

RELEASED APRIL 2025



CITY OF STAUNTON

ACTIVITY REPORT HIGHLIGHTS



By the Numbers

Distributed across VA's **12** Welcome Centers and **29** safety rest areas.

On average, **150** Visitors Guides are requested each month.

Visitor Guides have been mailed to all **50** states and D.C., as well as nearly **15** countries.

Visitors Guide Wins VTC Award

Visit Staunton received the 2024 Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC) "Brochure of the Year" Award for its Visitor Guide. The award celebrates excellence in print advertising and highlights the impact of an innovative, well-designed publication that inspires travel and enhances the visitor experience. Brochures were evaluated on several criteria, including design, readability, engagement, and the integration of digital elements. The 2024 Staunton Visitors Guide received high marks for its curated photography, immersive storytelling, and interactive QR codes that provide valuable insights into visitor engagement.



March 2025

Dispatched Calls for Service*

Police	2,639 ↑
Fire & Rescue	304 ↓

Average Response Time month/year

Police	3'52"/4'03"
Fire & Rescue	4'43"/4'59"

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

Revive! Training Offered at Library

Revive! Opioid overdose and naloxone education is again offered at the Library thanks to the Central Shenandoah Health Department from 12-1 p.m. on the second Tuesday of every month. The training provides participants information on how to recognize and respond to an opioid overdose emergency using six easy steps and no registration is required.



Construction Underway

Construction is underway on a new 1-million-gallon water tank in Staunton Crossing. A crane is now in place and visible from the highway, signaling major progress on the project. The tank will support future economic development in the area and is funded primarily through a Virginia Business Ready Sites Program Grant.



Spring has Sprung

And summer is just around the corner. Starting the first weekend in April the Staunton Farmers Market returned to the Wharf and Shop & Dine Out in Downtown returned for its sixth year.

Visitors to downtown can enjoy eating and shopping outdoors on Beverley Street throughout the weekends. Streets begin closing at 4 p.m. on Fridays and stay closed until 7:30 a.m. on Mondays. Many restaurants have additional seating in the street and stores often have activities and additional items for sale for those enjoying the weather.

The Staunton Farmers Market is open 7 a.m. to noon on Saturdays starting in April through November and features farm goods and artisan products from local vendors along with live music.



Sears Hill Bridge Reopens

After months of much-needed repairs, the Sears Hill Bridge is once again ready to welcome visitors and serve as a vital connection in our community. The repairs were carried out with great care and attention to detail, using black locust lumber: a historically appropriate and rot-resistant material that ensures the longevity of the bridge. This choice not only preserves the bridge's historical integrity, but also enhances its durability for future generations to enjoy. Many thanks to the community for your patience throughout the duration of this project.



March 2025 Activity Report

Community Development

Key Construction Project Updates

Staunton Apartments II

The new apartment complex located at 1013 Seth Dr., which will offer 72 units in eight buildings, is advancing through the construction process. Building 100 has now received its Certificate of Occupancy, signifying completion. Temporary Certificates of Occupancy have been granted for Buildings 200 and 300, with the final Certificate of Occupancy inspection for Building 300 on the horizon. Meanwhile, Buildings 400 and 500 are moving forward, with framing and rough-in inspections currently being scheduled.



Wawa

Demolition was completed to clear the way for a new 5,915 square foot Wawa convenience store and gas station at 1135 Richmond Ave. Plans for the installation of Tesla Charging Stations at this future Wawa location are currently under review.



Dollar Tree

The former Dollar General location at 1500 W Beverley St. is being converted into a Dollar Tree. The store will occupy the existing 11,285 square foot space. The building application for this change is currently under review.

Lily Gardens

The site plan has been approved, and a building application is currently under review for a new apartment building located at 1119 Montgomery Ave. The proposed development includes one building with a total of 50 apartment units.

Reports

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 – 28 active sites with 49 inspections in March 2025
- Commercial Construction – 10 active sites with 20 inspections in March 2025

Environmental Staff Changes

Hunter Moore started as the Environmental Programs Specialist on March 17. Ms. Moore previously worked at the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission in various roles and coordinated the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Plan program.

Planning Commission

At its March 20 meeting, the Planning Commission recommended approval of a request to amend Staunton City Code Section 18.50, P-1, Professional District, to add a provision that allows florist shops by Special Use Permit. The Commission also recommended approval of a request for a Special Use Permit for Honey Bee's Florist to operate at 2010 N Augusta Street. The Commission considered, and recommended approval of, two final plats. First was a plat for South View, Sections Five and Six which will create 66 new lots. Second was a plat for Bell Creek, Sections Three and Four. The plat will create 74 new lots. Combined, the two plats will create 140 new lots for single-family homes.

Building Services Staff Development

David Smithgall, Mary Tyler, and John Glover attended the Virginia Building Code Officials Association conference in Roanoke on March 9 and 10. Mr. Smithgall serves as the chair of the local region of the association. Mr. Glover participated on a panel of past presidents sharing insights on leadership, career growth, and the value of association involvement.



Building Construction and Related Activity

Permit Fees Collected	Mar-25	Mar-24	# Chg	% Chg
New Residential	\$5,989	\$1,221	\$4,768	390.6%
Residential Renovations	\$2,285	\$842	\$1,443	171.5%
Electrical Permits	\$2,856	\$1,953	\$903	46.2%
Mechanical Permits	\$2,994	\$566	\$2,428	428.8%
Plumbing Permits	\$2,091	\$1,295	\$796	61.4%
Commercial New-Renovations	\$835	\$778	\$57	7.3%
Miscellaneous	\$150	\$172	-\$22	-12.7%
Total	\$17,200	\$6,827	\$10,373	151.9%

Permits Issued	Mar-25	Mar-24	# Chg	% Chg
New Residential	12	2	10	500.0%
Residential Renovations	17	11	6	54.5%
Electrical Permits	31	22	9	40.9%
Mechanical Permits	32	6	26	433.3%
Plumbing Permits	22	15	7	46.7%
Commercial New-Renovations	4	7	-3	-42.9%
Miscellaneous	15	3	12	400.0%
Total	133	66	67	101.5%

Economic Development

Staunton Crossing

There is continued interest in Staunton Crossing. Columbia Gas's work is underway, and they are seeking a second, smaller parcel for a service station. Additionally, the work on the water tower is now visible to the community, as the crane completing the work can be seen from I-81 and Rt. 250.

Business Retention and Expansion Efforts

This month the Economic Development Department continued to market the Business Retention Survey. Postcards with the survey link were distributed to all businesses. The survey was extended until April 18 to ensure additional participation.

Greater Augusta Regional Chamber of Commerce

On March 13 the Economic Development team joined their counterparts from Waynesboro and Augusta County to present to the Chamber's Leadership Greater Augusta class. Together they presented about the basics of local economic development and how it ties in to tourism and answered questions from participants.

Business License Activity

During the month of March, the Commissioner of Revenue's office issued 31 business licenses, compared to 18 the previous month, representing a 72% increase. This month a year ago, 46 business licenses were issued.

The Business Services sector accounted for 66% of the total licenses issued in March, and the Retail Trade and Professional Services sectors accounted for 7% each, with a remaining 20% represented by Contractors.

Unemployment Data

In February, Staunton's unemployment rate of 3.1% increased by .1% in comparison to the previous month. Staunton's rate was equivalent to the State's rate of 3.1%. With a labor force of 12,932, Staunton had 12,525 employed and 407 unemployed in February.

Finance

- The department issued 7,712 utility bills and general bills totaling \$1,291,776 during March.
- Collection activities in March resulted in the recovery of \$3,128 in delinquent utility invoices.
- The Utility Payment Office processed 3,222 receipts in the amount of \$714,962 during March.
- The department processed 383 City and 204 School accounts payable checks totaling \$6,700,778, 864 City and 575 Schools payroll-related advices totaling \$4,032,931 and 84 ACH debit/wire transactions totaling \$4,232,874 during March.
- Finance assisted the Inspection Department in publishing a Request for Quotes (RFQ) for property maintenance services.
- The department met with the Police Department to start creating a Request for Proposals (RFP) for consulting services related to the computer-aided dispatch and police records management system.
- The FY2026 budget was introduced to City Council on March 27.

Fire & Rescue

- Staunton Fire and Rescue responded to 304 incidents in March, with an average response time of 4 minutes and 43 seconds. The average response time for the year is 4 minutes and 59 seconds.
- Staff received over 1,132 hours of training in March.

- Staff conducted 28 business fire safety inspections and 24 re-inspections in March.
- Firefighters Savannah Snider and Devin Davis obtained their Hazardous Materials Technician certifications through the Virginia Department of Emergency Management.
- Captain Dolan recertified all Public Works staff in CPR and First Aid.
- Firefighter William McGuire graduated from the Virginia Fire Officers Academy.
- The Fire Marshal's Office conducted two final site inspections; reviewed one site plan, two special use permits, and two final plats; reviewed four semi-annual fire detection and suppression system inspection reports; reviewed six special event applications; and witnessed the installation of three underground storage tanks at the Wawa site. They investigated the cause and origin of two structure fires, one vehicle fire, and one outdoor fire; and investigated two malicious fire alarm activations.

Human Resources

Employee Actions

The following employee actions were processed:

Terminated:

Full Time— 2

Part Time/Seasonal— 3

Hired:

Full Time— 5

Part Time— 4

Retired— 2

Activities

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

Recruitment:

Initiated recruitment for the following positions:

- Recovery Court Coordinator (Maury River) – Blue Ridge Court Services
- Probation Officer - Blue Ridge Court Services
- Water Treatment Plant Operator
- Library Assistant 1 – Circulation
- Custodian – Part-Time

- Pretrial Officer – Blue Ridge Court Services
 - Probation Officer/Pre-Trial Officer – Blue Ridge Court Services
 - Regional Firefighter Testing
 - Deputy Treasurer I
 - Maintenance Worker – Traffic Control
 - Equipment Operator 1 – Utilities
 - Sanitation Worker
- Continued recruitment for the following positions:
 - Equipment Operator I – Streets
 - Equipment Operator II - Streets
 - Equipment Operator II – Utilities
 - Police Officer – Certified Only
 - Equipment Operator I – Park Maintenance

Orientations:

Conducted orientations for 4 full-time employees.

Miscellaneous:

- With City Council's adoption of the Personnel Policy Manual staff conducted 13 employee informational meetings on the revisions and updates.

Information Technology

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

- GIS Coordinator Jessica Wright produced a variety of reports and maps for City departments. Several new layers were also created to support projects.
- Replaced two workstations, several laptops, and several document scanners.
- Chief Technology Officer Kurt Plowman attended the Drone Responders National Public Safety UAS Conference.
- Mr. Plowman co-presented *Drones in Public Safety* at the International Wireless Communications Expo (IWCE) in Las Vegas. The IWCE conference is focused on critical communications technologies and professionals.
- The L3Harris subscriber units (portable, mobile and base station radios) have been received. Infrastructure installation continues with radio antennas being installed at tower sites.

Library



- The Library was closed on Wednesday, March 12 for an all-day staff development day. Approximately 30 library employees attended and had the opportunity to learn about digital resources, reader's advisory, censorship and book challenges, de-escalation techniques, and local services for vulnerable populations. Staff from both the Library of Virginia and the Valley Homeless Connection were invited to lead sessions.
- Local history and genealogy events were a big success for adult programs in March. The Augusta County Genealogical Society delivered a two-part beginner's genealogy workshop. Dr. Lynn Rainville presented a program on the cemeteries of enslaved families and individuals in our region.
- Popular children's programs included an Irish music and dance event and a series of Minecraft-themed after school craft programs.
- The Central Shenandoah Health District resumed Revive! rapid opioid overdose trainings on the second Tuesdays of the month.
- Youth Services Librarian Lizzy Hill installed a new picture book for the StoryWalk at Montgomery Hall Park.
- March art displays featured the work of Haley Roberts and Rebecca Souder Gish.
- The Friends of the Staunton Library finalized plans for a small pop-up sale to be held in the second-floor Board Room in April.



Library Statistical Report: March 2025

CIRCULATION	Month	YTD		SERVICES	Month	YTD
Adult	10,138	88,792		ILLs Borrowed	19	124
Young Adult (YA)	917	6,804		ILLs Lent	0	0
Juvenile	7,489	63,078		Proctoring/Book-a-Librarians	4	18
Digital	6,074	53,021				
				PROGRAMS		
Total Circulation	24,618	211,695		Adult	12	123
Talking Book Center Circulation	1,625	14,859		Attendance	154	2,283
				YA	5	46
Items Checked In	20,280	176,561		Attendance	617	4,355
				Juvenile	43	317
Outgoing to VLC Libraries	1,557	15,067		Attendance	1,657	13,185
Incoming from VLC Libraries	1,640	14,263				
Total Holds Filled	4,859	44,317		PEOPLE		
				Library Visits	13,882	114,132
Added to Collection	1,074	8,125		Curbside Visits	27	350
Withdrawn from Collection	1,091	14,157		Computer Users	676	5,599
				Juvenile Computer Users	1,802	13,237
Database Use/Sessions	1,924	18,702		Meetings Held	14	71
				Volunteer Hours	64	1,084
				New Card Registrations	195	1,585
				Total Registered Cards		15,636

Parks & Recreation

Horticulture

Horticulture completed the following tasks:

- Hannah Flavin began work as the department’s seasonal helper. Ms. Flavin will work part-time with the Horticulture division through December. This position is made possible by a grant from the Community Foundation of the Central Blue Ridge in honor of Susan Blackley, the city’s first horticulturist.
- Horticulture staff attended the Waynesboro Horticulture Symposium. The symposium included seminars on landscape design, planting for pollinators, and other related topics.
- Planted one shade tree and three flowering trees in Gypsy Hill Park.

- Completed trimming shrubs, cutting back grasses and perennials, along with final leaf clean up.
- Tulips have emerged and peak color was around April 12.

Maintenance

Park Maintenance completed the following:

- Superintendent of Parks Chase Dudley attended the National Playground Safety Inspector certification course in Williamsburg.
- Removed pool covers from both pools.

Community Outreach

Staff engaged in the following community outreach activities:

- Irish Road Bowling event was held at the Frontier Culture Museum – 70 teams and 300 people participated.
- American Red Cross Blood Drive was held in the Gypsy Hill Gymnasium.
- Highland County Maple Festival trip, 12 participants attended.
- Charles Town trip with 9 participants.
- Staff began in-person Lifeguard Certification Training.
- Programs offered
 - Morning Warm Ups, 19 participants
 - Toddler Open Gym, 50 participants
 - Chess Club, 11 participants
 - Indoor Walk, 9 participants
 - Indoor Futsal League, 23 teams
 - Kendo, 5 participants
 - Kung Fu, 12 participants
 - Pickleball, open gym
 - Intermediate pickleball, open gym
 - Explorers Club, 8 participants
 - Dancing through the decades, 28 participants
 - Little Movers, 16 participants
 - Fairy Home, 5 participants
 - A.S.L., 12 participants
 - CPR, 5 participants
 - Handprints, 12 participants
 - Boater Safety, 12 participants

Police

- Personnel attended career fairs at both Liberty University and Mary Baldwin University.
- All of the carpet in the police department was replaced, several offices were re-painted, and the investigations office was completely renovated.

- A new uninterrupted power source (UPS) was installed in the E-911 Center.
- The E-911 Center received 4,102 calls during the month, including 1,104 911 calls.
- Police personnel responded to 2,639 incidents during the month, including 1,383 citizen calls for service, 652 officer initiated activities, 157 administrative calls, and 447 directed patrols.
- The average response time for police emergency calls for service during the month was 3 minutes and 52 seconds; it is 4 minutes and 3 seconds for the year.

Public Works

- The Utility Office established 28 new owner accounts, 22 new rental residential accounts, and one commercial account.
- The Public Works Utility Office collected \$54,193 in payments.
- 40 accounts were cut off for non-payment during two cut off weeks. Of those cut off, 37 were reconnected after payments were made or a payment plan established.
- Utility crews repaired one water main break, two valves, and nine water meters. The crew responded to nine sewer main blockages and 23 sewer lateral blockages.

Tourism

Activities:

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

- Staunton blog promotions featured Where Girlfriends Gather: Your Guide to the Ultimate Women's Weekend in Staunton, Staunton's Craft Cocktails, Shop and Dine Out Downtown (and Beyond) in Staunton
- Podcast Episodes Released: The U is Silent; We Aren't – Episode 2: Where Passion Meets Precision: The Heifetz Experience, Episode 3: A Radical Act of Community: Shakespeare in Staunton
- Staunton was awarded the 2024 Brochure of the Year by Virginia Tourism Corporation.
- The Virginia Tourism Corporation Marketing, Communications, & Research Retreat was hosted in Staunton.
- Hosted digital creator and travel enthusiast @Shiond Farrell.

- Director of Tourism Samantha Johnson, Sales & Marketing Manager Jessica Williams, and Economic Development Specialist Jessica Blythe participated in a panel discussion as a part of Valley Women’s Weekend.
- Ms. Williams and Communications Coordinator Morgan Smith conducted a session on media and public relations best practices for the Virginia Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives Spring conference.

Public Relations

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

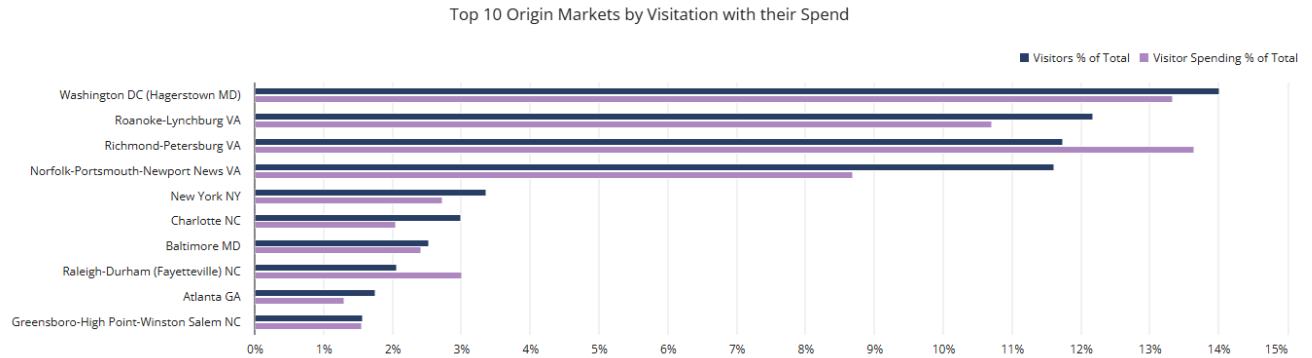
Mar. 14	10 Best Places to Live in Virginia	Travel + Leisure	9,876,963
Mar. 2	The 9 Best Towns in Virginia for Antiquing	Southern Living	11,524,249
Mar. 1	Virginia's 10 Best Retirement Towns Ranked	World Atlas	5,704,883
Mar. 29	11 Best Places to Live in Virginia in 2025	World Atlas	5,439,218
Mar. 13	9 Most Eccentric Towns in Virginia	World Atlas	5,439,218
Mar. 27	Staunton: Sixth Season of Shop & Dine Out Downtown Kicks Off April 4	The Augusta Free Press	1,235,992
Mar. 23	Visit Staunton Wins State Tourism Award for City's 2024 Visitor Guide	The Augusta Free Press	1,235,992
Mar. 17	Spring Has Nearly Sprung: Tickets Available for Virginia Scenic Railway	The Augusta Free Press	1,235,992
Mar. 14	This Homey Restaurant in Virginia Has Mouth-Watering Meatloaf Known Throughout the State	Family Destinations Guide	995,394
Mar. 26	Staunton Church Awarded Virginia 250 Preservation Fund Grant	WHSV-TV	362,767
Mar. 31	Shop & Dine Out, Farmers' Market, Frontier Culture Museum, Shakespeare Festival: The Digest	News Leader	81,881
Mar. 24	Staunton Makes List of Virginia's Most Eccentric Towns. Here's Why	News Leader	81,881
Mar. 7	8 Best Ice Cream Parlors in The State of Virginia	PhillyBite	32,068
Mar. 27	Frontier Culture Museum of Virginia Awarded Preserving America Grant From Americana Corner	Rocktown Now	28,152
Mar. 28	Three Trips to Savor Spring	Bethesda Magazine	7,293
Mar. 27	Escape To This Stunning 1893 Mansion in Staunton, VA	Arlington Magazine	30,768
		TOTAL	43,312,711

Website Visitation

Website Traffic		
March 2024	March 2025	% Change
37,703 visitors	29,371 visitors	-22.1 %
180 guide requests	176 visitor's guide requests	-2.2%

Top 10 Origin Markets and Visitor Spending

*Data not fully updated until 18th



7,086 Sample Size



13% of Overall Restaurant Spend - \$78



Increase in spending/visitation by Atlanta, NYC, & Raleigh



10% of Overall Retail Spend - \$88



11% of Attraction Spend - \$58



52% Ages 25-54
48% Household \$100k+
38% Have Children

Office on Youth

Crime Control Programs

- Nine youth received detention alternative services.
- Two youth completed *3rd Millennium Respect and Resolve* class.
- Seven youth participated in and completed *Youth Empowerment Session* March 24.

Family Service Programs

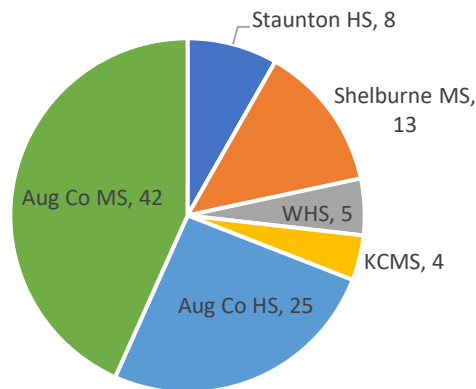
Area adults participated in the following programs:

- *Active Parenting - First 5 Years*, 7 participants
- *Loving Solutions*, 3 participants
- *Parenting and Divorce* co-parenting program, 8 participants

- *Parent Project*, 7 participants
- WARM Shelter, 4 participants
- *MOM's Inc.* at Middle River Regional Jail, 5 participants

Truancy Prevention - Check and Connect

- Participants include ninety-seven students from 14 schools.



Staunton Downtown Development Association¹

The first weekend in March was Valley Women's Weekend, which celebrated International Women's Day with special programming and events highlighting women-owned businesses of Downtown Staunton. SDDA Executive Director Darren Smith moderated a panel of local women leaders as part of a kick-off summit at Hotel 24 South, and the SDDA provided logistical support for other aspects of the weekend.

¹ 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.