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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **VIRGINIA'S 2019 COMMEMORATION, AMERICAN EVOLUTION RECOGNIZES AMERICA'S FIRST OFFICIAL THANKSGIVING**

*November Events Showcase Virginia's Role in Hosting America's First Official English  
Thanksgiving in 1619*

Jamestown, Va. (November 3, 2018) – The Thanksgiving season is upon us and many people are unaware that Virginia is the true home of America's first English Thanksgiving. Beginning today, Virginia's 2019 Commemoration, American Evolution will host a series of events and programs to elevate Americans' awareness of the 399<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first official English Thanksgiving, which occurred in Virginia.

Scholars and U.S. Presidents have recognized Virginia's role in hosting America's official First English Thanksgiving. In 1619, a group of English settlers arrived safely in Charles City, Virginia and held a ceremony of Thanksgiving for safe passage across the Atlantic, which was to be observed "annually and perpetually" thereafter. Before Europeans arrived in the New World, Native American peoples marked successful harvests with feasts and communal celebration. While these events are reminiscent of America's modern Thanksgiving, they were traditionally spontaneous affairs, as opposed to regularly scheduled celebrations.

"Thanksgiving is an important part of our nation's history, but for years Americans have mistaken its true birthplace," said Kathy Spangler, Executive Director of the 2019 Commemoration, American Evolution. "To commemorate America's first English Thanksgiving, which took place in Virginia, American Evolution is encouraging Virginians and all Americans to join us in reflecting on the meaning of Thanksgiving by attending upcoming events and engaging online with activities that highlight the true history of this holiday."

Virginia's 2019 Commemoration, American Evolution will host more than 20 events, programs and educational initiatives over the next year, including events showcasing key occurrences from 400 years ago in 1619 Virginia, which continue to shape today's America and set our nation on the course towards the ideals of democracy, diversity and opportunity. The formative 1619 Virginia events include the first official English Thanksgiving in North America, 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, and the development of the Virginia colony's entrepreneurial and innovative spirit.

A full schedule of American Evolution programming can be found [here](#). Thanksgiving-themed events are listed below:

- **[Fire, Flour & Fork – Thanksgiving Throwdown: Virginia vs. Massachusetts](#), November 1, 2018**  
Fire, Flour, and Fork received an American Evolution grant to produce a dine-around event that convened Virginia chefs, brewers and distillers in a face-off with rivals from Massachusetts for the title of first (and best) Thanksgiving.
- **[Take Back the Spirit of Thanksgiving](#), November 3, 2018**  
The Virginia Tech and Boston College football teams will meet in Virginia Tech’s Lane Stadium for a pre-Thanksgiving game. As Virginia Tech and Boston College come together to play football, Virginia’s 2019 Commemoration, American Evolution invites everyone to join in Taking Back the Spirit of Thanksgiving. Virginia Governor Ralph Northam will encourage Virginians and Americans, to remember the true meaning of Thanksgiving as a time for being thankful; for putting aside differences; for connecting with family, friends and neighbors; and giving generously to local food banks and schools to ensure no one goes hungry this Thanksgiving. View a video of Governor Northam’s remarks [here](#).
- **[Virginia Thanksgiving Festival](#), November 4, 2018**  
Every year on the first Sunday of November, Berkeley Plantation hosts the Virginia Thanksgiving Festival. This annual tradition dates back to 1619 when Captain John Woodlief and his crew of 35 men landed on the shores of the James River. Activities for the entire family include a re-enactment of the First English Thanksgiving, Chickahominy Tribal Dancers, parade with horse drawn carriages, fife and drum, colonial period games, corn maze, cornhusk doll making, storytelling and more.
- **[Come Home to Virginia Postcards](#), November 2018**  
Thousands of Virginians are sending “Come home to Virginia” postcards to their Massachusetts friends, family and work counterparts. Mailed and electronic postcards underscore that the first official English Thanksgiving was held in Virginia in 1619 and encourage recipients to visit Virginia to engage in 2019 Commemoration events and activities. Customize and send your loved ones an electronic postcard from the [2019 Commemoration’s website](#).

#### **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.