

Activity Report Highlights

City of Staunton



CROSSING WAY TO OPEN SOON

The City of Staunton held a ribbon cutting for the completion of Crossing Way on May 30, connecting Richmond Avenue to Valley Center Drive, giving access to the interior of Staunton Crossing. "This milestone has been many years in the making. It is progress that a lot of our Staunton community members are excited to see," said City of Staunton Mayor Stephen W. Claffey. "The roadway gives access to hundreds of acres of prime real estate for development for new businesses that would create jobs." The extension, originally scheduled to open in May, is now expected to open mid-summer due to construction delays. Contractors are currently working with VDOT to finish final items.



May 2024

Dispatched Calls for Service*

Police 2,355 ↓

Fire & Rescue 303 ↑

Average Response Time month/year

Police 3'31"/3'54"

Fire & Rescue 4'42"/4'36"

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

By the Numbers

The Recycling Center had **3,600** visits in the month of May.

Finance assisted various departments with **4** invitations for bid and **1** unsealed request for proposal.

Into the Future

Fourth of July Events:

June 30, Beauty Pageant
July 3, Vesper Service
7:30 a.m., Firecracker 5K
10 a.m., Parade
11 a.m., Carnival
Dusk, Fireworks

happybirthdayamerica.org

City offices are closed **July 4** and **5** in observance of the Fourth of July holiday.



SIRON HELPS STEADY MINDS

Officer Joe Siron has received positive feedback from students and staff on the My Steady Mind (MSM) classes he has been teaching at Shelburne Middle School. He has been asked to continue teaching the program the next school year. MSM is a cognitive fitness program that helps people manage stress, improve personal performance, become more confident, and be better equipped to handle life's complications. Staunton's PD put its supervisors through the program in 2023 and Officer Siron observed how the program's resources could also benefit the children at SMS.



VOLUNTEERS HELP CLEAN THE BAY

Fred Blanton, chair of the Lewis Creek Watershed Advisory Committee, organized the local efforts for the Chesapeake Bay Foundation's Clean the Bay Day on June 1. Community Development staff participated along with approximately 70 volunteers from various local organizations (Staunton Rotary Club, YMCA Youth Corp, JMU Valley Scholars, Skyline Rotary Club, Friends of the Middle River, Shenandoah Valley Club for the Deaf, Shenandoah Green) to help clean the local waterways. Over 40 bags of garbage and two tires were collected. Pictured are two Lewis Creek Advisory members.

PANTRY OPENS AT LIBRARY

The library held a ribbon cutting for the grand opening of its new Little Free Food Pantry. The pantry was created and will be maintained by partner organization The Neighbor Bridge. It is designed for 24/7 access when other local food insecurity resources may be closed.



Notes from the City Manager

Wondering about all the work behind Bessie Weller Elementary School and parts of the Green Spring Valley and Shenandoah Heights neighborhoods? According to Dominion Energy, this is part of their Staunton-Valley Transmission Rebuild Project. What looks like roads behind some of the houses are "temporary access mats." These will allow crews and equipment to get to the powerline poles. All access is being installed first and will take 1-2 more months, then line and pole work will begin. That work should last until late 2025. Pole and line work will

begin near the West Staunton substation and then work back south and around into the Staunton substation (9.3 miles). Once all work is completed, the access mats will be removed and the sites will be returned to their original condition (late 2025). For more information about the project, visit their website at <https://www.dominionenergy.com/projects-and-facilities/electric-projects/power-line-projects/staunton-valley>.

The data shared in the Activity Report and Activity Report Highlights are from the month prior, unless otherwise noted.



May 2024 Activity Report

Community Development

Key Construction Project Updates

Dunkin Donuts

Framing is underway for the construction of a Dunkin Donuts at 704 Greenville Ave.

Firestone Complete Auto Care Center

Final inspections are scheduled for the 5,969 square foot Firestone Complete Auto Care Center at 1012 Richmond Ave.

Middlebrook Trace

Framing and rough-in inspections are scheduled for two three-story apartment buildings each consisting of 41 units, with a total of 82 new apartments, located at 601 Moore St. Final inspections will be scheduled soon with the possible issuance of a certificate of occupancy in June.

Reports

Site Plans

The following is a newly approved site plan:

- 105 Stribling Lane, revised site plan for Villages Stage 5

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 – 45 active sites with 118 inspections in May
- Commercial Construction – 9 active sites with 22 inspections in May

The City of Staunton – Watershed Awareness Facebook page had a post reach 1,648 people last month.

Community Development

Zoning Administrator Linda Nesselrodt, along with other city staff in the Finance and IT departments, attended the 2024 Tyler Connect Conference in Indianapolis, Indiana in May. The annual conference provides three days of training for software users for all of Tyler Technology solutions. Currently, the Community Development Department utilizes Enterprise ERP software for processing of all building and zoning permits. The department will be migrating to the new Enterprise Permitting and Licensing software in

the next 12 to 18 months. The conference provided staff with additional knowledge and resources for the upcoming implementation of the new software.



Zoning Administrator/Historic Preservation Coordinator Linda Nesselrodt, Assistant Director of Finance Cindy Fitzgerald, and IT Systems Engineer Zach Henry attended the Tyler Connect 2024 Conference along with the former city Chief Financial Officer Phil Trayer.



Building Official John Glover attended the Augusta Home Builders Association meeting on May 21. There were 90 attendees.

Staunton Plan Reviewer David Smithgall, as the chairman of Region III of the Virginia Building and Code Officials Association, organized and facilitated code update training for contractors and tradespeople May 30 and 31. This training provided updates to the changes for the Uniform Statewide Building Code, which was adopted in January 2024. This training also provided credit for tradesman to maintain their licenses through the Virginia Department of Occupational Regulation. Approximately 60 people were in attendance. Cardinal Home Center provided lunch and City of Staunton Building Inspectors Mark Wade and Lloyd Otte assisted with the training sessions.



Building/Electrical inspector Mark Wade, observes the training being provided by VBCOA.

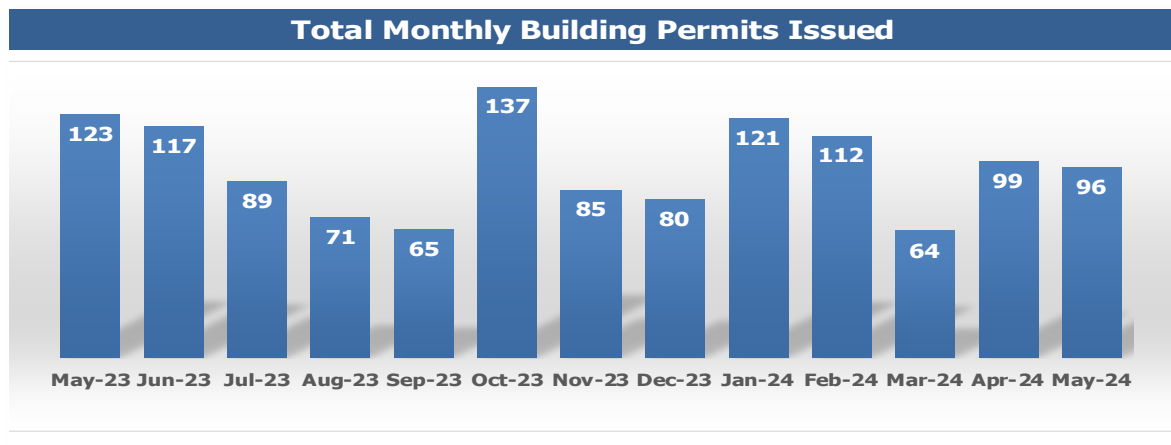
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Members of the Staunton and Skyline Rotary Clubs participated in the Clean the Bay Day on June 1.

Building Construction and Related Activity

Permits Issued	May-24	May-23	# Chg	% Chg
New Residential	5	13	-8	-61.5%
Residential Renovations	18	16	2	12.5%
Electrical Permits	30	33	-3	-9.1%
Mechanical Permits	10	18	-8	-44.4%
Plumbing Permits	14	23	-9	-39.1%
Commercial New-Renovations	8	4	4	100.0%
Miscellaneous	11	16	-5	-31.3%
Total	96	123	-27	-22.0%



Permit Fees Collected	May-24	May-23	# Chg	% Chg
New Residential	\$2,883	\$9,310	-\$6,427	-69.0%
Residential Renovations	\$2,085	\$1,458	\$627	43.0%
Electrical Permits	\$0	\$4,317	-\$4,317	-100.0%
Mechanical Permits	\$1,319	\$3,276	-\$1,957	-59.7%
Plumbing Permits	\$1,594	\$3,283	-\$1,689	-51.4%
Commercial New-Renovations	\$3,403	\$1,471	\$1,931	131.2%
Miscellaneous	\$404	\$729	-\$325	-44.5%
Total	\$11,689	\$23,844	-\$12,155	-51.0%

Economic Development

Greater Augusta Regional Chamber of Commerce

On May 7, the Staunton, Augusta and Waynesboro Economic Development departments in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce, held the annual business appreciation breakfast at the Holiday Inn. Director of Economic Development Billy Vaughn was recognized for his successful career and many years of service.

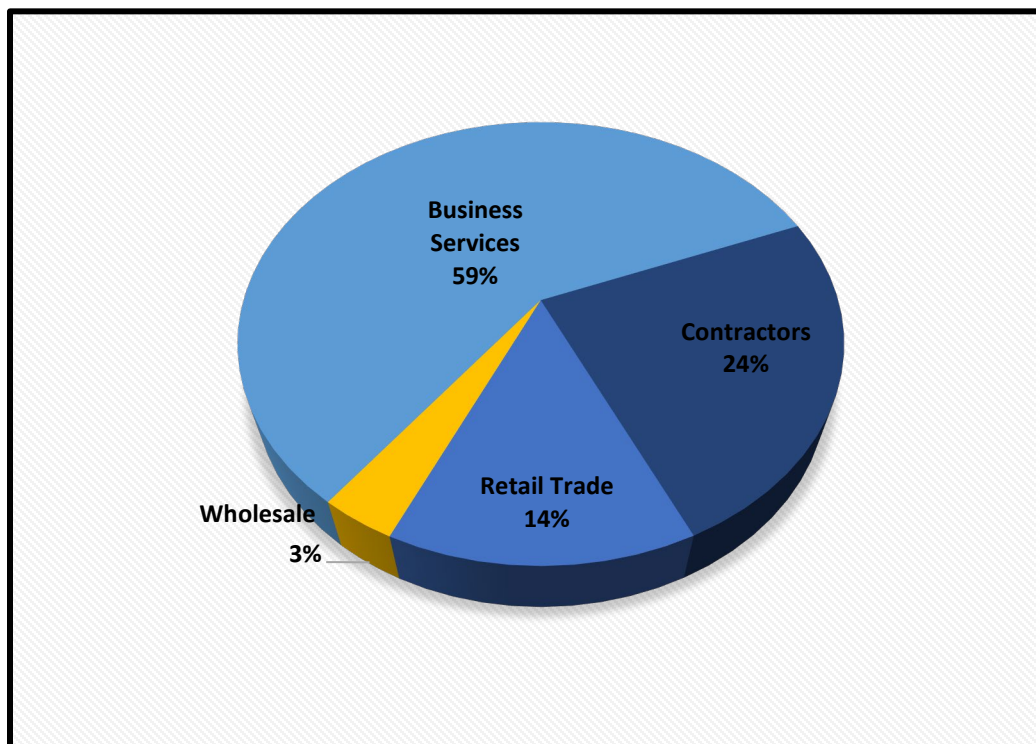
Crossing Way

The Crossing Way Road extension, originally scheduled to open in May is now expected to open mid-summer due to construction delays. Contractors are currently working with VDOT to finish final items. Staff hosted a ribbon cutting on May 30 for invested individuals before Mr. Vaughn's last day on May 31.

Business License Activity

During the month of May, the Commissioner of Revenue's office issued 29 new business licenses, compared to 46 the previous month, representing a 37% decrease. This month a year ago, 31 new business licenses were issued.

As seen in the following pie chart, the Business Services sector accounted for 59% of the total new licenses issued in May.



Finance

- The department issued 7,635 utility bills and general bills totaling \$1,008,655 during May.
- Collection activities in May resulted in the recovery of \$4,100 in delinquent utility invoices.
- The Utility Payment Office processed 3,110 receipts in the amount of \$750,595 during May.
- The department processed 460 City and 270 School accounts payable checks totaling \$3,516,894. 1,299 City and 579 Schools payroll-related advices totaling \$4,785,519; and 18 ACH debit/wire transactions totaling \$2,110,119 during May.
- The department assisted with issuing invitations for bid (IFB) and other proposal requests as FY24 comes to a close. All bids and proposals are under review.
 - IFB, Engineering, Staunton Crossing Water and Sewer Extensions
 - IFB, Engineering, Staunton Crossing Elevated Water Storage Tank
 - IFB, Engineering, West Beverley Street Sidewalk Improvements & VDOT SGR Repaving project
 - IFB, Environmental Programs, Cole Avenue Stream Restoration & Sanitary Sewer project
 - Unsealed Request for Proposal, Tourism, data gathering, analysis
- Several members of the finance department attended the Virginia Government Finance Officer's Association and the Virginia Association of School Business Officer's Spring conferences. Assistant Director of Finance Cindy Fitzgerald represented the finance department at the Tyler Connect 2024 conference in Indianapolis.
- Accounting Supervisor Gin Chandler graduated with her Master's in Public Administration in Business and Government from Liberty University.
- Chief Financial Officer Jessie Moyers earned the Virginia Government Finance Officer's Certificate from VGFOA and the Radford University Governmental and Nonprofit Assistance Center.
- Preliminary work has begun on the FY2024 financial statement audit by the city's external auditors, Brown, Edwards, & Co. The auditors were on-site for audit work the last week of May.
- The city issued bonds through the Virginia Resource Authority's Spring 2024 pooled financing. The bonds are to finance the construction of Staunton's Juvenile and Domestic Relations courthouse. The bonds closed on May 15.

Fire & Rescue

- Staunton Fire and Rescue responded to 303 incidents in May, with an average response time of 4 minutes 42 seconds. The average response time for the 2024 is 4 minutes and 36 seconds for the year.
- Staff received over 559 hours of training in May.
- Staff conducted 18 business fire safety inspections and 14 re-inspections in May.
- Crews participated in Kids Matter Day and Kids Fishing Day at Gypsy Hill Park.
- Kylik Scott joined the A-Shift team at Station #1 to fill a full-time vacancy.
- The winner of the Firefighters for Literacy program was escorted home from school in a firetruck.
- Lieutenant Adam Dolan taught three different classes of CPR and First Aid to City School bus drivers, along with Parks and Recreation summer staff.
- Crews participated in career day events at Elk Hill School and A. R. Ware Elementary.
- Deputy Chief Perry Weller arranged an agreement with the demolition contractors at the site of the new WaWa on Richmond Rd. Crews took advantage of different training evolutions in the Econo Lodge buildings for two weeks.
- Firefighter Ryan Hines participated in the Shelburne Middle School Field Day.
- Lieutenant Daniel Hinkle was appointed to the Board of Directors for the Central Shenandoah EMS Council.
- Hosted a station visit from a group of children from Ware Elementary and visited St John's pre-school.



Human Resources

Employee Actions

The following employee actions were processed:

Terminated:

Full Time—4

Part Time/Seasonal—7

Hired:

Full Time—4

Part Time—36

Retired—2

Activities

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

Recruitment:

- Initiated recruitment for the following positions:
 - Pretrial Officer Position – Blue Ridge Court Services
 - Maintenance Worker – Traffic Control/PW
 - Utility Electrical Technician/Utility SCADA Technician
- Continued recruitment for the following positions:
 - Equipment Operator I – Public Works Utilities
 - Police Officer – Certified
 - Equipment Operator II – Public Works Utilities
 - Lifeguards – 2024
 - Referees/Umpires – Parks & Recreation
 - Probation/Pretrial Officer Position – Blue Ridge Court Services
 - Sanitation Worker

Orientations:

- Conducted orientations for six full-time employees and provided a group orientation on May 23 for the summer lifeguard staff.

Training:

- Virginia Risk Sharing Association Annual Meeting – training and information on Freedom of Information Act, Human Resource Audits and Property Appraisals and insurance renewals.

Information Technology

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

- Installation of security upgrades started at the Library, including camera upgrades and wiring for new door access controls.

- Migrated nearly 40 aircards to T-Mobile. The new contract will save 20% and improve data speed and coverage within the city.
- Replaced five workstations.
- Preliminary work has started for the Enterprise Licensing and Permitting (EPL) project that will improve planning, permitting, inspections, code enforcement and compliance. This is a significant multi-departmental project that will transform how the Planning and Inspections department functions and will improve citizen interactions.
- Four truckloads of microwave equipment is expected to arrive in early June for the SAW Regional Radio Project. Equipment installation is scheduled to start in late summer.

Library

- The library held a ribbon cutting for the grand opening of its new Little Free Food Pantry. The pantry was created and will be maintained by partner organization The Neighbor Bridge. It is designed for 24/7 access when other local food insecurity resources may be closed.
- There is a new addition to the Library of Things collection. Backpacks with local birding information, a Peterson Guide to Birds of North America, and a pair of binoculars were compiled and donated by the Augusta Bird Club. Birding backpack kits check out for three weeks and bring more informal science and nature activities to the public for free with a library card.



- The library hosted its second annual community Mini Art Show. Residents were able to pick up a small art kit consisting of a tiny easel or clay and contribute their work towards the May exhibit. No artistic experience was required, and almost 60 pieces were submitted.
- Eight teams participated in a speed puzzle competition. All teams, consisting of kids to adults, completed the same 500 piece jigsaw puzzle and the winners received trophies. The event was such a hit, that staff are planning a second, larger event for the fall.

- Twelve adults attended an “Are You Smarter Than Your Smart Phone” class to learn more about settings and security for their Android devices. Four adults also attended one-on-one Book-a-Librarian sessions for assistance with various tech topics.



Statistical Report: May 2024

CIRCULATION	MONTH	YTD		PROGRAMS	MONTH	YTD
Adult	9,778	111,555		Adult	14	133
Young Adult (YA)	939	8,562		Attendance	244	3,355
Juvenile	7,448	74,874		YA	3	75
Digital	5,688	56,396		Attendance	462	7,220
				Juvenile	43	440
Total Circulation	23,853	251,387		Attendance	2,168	17,768
Talking Book Center Circulation	1,286	13,831				
				PEOPLE		
Items Checked In	19,924	219,220		Library Visits	14,284	143,428
				Curbside Visits	36	831
Outgoing to VLC Libraries	1,796	21,470		Computer Users	782	7,676
Incoming from VLC Libraries	1,473	18,592		Juvenile Computer Users	1,404	9,745
Total Holds Filled	4,791	55,591		Meetings Held	5	44
				Volunteer Hours	184	1,427
Added to Collection	893	9,986		New Card Registrations	249	2,028
Withdrawn from Collection	5,197	15,566		Total Registered Cards		18,083
SERVICES						
ILLs Borrowed	17	150				
ILLs Lent	0	0				
Proctoring/Book-a-Librarians	4	53				

Parks & Recreation

Horticulture

Horticulture completed the following tasks:

- City Horticulturist Matt Sensabaugh completed the requirements to recertify as a Certified Arborist from the international Society of Arboriculture. Mr. Sensabaugh has been a certified Arborist for 18 years.
- Completed a renovation planting at Landes Park, 60 new perennials and 30 new shrubs were planted along the side borders. The project was possible due to a gift from the Community Foundation of the Central Blue Ridge and was made in honor of Susan Blackley, former Staunton horticulturist.
- Started renovation of the plantings in the island at the intersection of Statler Boulevard and Greenville Avenue. Old shrubs and perennials were removed, the bed was regraded, and a temporary annual bed was prepped. The entire island was also mulched. The new renovation will be completed in late summer/early fall and layout will be similar to the layout of the Ann Lee Bennett flower bed.

Maintenance

Park Maintenance completed the following:

- Assisted with minor storm damage clean up.
- Painted the Gypsy Hill Park pool house and assisted pool staff with maintenance issues prior to opening for the season.
- Repaired the main irrigation line on Gypsy Hill Golf Course and a water line break at Moxie Stadium.
- Added new resilient surfacing to the playgrounds in Gypsy Hill and Montgomery Hall Parks.

Community Outreach

Staff engaged in the following community outreach activities

- HEART afterschool program concluded for the school year.
- Completed staff orientation for Camp Staunton.
- Youth Fishing Derby had an excellent turn out. The annual event had over 150 participants. *Pictured right.*
- Senior Fishing Derby was a success with over 100 seniors participating
- Assisted with Kids Matter Day held in Gypsy Hill Park.
- Co-Ed Softball began with eight teams participating.
- Montgomery Hall and Gypsy Hill Pools opened over the Memorial Day weekend.



Police

- Sgt. Joe Siron has received positive feedback on the My Steady Mind (MSM) classes he has been teaching at Shelburne Middle School, from students and staff. He has been asked to continue teaching the program the next school year. MSM is a cognitive fitness program that helps people manage stress, improve personal performance, become more confident and be better equipped to handle life's complications. Staunton's PD put its supervisors through the program in 2023 and Sgt. Siron observed how the program's resources could also benefit the children at SMS. He stated, "A good number of students took away tools to make them better equipped when life comes at them with the unexpected."
- The Police Department's E-911 Center handled a total of 3,471 telephone calls during the month, including 1,200 9-1-1 calls.
- Police personnel responded to 2,355 incidents during the month, including 1,097 citizen calls for service, 618 officer initiated activities, 182 administrative calls, and 458 directed patrols.
- The average response time for police emergency calls for service during the month was 3 minutes and 31 seconds; it is 3 minutes and 54 seconds for the year.

Public Works

- The Utility Office established 54 new owner accounts, 28 new rental residential accounts, and 5 commercial accounts.
- The Public Works Utility Office collected \$44,906 in payments.
- 24 accounts were cut off for non-payment during two cut off weeks. Of those cut off, 16 were reconnected after payments were made or a payment plan established.
- Utility crews repaired three water main breaks, one valve, one service, and five water meters. The crew responded to three sewer main blockages and five sewer lateral blockages. The crew completed one sewer main repairs and one sewer lateral repair.
- The Recycling center had over 3,600 people drop off their recyclables during the month of May.
- Line painting throughout the city for turn arrows, stop bars and crosswalks has started.
- The Greenville Ave. project to update streetlights is underway. Staff began pulling wire and started installing cameras on the mast arms for the upgrades.

- The Streets Department started paving streets and completed the spring round of blacktop utility cuts, mowing right of ways, and weed eating.
- The stairs from Byers St to Middlebrook Ave have been temporarily closed due to safety issues.

Tourism

Activities:

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

- April blog promotions featured Seize The Staunton Day: No Kids Allowed, Staunton's Best in Virginia Winners, Top 10 Must-Sees Every Visitor Should Explore, Explore Staunton Without Breaking the Bank, Embrace the Great Outdoors in Staunton
- Celebrated National Travel & Tourism Week May 19-25
- Partnered with VTC International to host Canadian travel writer Jim Bamboulis and hosted their public relations team for a familiarization visit that included a ride on the Scene Railway, a tour of the Blackburn Inn and a tour of the Blackfriars Playhouse

Public Relations

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

Date	Headline	Source	Reach
May 13	Princess Cruises Adds Historic America Cruisetour Ahead Of 250th Anniversary of America	Yahoo! Finance	49,142,119
May 8	Plan An Antiquing Road Trip Through the Shenandoah Valley— Including A Stop at The Largest Antique Mall in The U.S.	Southern Living	13,555,536
May 14	9 Most Inviting Towns in Virginia	World Atlas	5,483,253
May 12	10 Coolest Towns in Virginia for A Summer Vacation In 2024	World Atlas	5,483,253
May 11	11 Senior-Friendly Towns in Virginia	World Atlas	5,483,253
May 8	Plan An Antiquing Road Trip Through the Shenandoah Valley— Including A Stop at The Largest Antique Mall in The U.S.	Yahoo! Lifestyle	4,297,310
May 23	A Star Virginia Chef Has a New Destination Restaurant and Inn in The Shenandoah Valley	Washingtonian Magazine	1,166,417
May 01	American Shakespeare Center Partners with Local Libraries to Give Free Tickets to Plays	WHSV-TV	465,681
May 14	Dinner At Virginia's Maude & The Bear Is a Culinary Journey	Garden and Gun	426,944

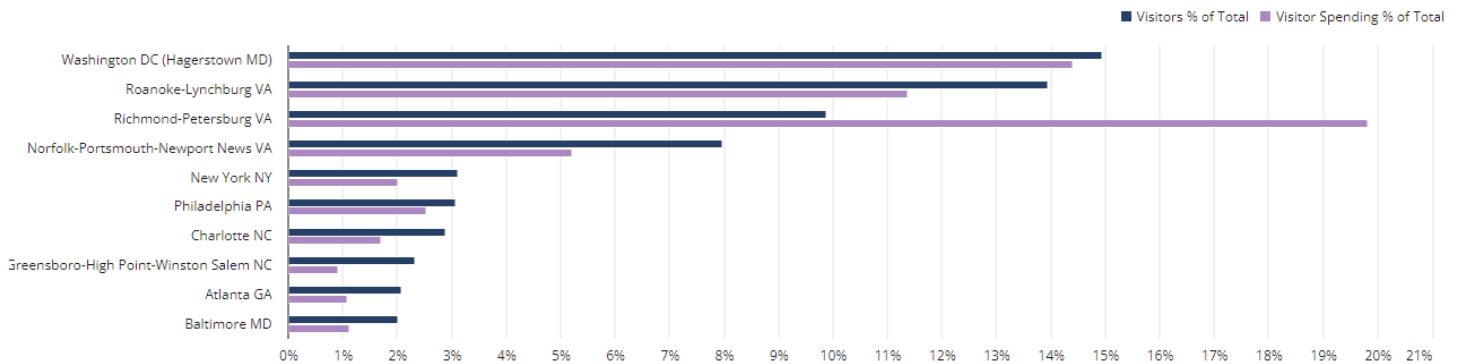
Date	Headline	Source	Reach
May 21	<u>Art On the Town Festival Returns to Staunton</u>	WHSV-TV	372,753
May 15	<u>Pro Re Nata Acquires Skipping Rock in Staunton, Renovations Underway</u>	WHSV-TV	372,753
May 13	<u>Princess Cruises Adds Historic Cruisetour for the 250th Anniversary of America in 2025</u>	TravelPulse.com	285,122
May 16	<u>Hot Off the Press: Finally, Staunton's Own Book Festival Will Turn the Page on October 19</u>	Augusta Free Press	269,729
May 29	<u>Wood-Fired Pizza, Handmade Pasta and Ice Cream — Have You Been to The Shack? It'll Surprise You.</u>	News Leader	118,685
May 24	<u>After A Very Successful Opening, Staunton's Pizza Luca Remaining Dinner-Only for Now</u>	News Leader	118,685
May 06	<u>Queen City Word Fest: Literary Event Coming to Staunton This October</u>	News Leader	112,571
May 14	<u>Princess Showcases Historic America Cruise-Tour Ahead of USA's Yahoo! Finance 250th Anniversary</u>	Insider Travel Report	35,767
May 22	<u>Crozet Brewery Acquires Skipping Rock Beer Co. In Staunton</u>	News Virginian	27,124
			87,216,955

Website Visitation

Website Traffic		
May 2023	May 2024	% Change
34,000 visitors	41,000 visitors	+21.43%
128 visitor's guide requests	138 visitor's guide requests 512 visitor's guide requests (Blue Ridge Country)	+7.8%

Top 10 Origin Markets and Visitor Spending

Top 10 Origin Markets by Visitation with their Spend



Office on Youth

Crime Control Programs

- Twelve youth received detention alternative services.

Parenting Programs

- Three adults participated in Active Parenting - First 5 Years.
- Nine adults participated in Parenting and Divorce co-parenting program.
- Twelve adults participated in 24/7 Dads at Middle River Regional Jail.

Check and Connect

- Participants include 73 students from 11 area middle and high schools. There were 5 students from Staunton High School and 16 from Shelburne Middle School.
- Nine Check and Connect students graduated from area high schools and three graduated from programs at Valley Career and Technical Center.

Personal Responsibility Education Programs (PREP)

- PREP Coordinator attended *Best Practices for Implementing Fentanyl Prevention Lessons* webinar presented by Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth, May 7.
- PREP Coordinator facilitated Bullying Behavior training for Camp Staunton, Parks and Rec program staff May 31.

Safe Routes to School (SRTS)

- Coordinator participated in meeting with Randall Wolfe and Peter Van Acker to plan details for the Screening of *The Street Project* May 23.

Staunton Downtown Development Association¹

The Staunton Downtown Development Association is on hiatus from any activities outside of the normal day-to-day business.

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.