

The 2005 Convention Choices

by Mark Smith

The 2005 ICS Convention is already scheduled for Manassas Virginia ([KHEF](#)), but making that decision, as you might guess, was difficult. The choices for the convention site were varied and hard to choose from. Each had a certain appeal. As an ongoing information outlet, we would like to outline various choices and the rationale for selection.

The first step in whittling down a set of locations was to first find a set of locations to whittle down. With so many fine places to choose from in the Northeast Tribe region, you would think that this task would have been easy. There were many discussions pertaining to the pro's and con's of one location or another, but it was quite hard to come up with a list of possible choices. John

Dunning, our tribe chief sent out a note to the members via email and hardcopy posing this important question. The responses did not point clearly to one location over another, but it did help in some manner.

There were a number of criteria that slowly worked it's way to the top of what needed to be considered. When were we going to have the convention. Summer has thunderstorms, winter has ice so that narrowed down the timeframe. There had to be a number of things to do which would appeal to a typical comanche enthusiast and/or a spouse or family member. There had to be access to an airport which provided excellent services and excellent approaches. It had to be a place that wanted to work for our money. Finally, as with many tasks, the situation came down to three important criteria, location, location, location. Without any further ado, here are the choices:



*The American falls as seen from the tower
(Photo: Mark Smith).*



clockwise: The Lincoln Memorial, The White House, Arlington Cemetary, The Jefferson statue inside of the Jefferson Memorial, The Department of the Interior, The Supreme Court building, The Korean War Memorial, and in the center The Capitol Dome. (Design: Mark Smith).

Niagara Falls, NY – This is a wonderful location filled with awesome spectacles and beautiful parks. Naturally, the falls are available, but there are also woodlands, trails, scenic overlooks all available very nearby. A quick walk across Freedom Bridge will get you to Canada.

The whole area is a little *hungry* right now, so it was imagined that there may be some interesting deals to be had. Since the area had at one point been a very big convention and tourist area (and still is), there were very many nice facilities available. In addition, the town assists groups such as ours by offering convention services helping to connection to suppliers.

The airport facilities were in good shape including two major airports and nice approaches into them. Fuel was plentiful, but expensive. Prices in the December 2003 timeframe were \$3.49 per gallon for Buffalo International Airport and \$3.34 for Niagara International Airport.

Niagara is at the very northern most part of New York making it very uncentral to both the Northeast Tribe and to the International Tribe at the same time. The northern latitudes can be extremely beautiful in the fall timeframe, but can also be cold and it's not uncommon to have sudden amounts of snow early on in the season.

Williamsburg, VA – This location was also an extremely beautiful location. The main attraction, but by far, not the only one is the Colonial Williamsburg area. This location is an accurate reanactment of times long past. This includes villages, people, animals, and professions. It is possible to see a blacksmith in traditional garb working on shoeing a horse and ladies in full petticoats in the blazing sun. Besides reanactments, you can go to Bush Gardens Amusement Park and various water amusement parks. For those who like the great outdoors, the area has hiking and other beautiful outdoor activities.



Bridge seen while turning base to final of runway 31 (Photo: Sandrine Smith).

The weather in the fall timeframe could be very lovely. The deadly heat of summer has passed, but the frigid winds of winter haven't started yet. In fact, central Virginia is a temperate climate (though there are those that would argue this point).

The airport facilities were in good shape, but there were disagreements as to whether or not the facilities could support many comanches at the same time. The runways are a little smaller, but suitable. There is no tower which may be an issue. New, much larger, ramps were being installed at the time of our investigations. The restaurant at the airport has mixed reviews, but it was felt that although the building would support a flyin, it could not support a large enmass full comanche tribe convention.

A convention center at the town made searching this area very easy and that's always a big plus.



The Ocean City boardwalk while seen off season during a recent scouting trip on December 20, 2003 (Photo: Mark Smith).

Ocean City, MD – This ocean town is well known in the area for its boardwalk which goes on for miles. It is lined with numerous stores and hotels facing the Atlantic Ocean. On the other side of this narrow strip of an island is the bay side which does not have a boardwalk, but is more calm. There is no beach on this side.

The boardwalk contains everything you might imagine a boardwalk should have. That includes arcades, restaurants with fabulous seafood and restaurants with less than fabulous foods. The area is filled to the brim with beach activities culminating in an annual fall-festival.

The town provides a convention center which is very complete. There are numerous facilities on the island making it easy to run a convention.

The Ocean City Airport has three intersecting runways to match every wind condition possible. It does not have a tower which could help to avoid problems. The airport sees a lot of traffic in the fall, but even so, the ramp space is considerable. The least desirable aspect of the airport is that it's on the other side of the bay from the island making it a fair ride away from the actual island and the boardwalk which is arguably the reason for getting on the island in the first place.

Newport, RI – This area was dropped early on for lack of support. Some of the members wanted it, but some did not thus not making it desirable enough to keep as a candidate convention site.

On the whole, prices may have been expensive and weather conditions may have been temperate due to the ocean nearby, but weather conditions to get to and from this beautiful town may have been an issue. Obviously, it's not very centrally located either.

Ocracoke, NC – This was dropped early on as not a viable location for a full ICS convention. The conditions there are positively beautiful much of the time. It's quiet unless you count the continual soothing sounds of the waves crashing on the shore. The site lacked facilities, both airport and convention to permit a large gathering as would be a convention. The physical location is not in the Northeast Tribe as well.

Manassas, VA – This is the airport which has been selected for the 2005 Northeast ICS Convention. Expect more information on this topic as the months fly by and the convention time gets closer.

Manassas is about as close as you can get to Washington DC in a general aviation aircraft. Washington DC has just about anything that a typical Comanche owner would be interested in. Being the seat of the United States government, it contains all the White House, the Capitol building, uncountable federal agencies many of which are open to the public with or without prior arrangements. It contains numerous world class museums, most of which containing one of a kind artifacts. There are numerous hiking and outdoor activities much of it maintained to high standards with federal monies. There is a huge supply of monuments and architectural examples, many world famous. There is countless places to eat from menus around the world.



The waiting lounge in the Jet Services FBO on the east side of the field (Photo: Mark Smith).

The airport facilities are excellent. They have two parallel runways with precision approaches and a control tower. There are multiple FBO choices and huge overflow ramps. We also have prior experience with this facility in a successful Larkin Seminar.

The airport is completely within the new Washington DC ADIZ controlled airspace so special precautions need to be made when flying in, but thousands do it regularly and it's no big deal. The airspace is not that hard to navigate via VFR and if you're on an IFR flight plan, it's a no brainer (please refer to Comanche Flyer, July issue, *Flying the Washington DC ADIZ*, for tips on navigating this special control airspace).

There is much more to consider with the 2005 International Comanche Convention location, but not here. Look forward to reading more about it in the months to come.

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