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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **VIRGINIA'S 2019 COMMEMORATION TAKES BACK THE SPIRIT OF THANKSGIVING WITH "COME HOME TO VIRGINIA" POSTCARDS**

*Virginians are sending customized postcards to friends and family nationwide informing them that Virginia hosted America's first official English Thanksgiving in 1619 in Charles City, VA*

Jamestown, Va. (November 8, 2018) – Throughout the month of November, Virginia's 2019 Commemoration, American Evolution is inviting Virginians to *Take Back the Spirit of Thanksgiving by sending postcards* to their friends, family and work counterparts in Massachusetts and nationwide. Available in hard copy and electronically, the postcards underscore that the first official English Thanksgiving was held in Virginia in 1619, a full two years before the Massachusetts observation. Postcard recipients are invited to "come home to Virginia," and take part in the 2019 Commemoration, American Evolution's yearlong schedule of events.

Despite what you learned in school, Virginia is the true home of America's first English Thanksgiving. In December 1619, a group of English settlers arrived safely in Virginia and held a ceremony of Thanksgiving which was to be observed "annually and perpetually" thereafter. In addition, in John F. Kennedy's 1963 Thanksgiving Proclamation, the Massachusetts-born President acknowledged that Virginia hosted America's first Thanksgiving.

Virginians can send these unique postcards to their friends and family and encourage them to reengage with our nation's history. Virginia Governor Ralph Northam has joined in on the fun, inviting Virginia state employees to send the 2019 Commemoration's digital postcards to their Massachusetts counterparts as well as friends and family across the nation.

"These postcards encourage engagement with Virginia's history in a fun way. We're very thankful to our Massachusetts counterparts for being good sports and we hope they'll visit Virginia and participate in 2019 Commemoration events," said Kathy Spangler, Executive Director of Virginia's 2019 Commemoration.

Hundreds of postcards have already been sent from Virginia’s elected officials, legislators, educators, art and culture institutions, industry associations and Virginia-based corporations, welcoming those from Massachusetts, and from across the country to, “come home to Virginia,” and participate in the year-long schedule of 2019 Commemoration, American Evolution events, activities, programs, legacy projects and educational initiatives. Visit our [photo gallery](#) to see some of the familiar faces who have already sent their postcards. [Digital postcards](#) and [a full schedule of 2019 Commemoration programming](#), with detailed event information, can be found on the official 2019 Commemoration website.

Over the next year Virginia’s 2019 Commemoration, American Evolution is hosting more than 20 events, exhibitions, educational initiatives and legacy projects that commemorate the 400th anniversary of formative events that occurred in Virginia in 1619 and set Virginia and America on a course towards the ideals of democracy, diversity and opportunity. These 1619 Virginia events include the first official English Thanksgiving in North America, the First Representative Legislative Assembly in the New World, the arrival of the first recorded Africans to English North America, the recruitment of English women in significant numbers to the Virginia colony, and the launch of free enterprise in the Commonwealth.

### **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 and TowneBank are Virginia Colony Partners.

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Dear

*Virginia is taking back the spirit of Thanksgiving!*

*Most Americans aren't aware that the first official English Thanksgiving was held right here in Virginia on December 4, 1619.*

*Come home to Virginia and commemorate the 400th anniversary of the first Thanksgiving with us. Visit Virginia to experience upcoming events of the 2019 Commemoration.*



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"First Thanksgiving" by Sidney King; photograph courtesy Berkeley Plantation.