

Patrick foundation to host national literacy officials

The Patrick County Education Foundation in Stuart will host representatives of the National Commission on Adult Literacy on Thursday.

The all-day meeting at the foundation's offices will explore the experiences and success of the foundation and its partners in addressing adult literacy.

Five of the commission's 22 members will participate in the session, which will include interviews with GED recipients as well as leaders from Patrick County and the region's adult education service providers.

Commission members hope to observe how the collaboration of civic and government agencies in Patrick County have contributed to improved educational outcomes. They will also explore ways private charitable contributions and public funding have helped increase access to education, raise awareness of the importance of education, and learn

how the foundation's success in improving critical education indicators can be replicated around the country.

This independent commission was launched by Dollar General Corp. and the Council for Advancement of Adult Literacy (CAAL) in October 2006. The Dollar General Literacy Foundation is the lead supporter of the initiative with a donation of \$1 million. The commission is chaired by Dollar General Chairman and CEO David Perdue and is comprised of a former governor, Fortune 500 CEOs, former congressional and cabinet members and other business, education, literacy and public policy leaders.

The commission's charge is to examine all components of the nation's adult literacy enterprise and make recommendations on how to chart a future course for adult education and literacy service in America. Its challenge is to

bring about informed federal and state public policy changes, motivate more involvement by the business community and move the adult education and literacy system out of the shadows into the education mainstream.

Its primary goal is to increase American economic vitality and competitiveness, civic engagement, and quality of life.

The Patrick County Education Foundation and Patrick County meeting is one of three national site visits planned to give commissioners a chance to see exemplary adult literacy programs in action. Other visits are planned to Louisville and Seattle.

A series of research papers will be developed to inform the commission's deliberations; some of these are expected to be published at the end of the study in 2008. The major outcome of the commission's work will be a

national report, complete with analysis and strategically directed recommendations for the business, literacy, education and philanthropic communities and for federal and state government.

The Patrick County Education Foundation was created in 2001 as an economic development initiative to provide leadership and programming to raise education attainment levels in the county. At that time, education attainment levels in the county were near the bottom among Virginia's rural counties.

The foundation and its partners have been guiding the county toward significant increases in college attendance, adults with a high school diploma and work force training participation. That success helped attract the commission's attention and led to its selection as one of the commissioners' three national site visits.