

CITY OF STAUNTON

# ACTIVITY REPORT HIGHLIGHTS



## By the Numbers

125+ community members at open house

1 of 3 public engagement opportunities

18-month project timeline

15 chapters proposed in updated Comprehensive Plan

## Comprehensive Plan Update

After a successful community open house for the Comprehensive Plan Update at the end of January, attracting more than 100 engaged community members, city staff is hoping to maintain the enthusiasm to create a shared vision for Staunton's future. Those who weren't able to attend the open house are encouraged to participate by visiting the comp plan website (easily found at [www.staunton.va.us](http://www.staunton.va.us)), post comments, and complete the mapping survey. Also consider sharing the links with neighbors, friends, and community groups so everyone's voice and perspective can help shape the future.



## January 2025

### Dispatched Calls for Service\*

Police	2,190
Fire & Rescue	371

### Average Response Time month/year

Police	3'40"
Fire & Rescue	5'20"

## Six Breaks in 24-Hours

A severe cold snap in January, along with the age of the pipes, caused six water main breaks within 24-hours. Many thanks to the Streets Department and other Public Works staff who worked quickly in the frigid weather to restore service to Staunton's residents.



## Librarians Do It All

Few who enter the field of Library Science realize that it is truly an all season job. One of the recent storms didn't stop Children's Programmer Martha Tillen from gathering returned items from the snowy book drop bins. The Library is also a good place to visit in the cold weather for a little warmth and quiet.



## Budget Season Begins

The Fiscal Year 2026 (July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026) budget process is underway. The proposed budget will be presented to City Council by City Manager Leslie Beauregard on March 27. There will be multiple work sessions and public hearings throughout the budget process giving community members many opportunities to provide comment.

- 5 p.m., 2/27 - Capital Improvement Plan
- 5 p.m., 3/27 - Budget Presentation
- 7 p.m., 3/27 - public hearing, proposed tax rate
- 5 p.m., 4/3 - budget work session
- 5 p.m., 4/10 - budget work session
- 7 p.m., 4/10 - public hearing on all ordinances
- 5 p.m., 4/24 - budget work session
- 7 p.m., 4/24 - budget and CIP adoption

[www.staunton.va.us/budget](http://www.staunton.va.us/budget)



## Service Nothing New for Fire Marshal

Deputy Chief Perry Weller went on his fifth mission trip recently, this time to Robin's Nest Children's Home in Jamaica. The team, including Staunton High School Athletic Trainer Kwadwo Donkor, provided medical training to the Children's Home staff. The pair provided a CPR refresher, how to manage burn injuries and stop bleeding, what to do if someone is choking, how to handle someone having seizures, drowning management, sprains and strains training, and how to splint broken bones. The team also provided fire safety and kitchen safety talks.

## January 2025 Activity Report

### Community Development

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

##### **222 Crossing Way**

The construction of the 1-million-gallon water tank in Staunton Crossing has begun.



##### **Holy Cross Presbyterian Church**

Final inspections for interior renovations to what was a previously 4,200 square foot restaurant/night club, and an addition of 8,280 square foot for a sanctuary to create Holy Cross Presbyterian Church at 216 Frontier Dr. are completed. A temporary Certificate of Occupancy has been issued, with minor site improvements needed.



## Reports

### Comprehensive Plan Update

An open house for the Comprehensive Plan was held on Jan. 22 at Staunton High School, attracting more than 100 engaged community members who shared their ideas for the city's future. Attendees actively participated in the event by posting ideas on poster boards and utilizing an interactive map to identify community challenges, opportunities for improvement, and areas where the city is already thriving. This input will guide the Comprehensive Plan update. In February, City staff and consultants from EPR, PC will host stakeholder meetings with representatives from ten key areas to delve deeper into specific topics and develop a shared vision for Staunton's future.

Those not able to attend are encouraged to share any feedback or thoughts on our [Comprehensive Plan Update Project website](#) by posting comments on the virtual posters or by taking the [mapping survey](#).

**Help us reach more voices!** Please share the links with your neighbors, friends, and community groups to ensure as many Staunton community members as possible have a chance to share their perspectives.



### Site Plans:

The following are newly approved site plans:

- 102 Valley Center Dr., a new 22,355 sq ft warehouse for Columbia Gas
- 438 Greenville Ave., construction of a parking lot for Fisher Auto Parts

### 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 – 21 active sites, with 41 inspections in January
- Commercial Construction – 9 active sites, with 17 inspections in January

Environmental Programs Specialist Willow Hughes will be participating in the 2025 Virginia Women's Municipal Leadership Institute. This program is specifically tailored to help women working in local government build essential skills, knowledge, and leadership abilities while also building a network of support among the participants. Ms.

Hughes was one of 25 women selected from local governments across the state and is the third Staunton employee to participate in the VWMLI.

### **Jan. 16, Planning Commission Actions**

The Planning Commission recommended approval of a special use permit for Phase I of Panorama Ridge, a multi-family development at 206 Frontier Dr. The Commission also recommended approval of a special use permit for 17 new single-family attached dwellings at 2311 Morris Mill Rd. The Commission unanimously recommended denial of a special use permit to allow multi-family units on the ground floor of 217 W Beverley Street expressing concerns with residential use on the ground floor of a commercial building on the city's main street so close to downtown. The applicant has now withdrawn that request and it will not go before City Council for consideration.

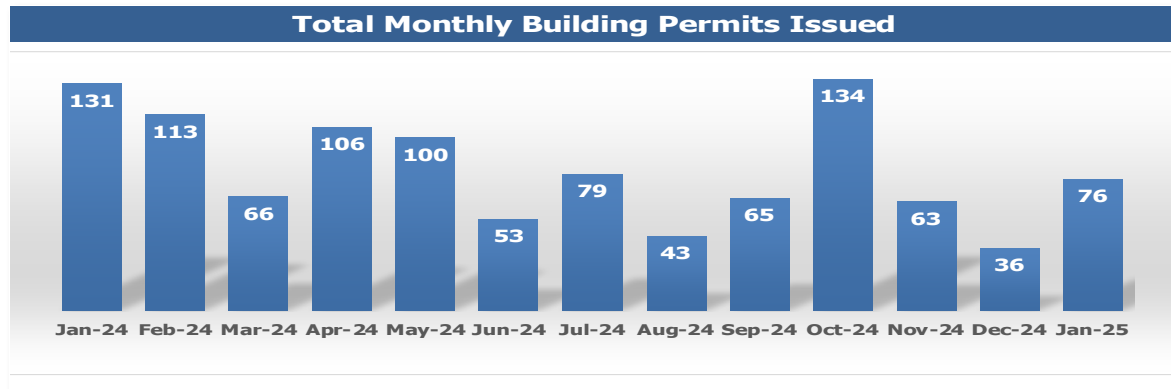
### **Housing and Grants Coordination**

The city's Housing Strategy workgroup met on Jan. 29. Next steps in the process are to host public engagement opportunities in March.

The Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission recently released the **Central Shenandoah Regional Housing Study**. The study includes an analysis of data and housing needs as well as recommended solutions for each of the localities in the district, which includes the City of Staunton. City staff participated on the leadership team as the study was being developed and is now reviewing the completed version of the study. The Central Shenandoah Regional Housing Study can be viewed online at <https://connect.cspdc.org/cspdc-housing-study>.

### **Building Construction and Related Activity**

Permits Issued	Jan-25	Jan-24	# Chg	% Chg
New Residential	5	10	-5	-50.0%
Residential Renovations	15	22	-7	-31.8%
Electrical Permits	24	32	-8	-25.0%
Mechanical Permits	13	23	-10	-43.5%
Plumbing Permits	12	30	-18	-60.0%
Commercial New-Renovations	2	4	-2	-50.0%
Miscellaneous	5	10	-5	-50.0%
Total	76	131	-55	-42.0%



## **Economic Development**

### **Staunton Crossing**

Amanda DiMeo and Jessica Blythe, along with City Engineer Lyle Hartt, met with the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP) grant team to discuss the progression of work at Staunton Crossing under the scope of the Business Ready Site grant. The utility infrastructure work is underway and is scheduled to conclude on time. In addition to the work being done on site, Ms. DiMeo and Ms. Blythe worked alongside Chad Horvat to update the Grounds Maintenance Contract after the sale of parcels in December.

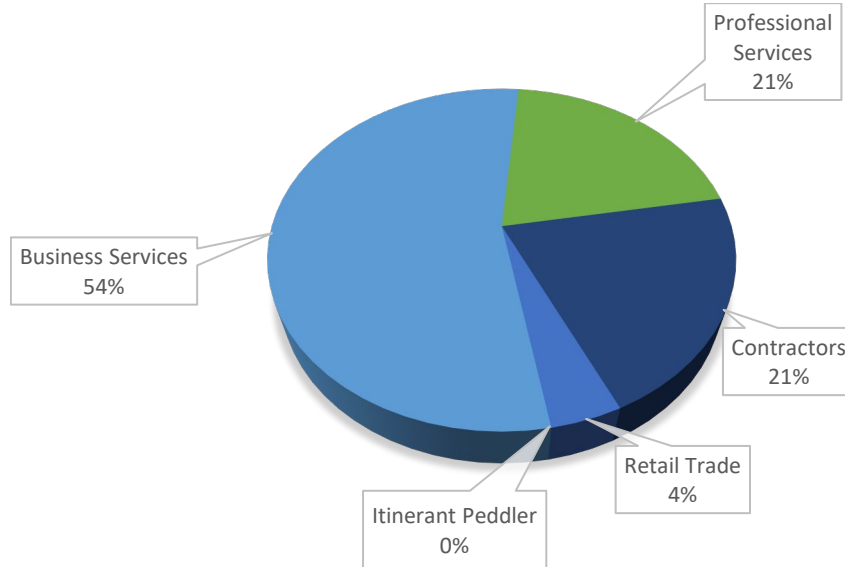
### **Business Retention**

Two Staunton businesses have moved into new spaces. Ryzing Technologies' new space is in the revitalized Staunton Steam campus and the new Davenport offices are located on the second floor of the Sunspots Studios space.

### **Business License Activity**

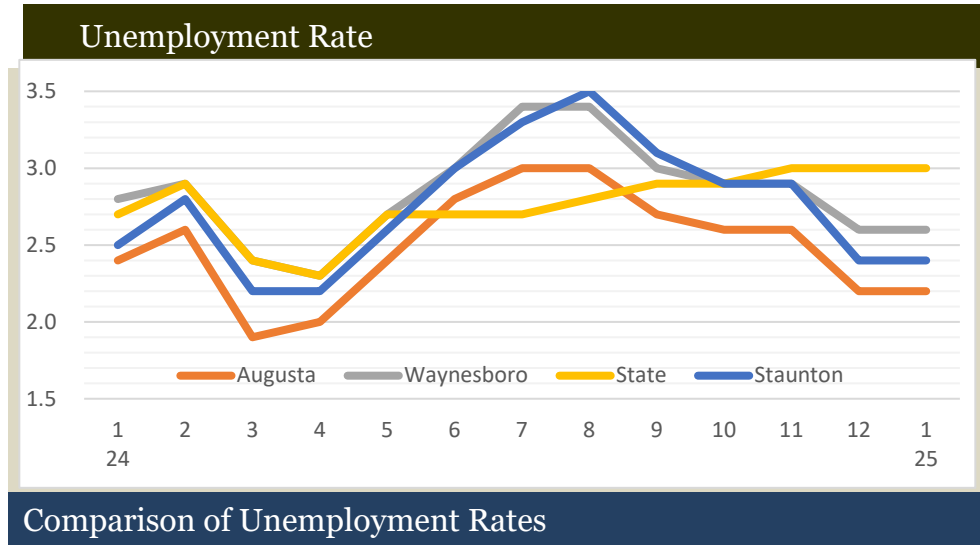
During the month of January, the Commissioner of Revenue's Office issued 24 new business licenses, compared to 28 the previous month, representing a 14.29% decrease. This month a year ago, 21 new business licenses were issued.

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



**Unemployment Data**

In December, Staunton’s unemployment rate decreased by .5% in comparison to the previous month. As seen in the graph below, Staunton’s rate was below both Waynesboro’s rate of 2.6% and the State’s rate of 3.0%. With a labor force of 12,693, Staunton had 12,386 employed and 307 unemployed in December 2024.



**Finance**

- The department issued 7,740 utility bills and general bills totaling \$1,268,418 during January.
- Collection activities in January resulted in the recovery of \$6,149 in delinquent utility invoices.

- The Utility Payment Office processed 3,041 receipts in the amount of \$1,360,765 during January.
- The department processed 322 City and 204 School accounts payable checks totaling \$5,132,913. 855 City and 561 Schools payroll-related advices totaling \$4,014,848 and 18 ACH debit/wire transactions totaling \$3,376,005 during January.
- The department continued to submit data and other pertinent information to Maguire Associates of Virginia, Inc. for preparation of the FY24 Cost Allocation Plan. The cost allocation plan distributes central service overhead costs such as finance, city manager, engineering, and legal to operating departments such as public works, parks and recreation, and public safety.
- Staff attended the winter conference of the Virginia Association of School Business Officers.
- The FY2026-2030 Capital Improvement Plan was introduced to the Planning Commission at their meeting on Jan. 16. The Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on the CIP at their meeting on Feb. 20. The updated five-year plan will then be introduced to City Council on Feb. 27.

### **Fire & Rescue**

- Staunton Fire and Rescue responded to 371 incidents in January, with an average response time of 5 minutes and 20 seconds.
- Staff received over 569 hours of training for the month.
- Staff conducted 88 business fire safety inspections and 19 re-inspections in January.
- Deputy Chief Weller participated in a mission trip to Robin's Nest Children's Home in Jamaica. The team, including SHS Athletic Trainer Kwadwo Donkor, provided medical training to their staff that covered CPR, choking, burns, seizures, fractures, and similar techniques. A total of 31 individuals were trained over eight sessions.
- Firefighter Cory Smith was released as an operator on Ladder 1 and Firefighter Ashton Dove was released as an engine operator.
- The Fire Marshal's Office issued one hazmat storage permit and one Ag-forest open burning permit; conducted one fire alarm inspection, one sprinkler inspection, and one final site inspection; reviewed two site plans and one rezoning request; reviewed three semi-annual fire suppression inspection reports; and reviewed one special event application.

## **Human Resources**

### ***Employee Actions***

The following employee actions were processed:

Terminated:

Full Time — 3

Part Time/Seasonal — 0

Hired:

Full Time — 2

Part Time — 9

Retired — 0

### ***Activities***

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

*Recruitment:*

Initiated recruitment for the following positions:

- Pre-Trial Officer – Blue Ridge Court Services
  - Probation Officer – Blue Ridge Court Services
  - Public Safety Dispatch
  - Sanitation Worker
  - Water Treatment Plant Operator
  - Probation Officer – Recovery Court Coordinator
  - Police Officer
  - Deputy Clerk – Staunton Circuit Court
- 
- Continued recruitment for the following positions:
    - Equipment Operator II – Streets
    - Equipment Operator I – Streets
    - Crew Leader – Park Maintenance
    - Equipment Operator I – Utilities
    - Equipment Operator II - Utilities
    - Equipment Operator I – Park Maintenance

*Orientations:*

Conducted orientations for two full-time employees.

*Miscellaneous:*

- At the January Employee Service Pin Luncheon, 10 employees with combined 125 years-of-service were honored, as well as four employees of the quarter.

### **Information Technology**

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

- Disassembled and reassembled the computer workstations, NG911 call handling and radio equipment for four dispatch positions for furniture upgrades. Nearly a mile of cable was pulled for this project.
- Implantation of a new multi-factor authentication tool has started. The new application will improve network security requiring users to have “something you know” and “something you have” to access the city’s network.
- Replaced three workstations, several laptops and several iPads.
- Work continues on the Building Security project. Network wiring and door hardware is installed for Irene Givens Administration Building, Parks Maintenance, Golf Shop, Commonwealth Attorney’s Office, and additional doors at the Cochran Judicial Center. Several city offices are now live, with several more scheduled for February.
- Desktop Engineer Kane Kennedy passed the CompTIA Network+ certification.
- Assisted Public Works in searching for a water main break with the City’s drone. While we did not locate the issue with the drone, over a dozen other locations were surveyed to ensure they were not leaking, saving considerable staff time to walk to remote locations.
- 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 February.

### **Library**

Librarian Carrie Whitlock conducted a K-Pop themed escape room to teach digital literacy skills. Twelve attendees of varying ages solved puzzles to detect misinformation and

disinformation such as AI generated deep fakes and images, unreliable sources/bias, and doctored data. She also hosted an outreach session at Gypsy Hill House to teach mobile device skills to residents.

Teen Services collaborated with Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library staff to offer a multi-week teen book club.

Youth Services offered a wide range of programs to kick off the new year:

- Stuart Hall 6<sup>th</sup> Graders came for a field trip on Jan. 14
- Milk & Cookies Storytime held on Jan. 15
- Happy Hat Day! crafts after school on Jan. 15
- Lunar New Year Party for kids on Jan. 28

Staff completed the annual Bibliostat state statistical and financial report and submitted it to the Library of Virginia.

The Friends of the Staunton Library kicked off 2025 by welcoming three new board members and approving their budget for the calendar year. The Friends provide supplemental financial support by sponsoring events and other services throughout the year.

### ***Library Statistical Report: January 2025***

<b>CIRCULATION</b>	<b>Month</b>	<b>YTD</b>	<b>PROGRAMS</b>		
Adult	10,419	69,080	Adult	unavailable	85
Young Adult (YA)	680	5,027	Attendance	unavailable	1,748
Juvenile	7,605	49,171	YA	5	34
Digital	6,900	41,301	Attendance	555	3,201
			Juvenile	29	245
Total Circulation	25,604	164,579	Attendance	1,260	10,200
Talking Book Center Circulation	1,855	11,114			
			<b>PEOPLE</b>		
Items Checked In	20,099	137,855	Library Visits	11,155	88,666
			Curbside Visits	23	301
Outgoing to VLC Libraries	1,882	11,996	Computer Users	586	4,420
Incoming from VLC Libraries	1,662	11,001	Juvenile Computer Users	1,364	10,156
Total Holds Filled	5,311	35,030	Meetings Held	7	44
			Volunteer Hours	53	962
Added to Collection	1,004	6,359	New Card Registrations	155	1,234
Withdrawn from Collection	3,567	13,033	Total Registered Cards		15,394
<b>SERVICES</b>	<b>Month</b>	<b>YTD</b>			

ILLs Borrowed	19	92			
ILLs Lent	0	0			
Proctoring/Book-a-Librarians	4	13			

## **Parks & Recreation**

### ***Horticulture***

Horticulture completed the following tasks:

- Completed and submitted summer flower orders for upcoming planting displays.
- Pruned ten trees in Gypsy Hill Park for the stream restoration project.
- Assisted with snow removal.

### ***Maintenance***

Park Maintenance completed the following:

- Snow removal and plowing operations underway for a large part of the month. Crews plowed downtown parking lots and snow removal from city sidewalks.
- With assistance from the city electrician, replaced outdoor lighting at the two gym entrances at Booker T. Washington Community Center and installed a new outdoor light at the rear parking lot to enhance safety and visibility at night.

### ***Community Outreach***

Staff engaged in the following community outreach activities

- Programs offered:
  - Morning Warm Ups, 23 participants
  - Toddler Open Gym, 53 participants
  - Chess Club, 11 participants
  - Indoor Walk, 9 participants
  - Indoor Futsal League, 23 teams/10 players per team
  - Kendo, 5 participants
  - Kung Fu, 12 participants
  - Pickleball, open gym
  - Intermediate pickleball, open gym
- Aquatic Manager completed lifeguard re-certification program.

## **Police**

- The Department began the process of planning for upgrading its Records Management System and Computer-aided Dispatch software with an estimated timeline of 24–30 months. It is anticipated that a needs assessment and RFP development can be completed during the calendar year 2025.
- The renovation of the E-911 Center was completed during the month.

- All sworn personnel completed annual ethics and mental health training during the month.
- Police personnel responded to 2,190 incidents during the month, including 1,257 citizen calls for service, 443 officer initiated activities, 166 administrative calls, and 324 directed patrols.
- The average response time for police emergency calls for service during the month was 3 minutes and 40 seconds.

### **Public Works**

- The Utility Office established 24 new owner accounts, 28 new rental residential accounts, and 6 commercial accounts.
- The Public Works Utility Office collected \$49,519 in payments.
- Twenty-two accounts were cut off for non-payment. Of those cut off, 17 were reconnected after payments were made or a payment plan established.
- Utility crews repaired 13 water main breaks (6 of those during the cold snap), 1 valve, and 10 water meters. The crew responded to 5 sewer main blockage and 18 sewer lateral blockages.
- After cleaning and fixing spreaders and plows following the recent snowstorms, the Streets Department returned to leaf collection.

### **Tourism**

#### ***Activities:***

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

- Staunton blog promotions featured [A Slice of Staunton: Where to Celebrate National Pizza Day](#), [The Ideal Date for Couples, Singles, and Galentines](#), [Dream Now, Travel Later: Your Guide to Planning the Perfect Vacation](#), [Your Guide to Healthy Living in Staunton](#), [Try Something New This Year](#), [Staunton's Post-Holiday Reset](#)

#### ***Public Relations***

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

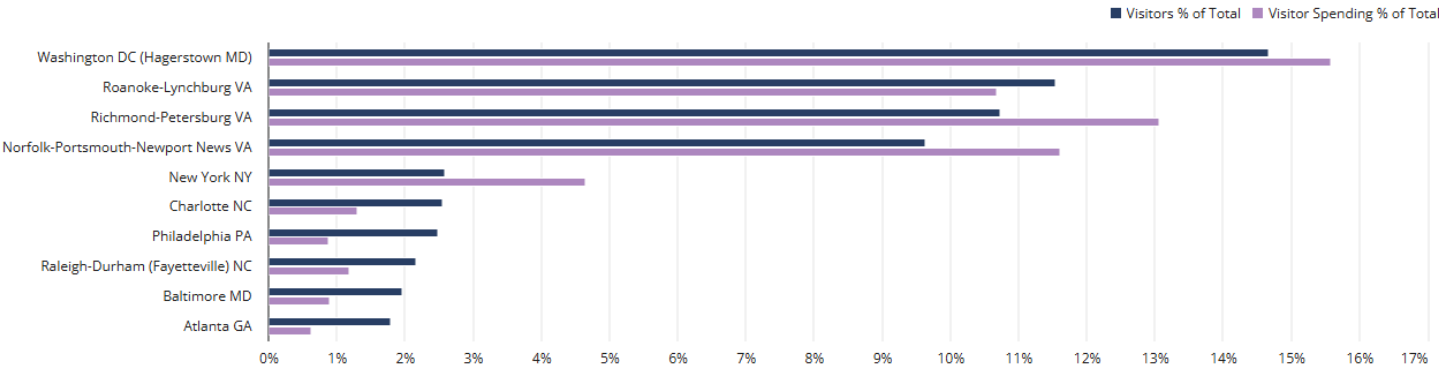
<b>Date</b>	<b>Headline</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Reach</b>
Jan 28	<a href="#">10 Incredible Vacation Spots in Virginia</a>	World Atlas	5,281,695
Jan 20	<a href="#">America's Only Replica of Shakespeare's Indoor Theater Offers Intimate Charm in Virginia</a>	Islands Magazine	2,844,185
Jan 22	<a href="#">Here Are The 2025 James Beard Awards Restaurant and Chef Semifinalists</a>	Eater	6,875,688
Jan 22	<a href="#">James Beard Award 2025 Semifinalists for D.C.</a>	Axios	12,905,366
Jan 14	<a href="#">The 38 Essential Restaurants Around D.C.</a>	Eater	6,875,688
Jan 22	<a href="#">Here Are The 2025 James Beard Awards Restaurant and Chef Semifinalists for D.C.</a>	Eater	6,875,688
Jan 30	<a href="#">Red Wing Roots Festival Set for Its 12Th Annual Music Event at Natural Chimneys</a>	News Leader	87,198
Jan 02	<a href="#">Visit These 12 Incredible Charming Small Towns in Virginia. One for Each Month of The Year</a>	Only In Your State	1,606,618
Jan 25	<a href="#">Virginia: 35 Projects Awarded \$20M To Improve Historic Sites Before Semi Quincentennial</a>	Augusta Free Press	251,144
Jan 27	<a href="#">Staunton City Council Makes Official the Percentage of Transient Tax to Tourism</a>	Augusta Free Press	251,144
Jan 29	<a href="#">4 Places to Disappear in The United States</a>	TravelAwaits	146,745
Jan 28	<a href="#">Secrets Of Virginia's Ancient Valley</a>	TouristSecrets	32,248
Jan 14	<a href="#">Staunton: Virginia Scenic Railway Featured on Virginia Travel Guide</a>	Augusta Free Press	251,144
Jan 04	<a href="#">The Appalachian Couple Hunting for Wild American Truffles</a>	Philadelphia Inquirer	3,195,569
Jan 26	<a href="#">La Virginie En Famille, De Washington Aux Appalaches En Passant Par Le Triangle Historique</a>	French Morning	63,388
Jan 20	<a href="#">Virginia Scenic Railway, Arctic Dip, Valentine's Music, And More: The Digest</a>	News Leader	87,198
Jan 13	<a href="#">Staunton: Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library Offers Special Admissions</a>	Augusta Free Press	251,144
Jan 06	<a href="#">A Shenandoah Valley Escape in Staunton, Va</a>	Blue Ridge Outdoors	36,557
Jan 03	<a href="#">Staunton Indoor Winter Farmer's Market Returns</a>	WHSV-TV	224,038
Jan 06	<a href="#">14 Best East Coast Mountain Towns for A Retreat Right Out of a Movie</a>	Day Trip Nomad	2,075
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>48,144,520</b>

**Website Visitation**

Website Traffic		
January 2024	January 2025	% Change
30,667 visitors	28,501 visitors	-7.32 %
159 guide requests	159 visitor's guide requests	-34.6%

**Top 10 Origin Markets and Visitor Spending**

Top 10 Origin Markets by Visitation with their Spend



7,350 Sample Size



3% of Overall Restaurant Spend  
\$49



Increase in spending/visitation by NYC,  
DC, Atlanta



17% of Overall Retail  
Spend - \$147



31% of Attraction Spend - \$52



51% Ages 25-54  
47% Household \$100k+  
34% Have Children

**Office on Youth**

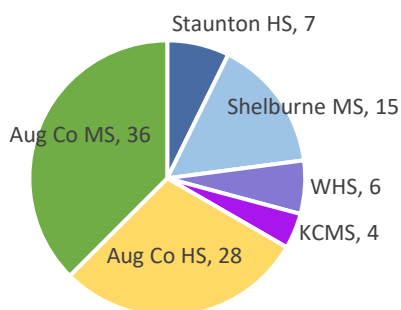
**Crime Control Programs**

- Six youth received detention alternative services.

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

- Participants include 95 students from 14 schools
- Three students and their families from Staunton City Public Schools participated with the Truancy Board.

#### Check & Connect Truancy Prevention Participants



### ***Family Services Programs***

Area adults participated in the following programs:

- *Parenting and Divorce* co-parenting program, 14 participants
- *Loving Solutions -Parent Project Jr.* program, 7 participants
- *Active Parenting*, 15 participants
- *MOM's Inc.* at Middle River Regional Jail, 5 participants
- WARM shelter, 4 participants

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

- 148 fourth and fifth grade McSwain Elementary students participated in Family Education Jan. 13–16.

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

In collaboration with the Virginia Main Street program and Frazier Associates, SDDA hosted a one-day training session for this year's Virginia Mobilizing Main Street cohort in January. The cohort was made up of representatives from communities working to attain full Main Street designation. Nearly 40 participants attended informational sessions held at Queen City Bistro and the Staunton Innovation Hub, and received a short tour of Downtown Staunton including the Arcadia Project and other redevelopment sites.

<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.