

# Activity Report Highlights

## City of Staunton



### OFFICE ON YOUTH PARTNERS WITH AMAZON TO GIVE TO THE COMMUNITY

The Central Shenandoah Office on Youth regularly receives donations from the Amazon Fulfillment Center in Fishersville. This month's donation included pallets of toys, hygiene products, and other essential items that will support local families in need this holiday season. When packages are damaged during transit, Amazon's fulfillment centers donate the items to nonprofit organizations instead of discarding them. This donation provides crucial items like diapers, toiletries, and paper towels, which are often not covered by benefits. Virginia Newman, Director of the Office on Youth, expressed gratitude: "Food stamps don't pay for diapers or paper towels. These essentials will provide relief for families, making the holiday season a little brighter for many parents and children." The Office on Youth is committed to distributing these donated items to local families, ensuring they have the resources needed to enjoy the season.

## By the Numbers

More than **150** people participated in **9** Parks & Rec activities in November.

There were **120** entries in SDDA's Christmas parade.

The **5** people in the City Manager's Office wish everyone happy holidays.

## Into the Future

Discarded Christmas trees will be picked up Wednesday, **Jan. 15**. Have them at the curb by **7 a.m.**

The City of Staunton is closed Monday, **Jan. 20** in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.



### November 2024

#### Dispatched Calls for Service\*

Police 2,336 ↓

Fire & Rescue 287 ↑

#### Average Response Time month/year

Police 4'13"/4'02"

Fire & Rescue 4'41"/4'42"

\*arrows indicate if calls are up or down compared to the previous month



## NEW BIKE LANES IN WEST END

The sidewalk improvements and repaving work in Staunton's West End have paused for winter due to cold temperatures, but quite a bit of work was completed throughout the fall. All concrete sidewalk work was finished, repaving from the city line to Grubert Ave. was completed, and pavement striping wrapped up. In the spring, remaining paving and striping will be completed, and the new bike lanes will get final markings and signs once new bike-friendly storm grates are installed.



## HOLIDAYS A MULTIDEPARTMENTAL AFFAIR


It's known that when there's a special event in the City of Staunton, city departments come together to make the event a success. What's not as obvious is that many of Staunton's favorite holiday traditions wouldn't happen without city staff. It's the Parks & Recreation Department that makes sure the snowflakes are along the light poles downtown; Public Works makes sure that Gypsy Hill Park has enough electricity throughout for the Celebration of Holiday Lights, while Parks & Recreation maintains the city displays and makes repairs when necessary. And Public Works, the Police Department, the Fire Department, the Tourism Office, and the City Manager's Office work in tandem with the Staunton Downtown Development Association to make the Staunton Christmas Parade happen.

## LEGACY OFFICER JOINS SPD

Officer Kailyn Nestor recently graduated from the basic law enforcement course at the Central Shenandoah Criminal Justice Training Academy and is an official member of the Staunton Police Department. Officer Nestor is the daughter of Sgt. Chad Nestor who retired from the Staunton Police Department in 2023 after 20 years of service.



## Notes from the City Manager



As it continues to get cold, residents are reminded that the Shenandoah Valley Department of Social Services administers a Fuel Crisis Assistance Program Jan. 2 through March 15 to help those in need with heating costs. SVSS is also able to help with equipment-related assistance and security deposits. Call 540.245.5890 or visit [commonhelp.virginia.gov](http://commonhelp.virginia.gov) for questions or to apply.

The 2024-2025 Cold Weather Shelter through Waynesboro Area Refuge Ministry (WARM), is open now through March 30. The complete schedule is available online at [www.warmwaynesboro.org/cold-weather-shelter](http://www.warmwaynesboro.org/cold-weather-shelter). If transporting individuals to the current site, please call 540.470.8648 to determine availability of a bed. All locations operate from 6 p.m. to 7 a.m., seven days a week.

## November 2024 Activity Report

### Community Development

#### **Key Construction Project Updates**

##### **106 Industry Way**

A temporary Certificate of Occupancy has been issued for Building One at 106 Industry Way, Crown Lift Trucks – Blue Ridge.

##### **Arcadia Building**

A temporary Certificate of Occupancy has been issued for the Arcadia Building at 119 E Beverley St. Some of the 23 apartments have already been rented and the commercial space is almost ready.

#### **Reports**

##### **Community Development**

In November, Zoning Administrator & Historic Preservation Coordinator Linda Nesselrodt was joined by Historic Staunton Foundation's Neighborhood Preservation Coordinator Ari Calos, to attend a National Alliance of Preservation Commissions (NAPC) Assistance & Mentoring Program in Lynchburg. Topics included Legal Basics, Standards and Guidelines for Design Review, Alternative Materials, Meeting Procedures, Infill Design, and Community Outreach. The training workshops are grant funded by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources to all Certified Local Government Historic Preservation Commissions and staff.



*Ari Calos and Linda Nesselrodt attending the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions meeting.*

##### **Environmental Inspections Report**

The Environmental Programs Division of Community Development completed erosion and sediment control inspections on residential and commercial construction sites throughout the city as follows:

- Residential Construction – 33 active sites with 55 inspections in November
- Commercial Construction – 9 active sites with 18 inspections in November

### **Gypsy Hill Park Stream Restoration Project**

On Nov. 19, Pete Kesecker, Environmental Programs Administrator, presented details of the Gypsy Hill Park Stream Restoration Project to the Staunton West End Business Association. The presentation, held at the Central Shenandoah EMS Office on West Beverly Street, aimed to inform the association about the project's dual purpose: Reducing pollutants and improving the ecological health of Peyton Creek. Approximately 20 individuals attended the presentation.



*Pete Kesecker, Environmental Programs Administrator, gives a presentation on Gypsy Hill Park Stream Restoration at SWEBA public forum*

### **November 21, Planning Commission Actions**

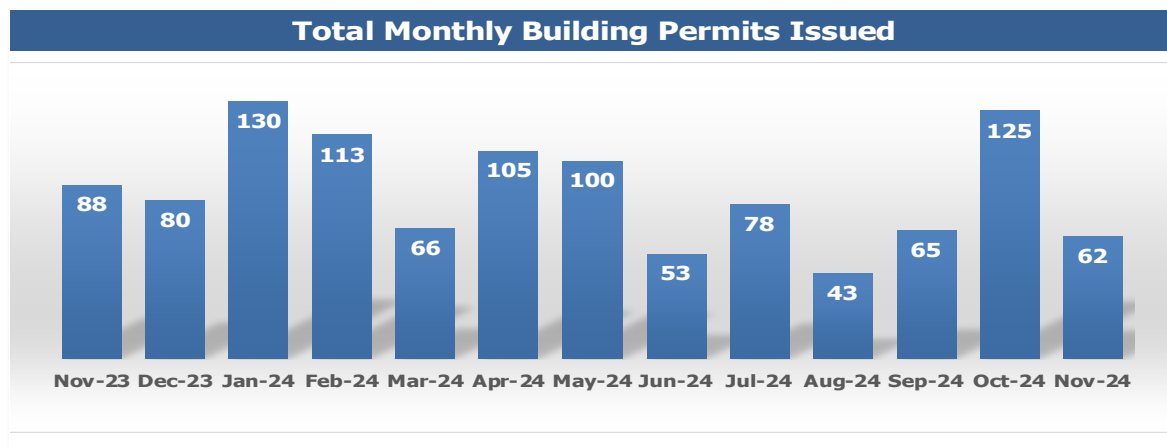
The Planning Commission reviewed three code amendments, one Comprehensive Plan amendment, and a variance request for the Board of Zoning Appeals. It recommended City Council approval of code amendments to reduce parking requirements for multi-family uses and add Chapter 18.47, Traditional Residential Development District, to the Zoning Code. The Commission also considered an amendment allowing alleys and private easements for access to new single-family homes when direct access from a public street is deemed unsafe due to factors like topography or traffic. Additionally, the Commission recommended adding the West End Revitalization Strategies Plan as an addendum to the Comprehensive Plan.

### **Housing and Grants Coordination**

The city's Housing Strategy Workgroup held its second meeting earlier this month, where members reviewed and prioritized sample housing strategies for affordable and workforce housing. The discussion focused on strategies feasible for the city. The Housing Strategy will outline policies and create an action plan with steps, timelines, responsible parties, partners, funding needs, and measurable milestones. The next meeting is scheduled for Jan. 29, 2025.

## Building Construction and Related Activity

Permits Issued	Nov-24	Nov-23	# Chg	% Chg
New Residential	2	7	-5	-71.4%
Residential Renovations	12	11	1	9.1%
Electrical Permits	17	22	-5	-22.7%
Mechanical Permits	10	15	-5	-33.3%
Plumbing Permits	13	17	-4	-23.5%
Commercial New-Renovations	6	5	1	20.0%
Miscellaneous	2	11	-9	-81.8%
Total	62	88	-26	-29.5%



## Economic Development

### Economic Development Authority

On Nov. 21, The Economic Development Authority (EDA) held their final meeting of the year to approve the sale of land at Staunton Crossing. The current EDA chair has resigned upon acceptance of a new position as of Jan. 1, 2025. City Council will interview and appoint a new member to fill the vacant seat in the new year.

### Business Retention and Expansion Efforts

On Nov. 12, Director of Economic Development Amanda DiMeo presented to the Citizen University class regarding Economic Development efforts in the city. Products from several local businesses were on display to spread awareness of local companies.

On Nov. 14, Ms. DiMeo met with Robin Miller of The Villages for current project updates. An open house was held at the Arcadia building in early December. Mr. Miller plans to present to the EDA at their January meeting.

### **Partner Agency Interaction**

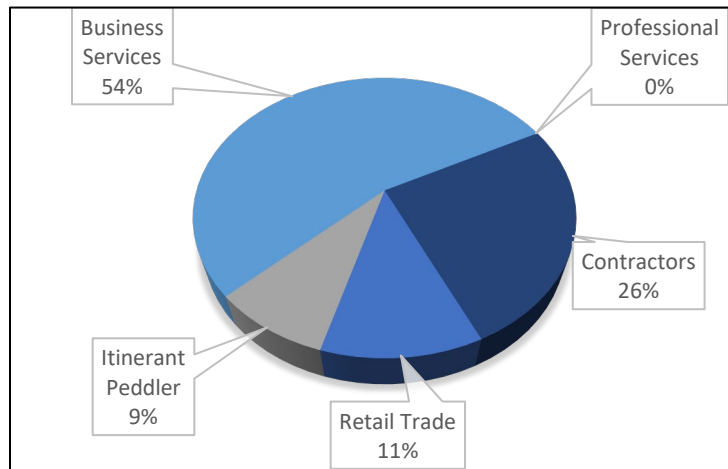
On several occasions this month, Ms. DiMeo met with the owner of the Staunton Train Station and representatives from the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority to discuss maintenance and improvements around the property.

On Nov. 13, Ms. DiMeo was asked to present an Economic update with Community Development Director Rodney Rhodes to the PCB Bank Advisory Board.

### **Business License Activity**

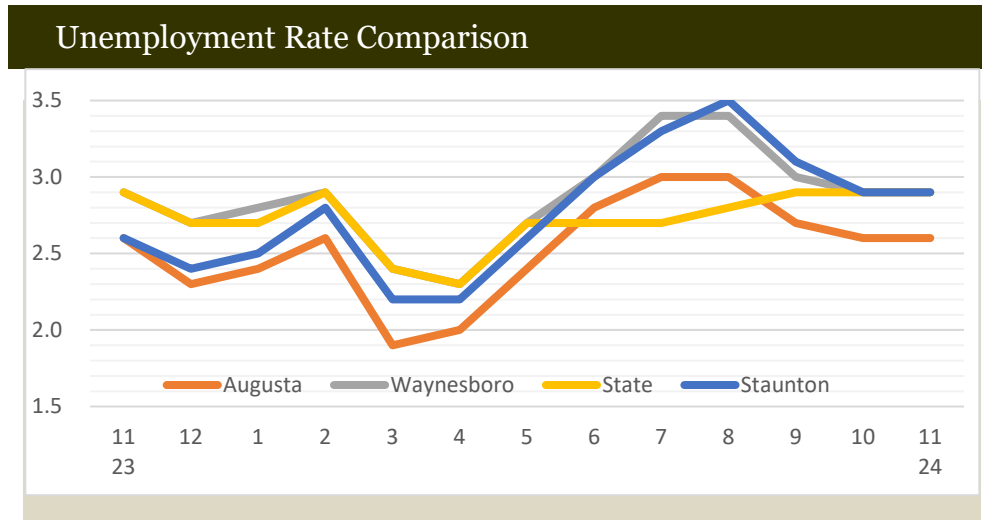
During the month of November, the Commissioner of Revenue's Office issued 36 business licenses, compared to 50 the previous month, representing a 28% decrease. This month a year ago, 30 business licenses were issued.

As seen in the following pie chart, the Business Services sector accounted for 54% of the total licenses issued in November, and the Contractor sector accounted for 26%.



### **Unemployment Data**

In October, Staunton's unemployment rate of 2.9% decreased from the previous month. As seen in the graph below, Staunton was the same as Waynesboro and the State. With a labor force of 12,786, Staunton had 12,410 employed and 376 unemployed in October.



### Finance

- The department issued 7,709 utility bills and general bills totaling \$1,170,975 during November.
- Collection activities in November resulted in the recovery of \$4,377 in delinquent utility invoices.
- The Utility Payment Office processed 2,909 receipts in the amount of \$669,945 during November.
- The department processed 381 city and 189 school accounts payable checks totaling \$3,904,064. 1,285 city and 572 schools payroll-related advices totaling \$4,923,722 and 74 ACH debit/wire transactions totaling \$1,242,801 during November.
- Several staff members attended the Virginia Government Finance Officers Association fall conference in Charlottesville.
- Work continued on the redesign of the FY2026-FY30 five-year capital improvement plan. The next meeting is planned for December and a draft of the plan will be sent out in mid-December to the CIP committee members.
- The department assisted Public Works in issuing an invitation to bid (ITB) for the city's fuel contract and an ITB for Fire Station #1 door replacement.
- Finance is working diligently with other city departments to make sure all American Rescue Plan Act funds are encumbered by the upcoming deadline of Dec. 31, 2024.

## **Fire & Rescue**

- Staunton Fire and Rescue responded to 287 incidents in November, with an average response time of 4 minutes and 41 seconds. The average response time for the year is 4 minutes and 42 seconds.
- Staff received over 588 hours of training for the month.
- Staff conducted 37 business fire safety inspections and 19 re-inspections in November.
- Staff participated in a drive-by parade to local nursing facilities honoring veterans and in the annual Veterans Day parade in downtown Staunton.
- The Firefighters for Literacy program held prize day at McSwain Elementary School.
- Staff participated in a community day event at the Miller St apartments.
- Staff provided a standby crew for one junior varsity and one varsity football game.
- Hosted station tours for children from Community Child Care and the Stuarts Draft Elementary School pre-school program.
- Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind hosted a shift for lunch along with a meet and greet with their students.
- Displayed a piece of apparatus and spoke with children about fire safety at the Library.
- The Fire Marshal's Office conducted two fire alarm inspections, three sprinkler inspections, and two final site inspections. It also reviewed one site plan, one street/alley vacation request, one special use permit, one fire alarm plan, one sprinkler plan review, ten semi-annual fire suppression inspection reports, and two special event applications.

## **Human Resources**

### ***Employee Actions***

The following employee actions were processed:

Terminated:

Full Time— 3

Part Time/Seasonal— 6

Hired:

Full Time— 3

Part Time— 2

Retired— 0

### **Activities**

Human Resources staff members took part in the following activities in November:

#### *Recruitment:*

Initiated recruitment for the following positions:

- Library Assistant 1 – Circulation
- Post Baccalaureate Fellowship in Criminal Justice – BRCS
  
- Continued recruitment for the following positions:
  - Equipment Operator II – Streets
  - Utility Electrical/Pump Technician
  - Parking Attendant
  - Planner – Comprehensive Planning
  - Probation Officer (PT) – BRCS
  - Transportation Planner
  - Deputy City Engineer
  - Equipment Operator 1 – Streets
  - Water Treatment Plant Operator
  - Part-time Firefighters/EMTs
  - Police Officer – Certified
  - Utility Service Technician – Traffic Signals
  - Equipment Operator II – Utilities

#### *Orientations:*

- Conducted orientations for three full-time employees.

### **Information Technology**

Information Technology staff took part in the following activities in November:

- Upgraded the voice logging recorder in Dispatch. The new recorder will improve search capabilities and will integrate with the new public safety radio system, text messaging, and RapidSOS.
  
- Replaced four workstations and seven laptops. IT is replacing all Windows 10 workstations by October 2025, Microsoft's end of support date for Windows 10.

- Completed a majority of the work on door locks for security upgrades in City Hall. City Hall doors will be activated in December. Installation of wiring, door locks, and other upgrades have started in other facilities.
- Installation continues on network connectivity to the new Gardner Springs pump station. A significant amount of rock has slowed installation by the vendor. The new circuit is scheduled to be live by the end of the year.
- Microwave installation for the SAW Regional Radio Project has started. Equipment has been setup on two towers in November and will continue through early January on the remaining tower sites.

### **Library**

At an all-staff meeting, employees attended a Dementia-Friendly Library training to better understand how to interact with and serve patrons experiencing dementia symptoms.

New shelving for the teen area allowed staff to reduce crowding for the young adult collections and better feature new books. Additional study tables for the children's department allowed staff to swap out old mismatched and overly large tables.

Librarians finished an intensive overhaul of the adult A/V collections to reduce the number of items that had not circulated in a long time; mismatching shelves were removed and collections were shifted to foster a more enjoyable browsing experience.

An intergenerational speed puzzling competition held in partnership with the Parks & Recreation Department had 25 teams of all ages racing to finish their jigsaw puzzle first. Prizes were generously donated by local businesses.



Staff from the library and the Talking Book Center hosted outreach tables at the Senior Health Fair at the Augusta Government Center.

### ***Library Statistical Report: November 2024***

<b>CIRCULATION</b>	<b>Month</b>	<b>YTD</b>	<b>SERVICES</b>	<b>Month</b>	<b>YTD</b>
Adult	8,843	49,092	ILLs Borrowed	10	58
Young Adult (YA)	627	3,656	ILLs Lent	0	0
Juvenile	7,459	36,210	Proctoring/Book-a-Librarians	1	7
Digital	5,741	28,481			

Total Circulation	22,670	117,439	<b>PROGRAMS</b>		
Talking Book Center (TBC) Circulation	1,628	7,842	Adult	16	72
			Attendance	294	1,513
Items Checked In	18,357	99,017	YA	5	24
			Attendance	243	2,314
Outgoing to VLC Libraries	1,479	8,536	Juvenile	42	177
Incoming from VLC Libraries	1,403	7,895	Attendance	1,445	7,307
Total Holds Filled	4,605	25,228			
			<b>PEOPLE</b>		
Added to Collection	774	4,660	Library Visits	11,960	65,786
Withdrawn from Collection	53	9,333	Curbside Visits	48	233
			Computer Users	581	3,324
Database Use/Sessions	1,571	8,701	Juvenile Computer Users	1,378	7,551
			Meetings Held	6	33
			Volunteer Hours	58	844
			New Card Registrations	134	966
			Total Registered Cards		15,072

## **Parks & Recreation**

### ***Horticulture***

Horticulture completed the following tasks:

- City Horticulturist Matt Sensabaugh was recognized for outstanding work by the Augusta Garden Club at their meeting in November.
- Boxwoods and hydrangea, as well as 100 daffodils and 200 grape hyacinth, were planted at the Statler Boulevard bed. Another 100 daffodils and 200 grape hyacinth were planted at the Staunton Public Library.
- Staff installed and repaired several of the holiday figures displayed in Gypsy Hill Park.

### ***Maintenance***

Park Maintenance completed the following:

- Began work on safety fencing around the tot lot located in Gypsy Hill Park.
- Assisted with the Celebration of Holiday Lights displays in Gypsy Hill Park.
- Decorated Montgomery Hall for the holiday season.
- Completed refinishing the Booker T. Washington gym floor.

### ***Community Outreach***

Staff engaged in the following community outreach activities

- Held a drive-in event in the Gypsy Hill Gymnasium.
- Staff attended the Fire Inspection walk-through of the Booker T. Washington Community Center with Fire Department staff.
- Staff met with the Frontier Culture leadership to work out details on finalizing plans to relocate the Irish Road Bowling event to the museum.
- Staff assisted with Celebration of Holiday lights in Gypsy Hill Park.
- Programs offered:
  - Morning Warm Ups, 23 participants
  - Toddler Open Gym, 47 participants
  - Explorers Club, 10 participants
  - Chess Club, 11 participants
  - Little Movers, 10 participants
  - Handprints, 9 participants
  - Puzzle Competition, 25 teams
  - Vermicomposting, 5 participants
  - Indoor Walk, 9 participants

### **Police**

- Officer Kailyn Nestor graduated from the basic recruit training at the police academy on Nov. 21 and began field training.
- The Department assisted with the annual Veterans Day parade on Nov. 9.
- A new digital voice recorder was installed in the E-911 Center during the month; it was needed to comply with the requirements of the new regional radio system.
- The Police Department's E-911 Center handled a total of 3,796 telephone calls during the month, including 1,098 9-1-1 calls.
- Police personnel responded to 2,336 incidents during the month, including 1,263 citizen calls for service, 469 officer initiated activities, 204 administrative calls, and 400 directed patrols.
- The average response time for police emergency calls for service during the month was 4 minutes and 13 seconds; it is 4 minutes and 2 seconds for the year.

### **Public Works**

- The Utility Office established 28 new owner accounts, 27 new rental residential accounts, and three commercial accounts.
- The Public Works Utility Office collected \$44,103 in payments.
- Nineteen accounts were cut off for non-payment during one cut off week. Of those cut off, 13 were reconnected after payments were made or a payment plan established.

- Utility crews repaired four water main breaks, two valves, and five water meters. The crew responded to nine sewer main blockages and 12 sewer lateral blockages.
- The streets department finished concrete work and caught up on asphalt patching. Leaf collection started Nov. 18 and staff have started putting salt spreaders on trucks to prepare for upcoming winter snow and ice.
- The facilities department placed electrical boards in the park for the Celebration of Holiday Lights and worked on multiple small projects in city buildings.

### **Tourism**

#### **Activities:**

Visit Staunton staff took part in the following promotional, networking, or administrative activities in November:

- Staunton blog promotions featured [Raise Your Glass for Virginia Cider Week](#), [Shopping Small in Staunton During the Holidays](#), [What You Need To Know About Thanksgiving In Staunton](#)
- Presented for Citizens University participants.
- Director of Tourism Samantha Johnson presented on a panel a VA-1 Governor’s Tourism Summit at the Omni Homestead Resort in Hot Springs, VA.
- Sales and Marketing Manager Jessica Williams attended the National Travel Association’s Travel Exchange in Huntsville, AL.

#### **Public Relations**

The Following is a list of newspapers, websites, magazines, and television stations that published articles about Staunton:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Headline</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Reach</b>
Nov. 16	<a href="#">Frontier Culture Museum: ‘Out of Many, One’</a>	The Epoch Times	6,207,398
Nov. 16	<a href="#">10 Most Comfortable Towns in Virginia for Seniors</a>	World Atlas	5,859,707
Nov. 9	<a href="#">6 Towns in Virginia that Transport You to the Past</a>	World Atlas	5,859,707
Nov. 5	<a href="#">These 10 Towns In Virginia Were Ranked Among US Favorites In 2024</a>	World Atlas	5,630,448
Nov. 26	<a href="#">Renovations at Barristers Row are Complete</a>	WHSV-TV	312,127
Nov. 27	<a href="#">Take a Ride on These 6 Holiday Trains Within Driving Distance of NoVA</a>	Northern Virginia Mag	287,099

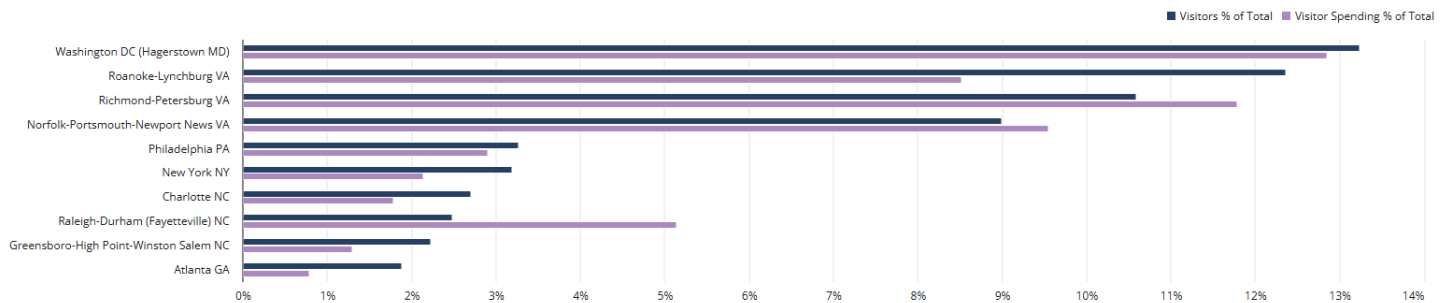
Date	Headline	Source	Reach
Nov. 27	<a href="#">Couple Behind Latin Soul Opening Brand New Mediterranean Restaurant in Staunton</a>	News Leader	137,099
Nov. 12	<a href="#">Vintage Toy Shop Opens in Downtown Staunton</a>	News Leader	137,099
Nov. 28	<a href="#">Staunton Offers Free Public Parking Over Holiday Season</a>	News Virginian	27,294
Nov. 8	<a href="#">Staunton Receives Prestigious Conservation Award for Gypsy Hill Park Stream Restoration</a>	Rocktown Now	19,395
Nov. 22	<a href="#">10 Small Virginia Towns That Become Real-life Winter Wonderlands</a>	The Dogwood	19,793
Nov. 1	<a href="#">Ski Getaways to Warm Up Winter</a>	Coastal Virginia Mag	9,168
<b>TOTAL</b>			24,500,334

### Website Visitation

Website Traffic		
November 2023	November 2024	% Change
32,832 visitors	33,423 visitors	+1.80 %
76 guide requests	99 visitor's guide requests	+30%

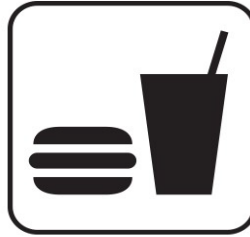
### Top 10 Origin Markets and Visitor Spending

Top 10 Origin Markets by Visitation with their Spend





9,168 Sample Size



5% of Overall Restaurant Spend  
\$45



Increase in visitation by key Out-of-State Visitors including Philadelphia, NYC, & ATL



22% of Overall Retail Spend - \$132



44% of Overall Attraction Spend - \$139



53% Ages 25-54  
45% Household \$100k+  
37% Have Children

### Office on Youth

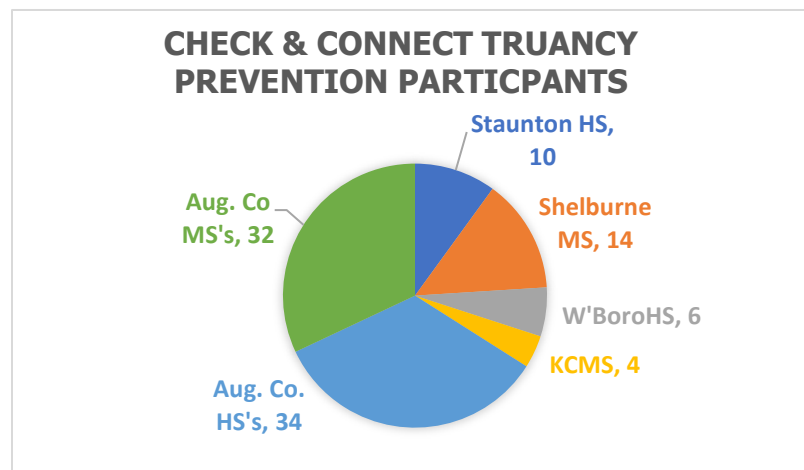
#### ***Crime Control Programs***

- Nine youth received detention alternative services.
- Six youth completed 3<sup>rd</sup> Millennium Classroom programs.

#### ***Family Service Programs***

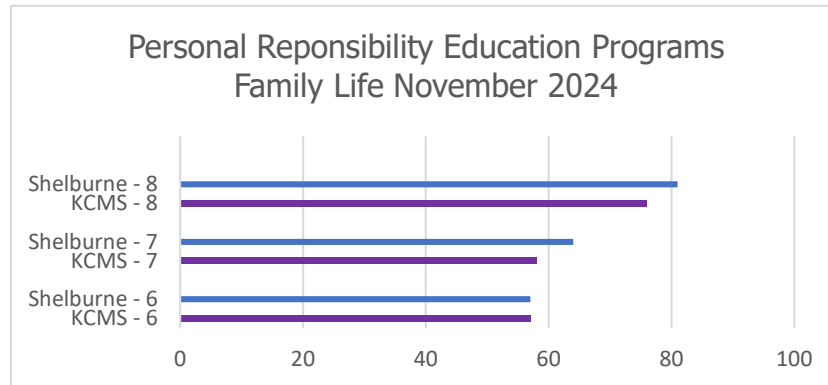
- Eight adults participated in *First 5 Years*.
- Seven adults participated in *Parenting and Divorce* co-parenting program.
- Eight adults participated in *The Parent Project* program.

#### ***Check and Connect - Truancy Prevention Program***



- One senior passed the *Microsoft Office Specialist* test for business accreditation.

## **Personal Responsibility Education Programs (PREP)**



### **Community/Etc.**

- Division Supervisor, Director, and community partners conducted an Amazon pickup, and media presentation Nov. 20.

### **Staunton Downtown Development Association<sup>1</sup>**

Registration for the 2024 Staunton Christmas Parade closed on Nov. 12, with more than 120 entries. SDDA staff coordinated with the Staunton Kiwanis Club to plan the parade lineup and other logistics.

The SDDA Director met with city staff to plan for holiday season events as well as participate in a debrief following the October conclusion of seasonal Shop & Dine Out weekend closures of Beverley Street, to plan for further improvements in 2025.

On Nov. 14, SDDA hosted a group of more than 30 participants from the Virginia Rural Leadership Institute. The group was welcomed to Staunton by Mayor Stephen Claffey and Delegate Ellen Campbell. That evening, SDDA Executive Director Darren Smith was at the City Council meeting to receive a proclamation naming Saturday, Nov. 30 as Small Business Saturday in the City of Staunton. SDDA distributed Small Business Saturday promotional materials to Downtown merchants, and assisted the organizers of the Nov. 30 Merry Market event on Beverley Street.

The SDDA also participated in a site visit by Frazier & Associates to plan for façade renovations at the Masonic Building at 11 W Beverley St. This collaborative façade design process is funded through the Virginia Main Street program.

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<sup>1</sup> The Staunton Downtown Development Association (SDDA) is an independent, non-profit corporation, separate from the City of Staunton. Pursuant to the Staunton City Code and a contract with the city, SDDA provides facilities and services funded by the City in the City's downtown service district. SDDA furnishes information to the City Manager's Office for inclusion in this Activity Report to update the city in the performance of its obligations.