

CITY OF STAUNTON

ACTIVITY REPORT HIGHLIGHTS



By the Numbers

7 phases to the terrace project. It started with tree removal in July 2024, currently in Phase 3.

The Friends have pledged to plant a new tree for every 1 removed during the project.

\$500,000 bequest from Julia Kiessling kickstarted the project.

Library Terrace to Connect Community

The Staunton Public Library broke ground on May 6 for the long-awaited library terrace. The library staff are honored to be working with the dedicated and passionate volunteers that make up the Friends of the Staunton Library, who have given so much of their time and effort to make this dream a reality. Director of the Library Sarah Skrobis said that the terrace “solidifies the legacy of Staunton Public Library as a welcoming place, one that invites people to connect with each other and the wider world.” Final surveying wrapped up in early May and the footer installation has begun. Updates will continue to be posted on the library’s Facebook page and on their [terrace-project](#) website.



April 2025

Dispatched Calls for Service*

Police	2,719↑
Fire & Rescue	277↓

Average Response Time month/year

Police	3'43"/3'58"
Fire & Rescue	4'42"/4'46"

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

Earth Day a Success in Staunton

Environmental Division staff Willow Hughes and Hunter Moore set up a table at Earth Day at Gypsy Hill Park on April 26. The event featured displays, demos, and learning opportunities from many local environmental groups. Staff had the opportunity to engage with community members of all ages about the importance of the environment.



Comp Plan Comes to Citizens

Staff, and Comp Plan update committee members, have been actively out in the community attending events to connect with residents where they live, work, and play. The Staunton community is invited to a workshop on the Comprehensive Plan from 5:30-7 p.m. on June 25 at Staunton High School to contribute to the vision for Staunton's future.



New Business Comes to Staunton

In a close-knit, dynamic community like the City of Staunton, the launch of a new business is always a momentous occasion. This spring, our Economic Development team, led by Amanda DiMeo and Jessica Blythe, alongside other city officials, celebrated several exciting milestones. These included the groundbreaking for a new Wawa at 1031 Richmond Rd, the ribbon-cutting for Safe Storage 365 in the West End, and the groundbreaking for Columbia Gas at Staunton Crossing. Each new venture not only brings fresh jobs and increased revenue but also infuses the city with renewed energy. Staunton is fortunate to have a thriving and well-established business community that attracts both new entrepreneurs and major corporations eager to make Staunton their home.



Matt Sensabaugh, Earth Hero

City Horticulturist Matt Sensabaugh has been named a 2025 Earth Hero Award winner by Shenandoah Green. For nearly 20 years, Sensabaugh has led Staunton's efforts to grow and care for thousands of trees across our parks and neighborhoods. Thanks to his leadership, Staunton is proudly celebrating 29 years as a Tree City USA. Shenandoah Green also presented a plaque honoring the city and his work on the Staunton Legacy Tree Project, which planted 2,746 trees — one for every child in Staunton City Schools.



April 2025 Activity Report

Community Development

Key Construction Project Updates

4 Silver Creek Dr.

The new office and several storage buildings (100, 200, 300, 500, 600, and 800) have passed final inspections; foundation plans for building 400 are under review, with no plans yet submitted for building 700. Minor site corrections are pending before a permanent Certificate of Occupancy can be issued for these completed areas at 4 Silver Creek Dr.



Lily Gardens

A building permit was issued for the new apartment building located at 1119 Montgomery Ave. The development will consist of one building with a total of 50 apartment units.

125 E Beverley St.

The historic Dixie Theatre building at 125 E Beverley St. may soon once again be a center for arts and entertainment! A pre-application to renovate and update the 8,004 square foot space into a theatre venue has been reviewed, and a building permit has been issued. This project promises to revitalize a cherished landmark and enrich Stanton's cultural scene.

710 Robertson St.

A 3,212 square foot building is being renovated to provide new office space within the city. The project is in its final stages and requires a final inspection before completion.

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 – 39 active sites with 70 inspections in April
- Commercial Construction – 12 active sites with 17 inspections in April

Earth Day Event



Environmental division staff members Willow Hughes and Hunter Moore set up a table at the Earth Day event at Gypsy Hill Park on April 26. The event featured displays, informational demonstrations, and learning opportunities from many local environmental organizations. Staff had the opportunity to engage with Staunton residents of all ages through a fun interactive game that highlights the importance of the environment.

Environmental staff Members Hunter Moore (right) and Willow Hughes (center).

Comprehensive Plan Update

Staff have been actively out in the community, attending three successful events in April to connect with residents where they live, work, and play. Staff engaged with approximately 80 people at the Farmers Market on April 5, and had great conversations with families at the Earth Day event on April 26. Staff also participated in Building Bridges for the Greater Good's Breaking Bread event on April 26.



Staff members Rebecca Joyce and Willow Hughes along with Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee member Sharon Angle.



Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee member Kim Woodwell engages with attendees at the Staunton Farmers' Market.

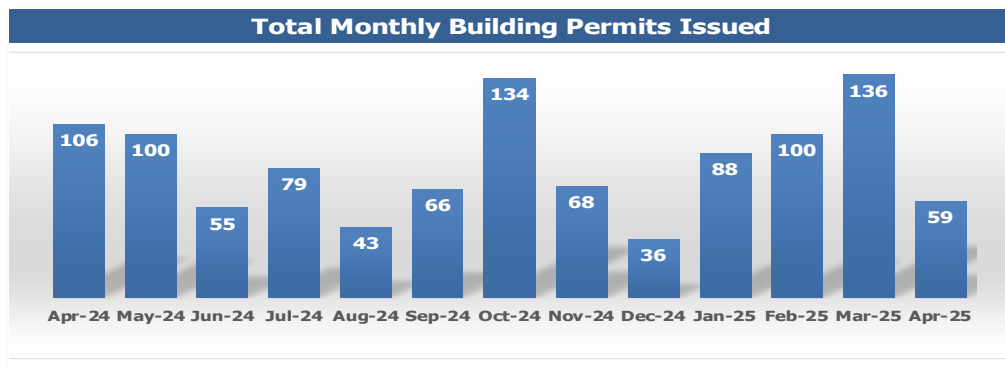
The Staunton community is invited to a workshop on Wednesday, June 25, from 5:30 - 7:00 p.m. at Staunton High School. This is an opportunity to contribute to the vision for Staunton's future.

Housing and Grants Coordination

As part of the planning process for the City of Staunton’s Housing Strategy, several public and stakeholder engagement sessions were held in April at the Staunton Public Library, as well as virtually. During the engagement sessions, participants discussed their greatest concerns about housing in the city and the types of housing or housing-related services they would like to see. In addition to the public engagement sessions, input will be gathered from community members with a 3-question survey on the city’s website that can be found at www.staunton.va.us/housingsurvey

Building Construction and Related Activity

Permits Issued	Apr-25	Apr-24	# Chg	% Chg
New Residential	3	3	0	0.0%
Residential Renovations	16	26	-10	-38.5%
Electrical Permits	23	27	-4	-14.8%
Mechanical Permits	6	14	-8	-57.1%
Plumbing Permits	5	15	-10	-66.7%
Commercial New-Renovations	1	9	-8	-88.9%
Miscellaneous	5	12	-7	-58.3%
Total	59	106	-47	-44.3%



Economic Development

Virginia Economic Developers Association

Economic Development staff attended the spring conference of the Virginia Economic Developers Association in Newport News alongside peers from across the state.

Business Retention and Expansion Efforts

This month the Economic Development Department, alongside several members of the Economic Development Authority, City Council, and other city staff, attended the groundbreaking for Wawa. This event, held on April 2, brought many community members to the future site of the gas station as several executives shared information

about the expansion into western Virginia. Wawa also presented a generous donation to the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank, showing their commitment to supporting the community.

Following the ground-breaking, staff attended the ribbon-cutting of Safe Storage 365 in the city's West End. A new business, that through adaptive reuse, has breathed new life into a vacant building.

On April 30, Economic Development staff, the city manager, assistant city manager, and the communications & engagement manager, met with stakeholders from the Wharf District. The majority of these stakeholders were businessowners and the purpose of this meeting was to discuss the ongoing changes in the Wharf District. The meeting aimed to:

- Address challenges and updates with the parking lot closure
- Strengthen communication between businesses and the community
- Gather feedback on needs and improvements
- Set a foundation for future collaboration

The meeting was well attended, and led to several actionable items for the city team. A business form was distributed to attendees to collect information to determine the timing for future meetings.

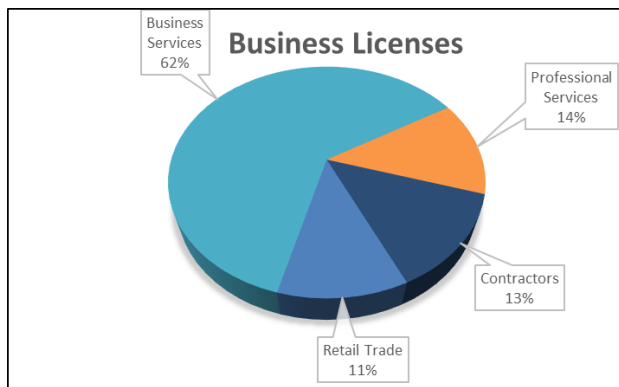
Greater Augusta Regional Chamber of Commerce

On April 29, the Staunton Economic Development Office and its counterparts in Augusta County and the City of Waynesboro sponsored the Chamber's Business Appreciation Breakfast, annually hosted by the Greater Augusta Regional Chamber of Commerce. The event was well attended by businesses across the SAW region. Also in attendance were Councilmembers Jeff Overholtzer and Alice Woods, along with numerous city staff.

Business License Activity

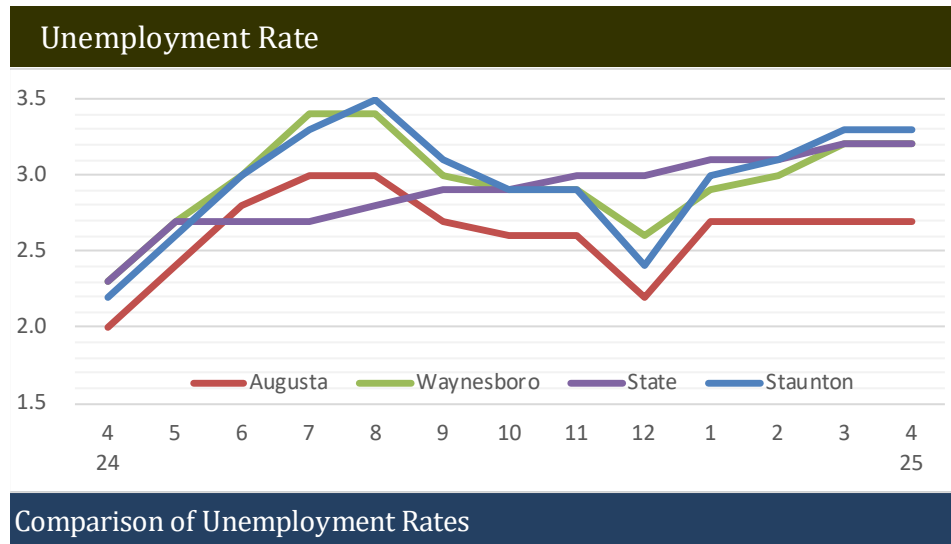
During the month of April, the Commissioner of Revenue's Office issued 45 business licenses, compared to 31 the previous month, representing a 45% increase. This month a year ago, 46 business licenses were issued.

As seen in the following pie chart, the Business Services sector accounted for 62% of the total licenses issued in April, and the retail trade sector accounted for 11%, the professional services sector accounted for 14% with a remaining 13% represented by contractors.



Unemployment Data

In March, Staunton’s unemployment rate was 3.3%, an increase of .2% from February. As seen in the graph below, Staunton’s rate is higher than the state’s rate of 3.2%. With a labor force of 12,988, Staunton had 12,565 employed and 423 unemployed in March.



Finance

- The department issued 7,196 utility bills and general bills totaling \$1,841,397 during April.
- Collection activities in April resulted in the recovery of \$2,009 in delinquent utility invoices.
- The Utility Payment Office processed 3,254 receipts in the amount of \$779,816 during April.
- The department processed 406 City and 181 School accounts payable checks totaling \$5,254,254.42, 850 City and 577 Schools payroll-related advices totaling \$4,003,271.79 and 79 ACH debit/wire transactions totaling \$4,033,562 during April.
- The department created and published a Request for Proposals (RFP) for consulting services related to the computer-aided dispatch and police records management system on behalf of the Police Department.
- The department created and published an RFP for banking services with proposals due on May 22.
- The department created and published an Invitation to Bid (ITB) for replacement garage doors at Fire Station 1 on behalf of the Fire Department.

- The FY2026 budget was adopted by City Council on April 24.
- The department, along with Human Resources and IT, began the implementation process for moving the current timekeeping system to a cloud-based system. Our current timekeeping system is reaching end of life, therefore, the city is moving to their cloud-based product. Estimated go-live time frame is early to mid-September 2025.

Fire & Rescue

- Staunton Fire and Rescue responded to 277 incidents in April, with an average response time of 4 minutes and 42 seconds. The average response time for the year is 4 minutes and 46 seconds.
- Staff received over 588 hours of training in April.
- Staff conducted 73 business fire safety inspections and 23 re-inspections.
- Lieutenant Siron conducted confined space training for Public Works staff.
- Each shift provided food and drinks to the dispatchers for National Dispatcher Week.
- Staff assisted with the Regional Firefighter testing at the Rockingham County Fairgrounds.
- The Fire Marshal's Office issued one tent permit and one blasting permit; handled three blasting complaints; collected \$250 in permit and inspection fees; conducted two final site inspections; conducted one sprinkler rough-in inspection and one fire alarm rough-in inspection at the new courthouse; witnessed one blasting operation (A-Shift witnessed an additional blasting operation); reviewed 34 semi-annual fire detection and suppression system inspection reports; and reviewed six special event applications. Deputy Chief Weller assisted with instruction at the Virginia Fire Marshal Academy Basic Law Enforcement for Fire Marshals Week 11 classes.

Human Resources

Employee Actions

The following employee actions were processed:

Terminated:

Full Time— 3

Part Time/Seasonal— 3

Hired:

Full Time— 5

Part Time— 22

Retired— 0

Activities

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

Recruitment:

Initiated recruitment for the following positions:

- Superintendent – Facilities Services and Refuse
 - Maintenance Workers – Maintenance/Transportation (part-time)
 - Bus Driver – Parks and Recreation (part-time)
 - Parking Attendant
 - Lifeguards
- Continued recruitment for the following positions:
 - Police Officer – Certified Only
 - Custodian (part-time)
 - Pretrial Officer – Blue Ridge Court Services
 - Regional Firefighter Testing
 - Equipment Operator 1 – Park Maintenance
 - Recreational Program Counselor (part-time)
 - Public Safety Dispatcher
 - Utility Service Clerk (part-time)
 - Library Assistant – Circulation
 - Maintenance Worker – Traffic Control

Orientations:

Conducted orientations for five full-time employees.

Miscellaneous:

- A quarterly staff appreciation luncheon was held in April. Just the employees in the photo to the right represent over 120 years of combined service to the City of Staunton! All together, more than 165 years of service were recognized – including three team members celebrating 30 years each!



Information Technology

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

- Completed the installation of the 30kW uninterruptable power supply (UPS) in Dispatch. The UPS replaced several smaller ones providing improved coverage and reliability and provide additional capacity to accommodate the new radio system.
- The door access control project is completed in all city facilities.
- Resolved a cut to fiber optical cables in Gypsy Hill Park. Conduit was repaired and new fiber pulled after a backhoe damaged cables that were not properly identified.
- Chief Technology Officer Kurt Plowman was invited to participate on the Intrado Customer Advisory Board. Six public safety agencies were asked to provide input to help Intrado continue to enhance and grow the 911 ecosystem.

Library

The Friends of the Staunton Library's terrace project progressed with preliminary site surveying, boring and geotechnical analysis, and safety fencing installation.

Special outreach events included the Senior Health Expo and the Neurodivergent Fair.

The library kicked off its third annual mini-art show. Patrons ages 13 and up could pick up a kit that contained a 3" x 3" canvas and 1 oz. of air-dry clay, create an artwork of their choice, and drop it off for inclusion in the community art show. This exhibit is currently hosted in the first-floor display cases through the end of May.



The Central Shenandoah Health District, in collaboration with the Valley Community Services Board, hosted a Fentanyl Awareness Day booth on April 29, during which they shared community health information and hosted Revive! rapid opioid overdose trainings.

Seniors learned how to spot and avoid AI scams at a class taught by Technology Services Librarian Carrie Whitlock. Residents can learn more about how to avoid scams for themselves and loved ones, by making an appointment for one-on-one instruction. Call the reference desk to Book a Librarian.

The Friends of the Staunton Library held a small pop-up book sale in the second-floor board room. Over 30 volunteers generously contributed 177 hours of their time to make the sale a success!

Library Statistical Report: April 2025

CIRCULATION	Month	YTD	SERVICES	Month	YTD
Adult	9,880	98,672	ILLs Borrowed	11	135
Young Adult (YA)	790	7,594	ILLs Lent	0	0
Juvenile	6,506	69,584	Proctoring/Book-a-Librarians	3	21
Digital	5,902	58,923			
			PROGRAMS		
Total Circulation	23,078	234,773	Adult	19	142
Talking Book Center Circulation	1,837	16,696	Attendance	279	2,562
			YA	6	52
Items Checked In	19,619	196,180	Attendance	753	5,108
			Juvenile	50	367
Outgoing to VLC Libraries	1,727	16,794	Attendance	1,731	14,916
Incoming from VLC Libraries	1,532	15,795			
Total Holds Filled	4,717	49,034	PEOPLE		
			Library Visits	13,718	127,850
Added to Collection	989	9,114	Curbside Visits	21	371
Withdrawn from Collection	79	14,236	Computer Users	746	6,345
			Juvenile Computer Users	1,530	14,767
Database Use/Sessions	1971	20,673	Meetings Held	16	87
			Volunteer Hours	221	1,305
			New Card Registrations	187	1,772
			Total Registered Cards		15,852

Parks & Recreation

Horticulture

Horticulture completed the following tasks:

- Twenty-three trees in total were planted in Gypsy Hill Golf Course, Gypsy Hill Park, Montgomery Hall Park, and Staunton Crossing.
- Staunton was again recognized as a Tree City USA for the 29th year and City Council proclaimed Arbor Day on April 25.
- Horticulturist Matt Sensabaugh was recognized by Shenandoah Green as an Earth Hero for his work.

Community Outreach

Staff engaged in the following community outreach activities:

- Annual Eggstravaganza egg hunt was held with a large turnout.

- Staff participated in Earth Day events.
- Senior Health Fair was held in Gypsy Hill Park Gymnasium.
- Programs Offered:
 - Morning Warmups, 12 participants
 - Little Movers, 33 participants
 - Chess, 17 participants
 - Rock Hopper Hiking, 5 participants
 - Afterschool Hiking, 7 participants
 - Gettysburg Class, 7 participants
 - Gettysburg Trip, 13 participants
 - TRIAD, 11 participants
 - Explorers Club, 15 participants

Police

- The Department participated in the annual Drug Take Back Day on April 26; a total of 78.4 pounds of unused medication was turned in.
- Chaplain Greg Czerniak retired after volunteering more than 24 years as the department's chaplain.
- All sworn personnel completed firearms training.
- The Police Department's E-911 Center handled a total of 4,051 telephone calls during the month, including 1,115 9-1-1 calls.
- Police personnel responded to 2,719 incidents during the month, including 1,401 citizen calls for service, 669 officer initiated activities, 183 administrative calls, and 466 directed patrols.
- The average response time for police emergency calls for service during the month was 3 minutes and 43 seconds; it is 3 minutes and 58 seconds for the year.

Public Works

- The Utility Office established 45 new owner accounts, 27 new rental residential accounts, and four commercial accounts.
- The Public Works Utility Office collected \$48,004 in payments.
- 25 accounts were cut off for non-payment during two cut off weeks. Of those cut off, 20 were reconnected after payments were made or a payment plan established.

- Utility crews repaired six water main breaks, two valves, and five water meters. The crew responded to nine sewer main blockage and 13 sewer lateral blockages.
- The Streets Department put in two emergency entrances into the Wharf Parking Lot, so that it could still be accessed after a number of sections were blocked off.

Tourism

Activities:

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

- Staunton blog promotions featured Earth Day and All Things Green in Staunton, 6 Unique Stays in Staunton for Your Next Getaway, Staunton Is Made of Magic, National Indie Bookshop Day in Staunton!, Staunton After Dark
- Podcast Episodes Released: The U is Silent; We Aren't – Episode 4: Steel Rails, Scenic Trails: Why Train Travel Still Captivates Us, Episode 5: Breaking Bread and Boundaries: The Audacious Rise of Ian Boden
- Visit Staunton launched the new Made of Magic campaign hyper-targeting family travelers and the Charlotte, NC market.
- Hosted content creators @brown.eyed.flower.child from Charlotte, NC, and @shiondagarrel from Washington, D.C.
- Director of Tourism Samantha Johnson appeared on Charlotte Today to promote visitation to Staunton from Charlotte, NC.

Public Relations

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

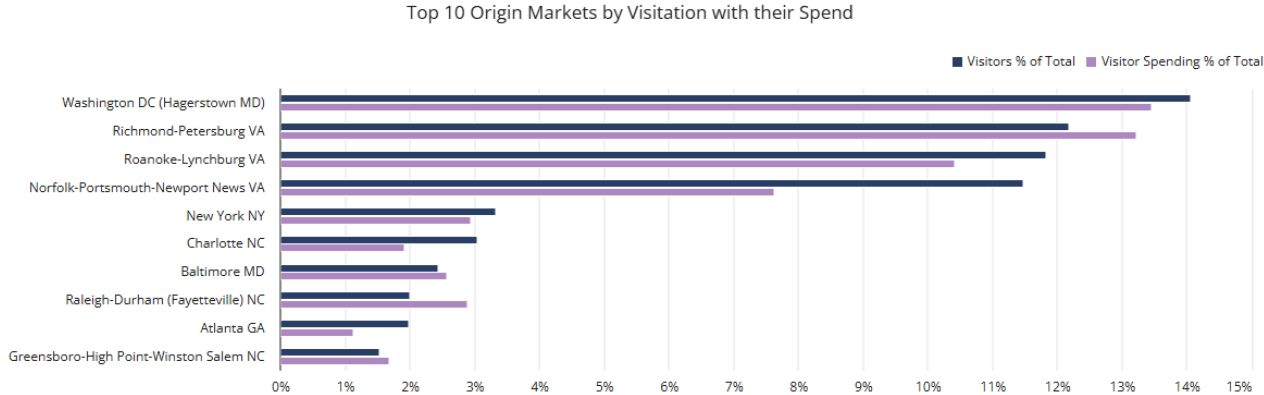
Date	Headline	Source	Reach
Apr. 25	Ride Merle Haggard's Vintage Dome Train Car Through Virginia	MSN.com	122,324,471
Apr. 25	Mother's Day Founder, Anna Jarvis Irked by Commercialization Of Holiday	MSN.com	122,324,471
Apr. 21	Augusta County Driving Tour Showcases Historical Gems of The Shenandoah Valley	Yahoo! Life	19,351,079
Apr. 25	Ride Country Star Merle Haggard's Vintage Dome Train Through Virginia	Axios	14,049,855
Apr. 14	Not Worth the Stars: Why Virginia Said No to Michelin	Axios	14,049,855
Apr. 14	10 Virginia Towns with Unforgettable Main Streets	World Atlas	6,145,520
Apr. 13	8 Virginia Towns with A Slower Pace of Life	World Atlas	6,145,520
Apr. 12	11 Serene Virginia Towns for A Weekend Retreat	World Atlas	6,145,520

Date	Headline	Source	Reach
Apr. 11	9 Most Hospitable Towns in Virginia	World Atlas	6,145,520
Apr. 10	12 Offbeat Virginia Towns to Visit In 2025	World Atlas	6,145,520
Apr. 4	8 Underrated Destinations in Virginia to Avoid Summer Crowds	World Atlas	5,439,218
Apr. 24	Mother's Day Founder, Anna Jarvis Irked by Commercialization of Holiday	The Columbus Dispatch	3,102,752
Apr. 22	5 Easy Day Trips You Can Take from Richmond, My Favorite Included	Only In Your State	1,532,366
Apr. 28	Discover The Magic of Staunton – Sponsored by Visitstaunton.Com	WCNC-TV	1,385,938
Apr. 8	If You Love Mashed Potatoes, You Need to Try This Low-Key Restaurant in Virginia This Spring Break	Family Destinations Guide	995,394
Apr. 2	Spring Break in Virginia Isn't Complete Without a Trip to This Charming Small Town	Family Destinations Guide	995,394
Apr. 2	If You're Planning a Spring Day Trip, You Need to Visit This Gorgeous Small Town in Virginia	Family Destinations Guide	995,394
Apr. 2	The Gorgeous Historic Town in Virginia That's Straight Out of a Hallmark Movie	Family Destinations Guide	995,394
Apr. 7	Richmond Restaurants Snubbed by The James Beard Awards Again	Richmond Times Dispatch	421,463
Apr. 1	9 Photos of The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts from The Times-Dispatch Archives	Richmond Times Dispatch	421,463
Apr. 4	Staunton's Sears Hill Bridge Reopens to The Public	WHSV-TV	362,767
Apr. 4	Shop And Dine Out in Downtown Staunton Returns for Sixth Year	WHSV-TV	362,767
Apr. 1	9 Photos of The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts from The Times-Dispatch Archives	The Daily Progress	233,293
Apr. 19	A Charming Virginia City Full of Artistic Energy and Unmatched Local Character Is a Hidden Historic Gem	Islands Magazine	156,068
Apr. 2	Vista Dome Car Once Owned by Country Music Star Now Part of Virginia Scenic Railway's Fleet	News Leader	81,881
Apr. 21	Augusta County Driving Tour Showcases Historical Gems of The Shenandoah Valley	News Leader	69,861
Apr. 9	Take A Spring Day Trip to Shenandoah Valley	Northern Virginia Magazine	60,862
Apr. 18	Virginia Scenic Railway Brings Riders to Staunton and Beyond	Daily News Record	50,625
Apr. 29	Secrets Of Virginia's Shenandoah Valley Mountain Communities	Tourist Secrets	45,018
		TOTAL	346,018,904

Website Visitation

Website Traffic		
April 2024	April 2025	% Change
35,566 visitors	38,151 visitors	+7.3 %
168 guide requests	145 visitor's guide requests	-13.6%

Top 10 Origin Markets and Visitor Spending
-March 2025-



8,198 Sample Size



13% of Overall Restaurant Spend - \$78



Visitor Spend UP 11% over 2024
Hotel Occupancy UP 2%



15% of Overall Retail Spend - \$182



9% of Attraction Spend - \$70



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

Office on Youth

Crime Control Programs

- Fifteen youth received detention alternative services.
- One youth completed *3rd Millennium Stoplifting 101* class; one completed *3rd Millennium ConflictWise* class; and two completed *3rd Millennium THC 101* class.

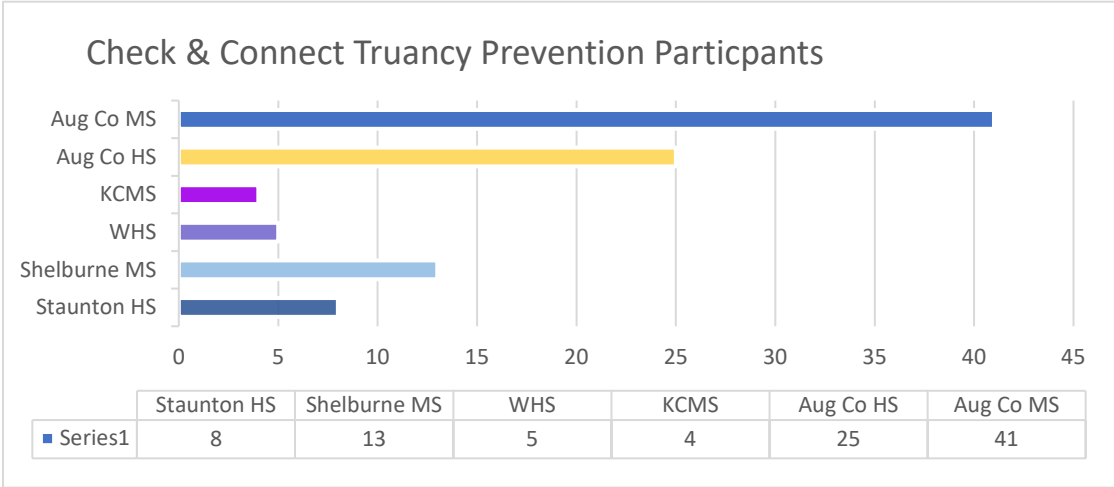
Family Service Programs

Area adults participated in the following programs:

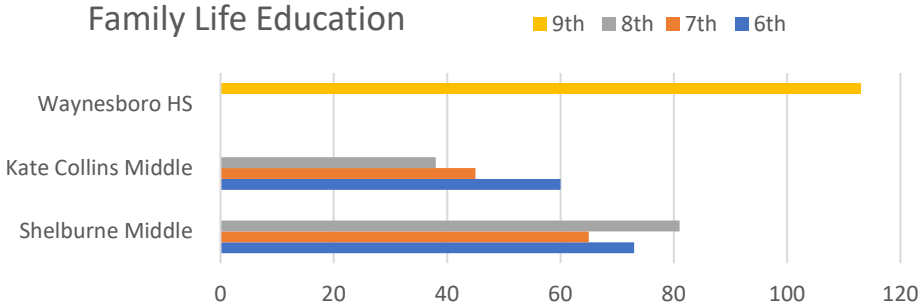
- *Active Parenting*, 18 participants
- *Parenting and Divorce* co-parenting program, 7 participants
- *Parent Project*, 7 participants
- WARM Shelter, 4 participants
- *Inside Out Dads* at Middle River Regional Jail, 9 participants

Truancy Prevention - Check and Connect

- Participants include 96 students from 14 schools.
- Regional Truancy Board met with four Staunton City School students and their families April 22.



Personal Responsibility Education Programs (PREP)



Safe Routes to School (SRTS) - Healthy Community Action Team (HCAT)

- 244 students participated in bike safety instruction at McSwain Elementary School, April 1-8.
- 138 Students participated in bike safety instruction at Bessie Weller Elementary School, April 25–30.

Staunton Downtown Development Association¹

The SDDA Director attended the annual conference of the National Main Street Center in Philadelphia, April 6-9.

SDDA solicited applications for the position of Creative Marketing and Events Coordinator, and prepared for a new season of the Downtown Flower Program.

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.