

Cox Business Brings High Speed Fiber Connectivity to Historical Jamestowne Island To Provide Virtual Explorations of the James Fort and Archaearium

30,000 students from 175 schools in 27 states have experienced the immersive demonstration powered by the new optical fiber connectivity

ATLANTA and JAMESTOWN, Va., April 16, 2021 /[PRNewswire](#)/ -- England's first permanent colony in North America, Historical Jamestowne Island, is modernizing with the help of Cox Business. The 411-year-old staple in American history now has high-speed, optical fiber internet, enhancing the visitor experience – both on-site and virtually.

Today, Historical Jamestowne Island and Cox Business will present a virtual trip for King's Grant Elementary School from Virginia Beach, VA. In attendance and making remarks will be Congresswoman Elaine Luria, who represents Virginia's second district, Virginia Secretary of Education Atif Qarni and Virginia Chief Broadband Advisor Evan Feinman.

Jamestown is known for many things – it's central to America's birthplace story and backdrop for the story of John Smith and Pocahontas, among others. It is not known for being the best place for Wi-Fi connectivity. Located far from most internet service providers, the island's 13 main tourism locations, including the Visitors Center and museum, have been restricted by the limitations of an aging infrastructure.

As pressures such as an increasing number of employees and rising expectations for onsite connectivity began to grow, community leaders recognized the need to make improvements. However, the site presented a unique challenge: how to modernize the visitor experience while preserving historical richness.

"Jamestown is deeply rooted in our nation's history, so it was imperative that changes to the Wifi infrastructure didn't impact the look and feel of the area," said Thom Watkins, vice president, Cox Business Virginia. "We worked with our partners, Jamestown Rediscovery and the National Park Service, along with a team of skilled archeologists, to adhere to preservation requirements during install."

The project to connect Historical Jamestowne Island was completed in early 2020 – just in time for distance learning. Without a reliable broadband connection, thousands of students and adults would've missed out on

the opportunity to explore Jamestown. Instead, this connection allowed Jamestown Rediscovery to thrive in the remote world and bring the past into the future, with more than 30,000 students from 175 schools in 27 states experiencing Historical Jamestowne since September.

The virtual field trip tours allow students from across the world to conduct an immersive, in-depth experience with the settlement and archaeology, all through the power of broadband.

"Without Cox Business we would not have been able to deliver educational programs coast to coast this year. Students from across the country and even the world now have access to Jamestown like never before," said Mark Summers, director of youth and public programs, Jamestown Rediscovery. "Before, we had maybe a handful of well-funded schools from the west coast visit us on field trips each year. Today, students from every walk of life, regardless of their socioeconomic status, get to experience all that Historical Jamestowne has to offer."

The enhanced connectivity gives Jamestown the ability to populate a virtual tour portal for exploring the rich resources related to the history and archaeology of Jamestown. Virtual tours of the archaeological site of James Fort and the Archaearium Museum will be told through a series of videos connected in an interactive, online map. One tour will weave together the history of the settlement with how archaeological research has informed our understanding of the site.

The other will be presented from the perspective of Anas Todkill, one of Jamestown's important early settlers who was a comrade of Captain John Smith. Relevant historical information, images, artifacts, and other videos will be linked to each tour topic, enabling the public and students to explore further.

"Partnering with Cox has given us the opportunity to bring the Jamestown experience into the 21st century," said Dave Givens, director of archaeology, Jamestown Rediscovery. "Our team's digital wish list has grown longer with each passing year, and with Cox, we can make them a reality."

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The Jamestown project began in summer 2019, as Cox installed over 13,000 linear feet of directional boring, pedestals, ground vaults and fiber runs.

Jamestown Rediscovery has taught 27 of the 100 largest school districts in the United States. Vitaly important, virtual programs are reaching urban centers with public schools that could not afford the high cost of plane tickets, hotels, and insurance. These districts represent the most diverse areas of the United States, including immigrant and underserved communities. Keeping costs down has allowed Jamestown Rediscovery to reach schools that would never have the opportunity to visit Virginia.

With high-speed internet connectivity among 13 locations, Jamestown Rediscovery and the National Park Service teams plan to introduce new digital experiences to the public, including live cameras on archeological excavations, virtual tours of long-lost landscapes, and 360-degree videos.

For more information about the project and Cox Business, visit www.cox.com/business.

About Cox Business

The commercial division of Cox Communications, Cox Business provides voice, data and video services for more than 355,000 small and regional businesses nationwide, including health care providers; K–12 and higher education; financial institutions; and federal, state and local government organizations. The organization also serves most of the top-tier wireless and wireline telecommunications carriers in the U.S. through its wholesale division. For more information, please visit www.coxbusiness.com.

About Jamestown Rediscovery

For two decades, the *Jamestown Rediscovery* Project has brought to vivid life the stories of early James Fort. As early as 1837, eyewitness accounts claimed that the fort built in 1607 by Captain John Smith and the first English settlers was submerged in the James River. But when Dr. William Kelso visited Jamestown in 1963 as a graduate student at the College of William & Mary in nearby Williamsburg, he was skeptical of that theory. He wondered if the standing 17th-century brick church tower would have been constructed near the center of the original fort, where an earlier church once stood. Under his leadership, the *Jamestown Rediscovery* Project launched in 1994 and within three archaeological seasons had uncovered enough evidence to prove the remains of James Fort existed on dry land near the church tower. Since then, *Jamestown Rediscovery's* mission has evolved into a more challenging undertaking. Today more than two dozen staff members excavate, interpret, preserve, conserve, and research the findings from the site.

About Preservation Virginia

Our mission is to make Virginia's communities and historic places of memory stronger, more vital and economically sustainable through preservation, education and advocacy. We envision a Virginia where historic preservation is an integral part of everyone's life.

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