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Patrick Henry to be tour's focus  
Assembly approves heritage trail aimed at drawing tourists  
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Patrick Henry will be the star of a new driving tour centered in the Richmond area under legislation adopted by the General Assembly.

Alisa Bailey, president of the Virginia Tourism Corp., said yesterday that "The Road to Revolution" heritage trail could bring a significant influx of visitors and tourist dollars to the Richmond area.

The legislation, passed by the House of Delegates and Virginia Senate, is on its way to Gov. Timothy M. Kaine, who is expected to sign it.

Del. Christopher K. Peace, R-Hanover, the legislation's sponsor, said he wanted a way to spotlight Hanover County's history.

The driving tour would begin at Scotchtown, one of Henry's homes, near Beaverdam.

It would proceed to Hanover Courthouse, where Henry argued a famous religious-liberty case, then across the street to Hanover Tavern, where, legend has it, Henry tended bar.

From there visitors would drive to Polegreen Church near Mechanicsville, one of the churches that began a dissent against the established Anglican Church. Henry's mother took him to church services there.

The site most closely identified with Henry, St. John's Church on Church Hill in Richmond, would be the next stop. There, Henry made his famous "give me liberty or give me death" speech.

Tourists could continue to Red Hill Plantation in Charlotte County near Brookneal. Henry died there June 6, 1799.

The legislation directs the Virginia Department of Transportation to prepare signs with a common logo directing tourists to the sites.

"I talked to a few folks and they suggested we find a way to gather all the Henry sites under an umbrella historical tour," Peace said.

Bailey said most tourists don't have a lot of time and don't spend all their time visiting historical sites.

Many who come to Richmond will look for places to eat, sleep and shop, Bailey said. "This will add to the Richmond area's [tourism] footprint," she said. "It is another thing to sell to get people to come to this area."

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