The festival’s events include a re-enactment of the landing of Captain John Woodlief and 35 settlers aboard the Margaret at Berkeley Plantation December 4, 1619. The Virginia Thanksgiving festival also features music, stories, dancing, children’s activities, food, living history programming and performances by the Chickahominy Tribal Dancers. American Evolution will also have an interactive exhibit at the festival.

In 1619, the settlers of Berkeley Plantation had been given instructions by their investors upon their departure from Bristol, England to “annually and perpetually” hold a day of prayer and Thanksgiving on the date of their arrival in the New World. This event marked the first official observance of Thanksgiving in the English colonies. Today the Virginia Thanksgiving Festival continues to fulfill the orders of Berkeley’s investors almost 400 years later by celebrating the arrival of Berkeley’s first settlers with a day of history, food, and fun.

“As a descendant of Captain John Woodlief, it brings me great joy to share the story of the first Thanksgiving in English North America with people,” said Graham Woodlief. “The story of the First Thanksgiving in Virginia has long been overlooked, but it is an important part of my family’s history and the nation’s history.”

American Evolution is partnering with the Virginia Thanksgiving Festival as part of its mission to bring attention to the important historical events that took place in 1619 Virginia and share them with the country and the world. The Commemoration aims to examine how these pivotal events have had an enduring impact on American culture, governance and society in the interim 400 years.

“The 2019 Commemoration is happy to partner with the Virginia Thanksgiving Festival to highlight the importance of Virginia’s history to that of our national history,” said Kathy Spangler, Executive Director of the 2019 Commemoration. “Many people don’t realize that the original English Thanksgiving in the North America took place in Virginia, and we are doing our part to correct that record.”

The Virginia Thanksgiving Festival will be held Sunday, November 5 at the Berkeley Plantation in Charles City. Admission is \$5.00 per motorcycle or bicycle, \$10.00 per car, truck or SUV and \$20.00 per bus. Tours of Berkeley’s Manor House are available for \$12.00 per person. For more information visit: <http://viriniathanksgivingfestival.com/>

About the 2019 Commemoration

The 2019 Commemoration, AMERICAN EVOLUTION™, highlights events that occurred in Virginia in 1619 that continue to influence America today. Featured programs, events and legacy projects will position Virginia as a leader in education, tourism and economic development. AMERICAN EVOLUTION™ commemorates the ongoing journey toward the key ideals of democracy, diversity and opportunity. Dominion Resources is an AMERICAN EVOLUTION™ Founding Partner and Altria Group is a Virginia Colony Partner.

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