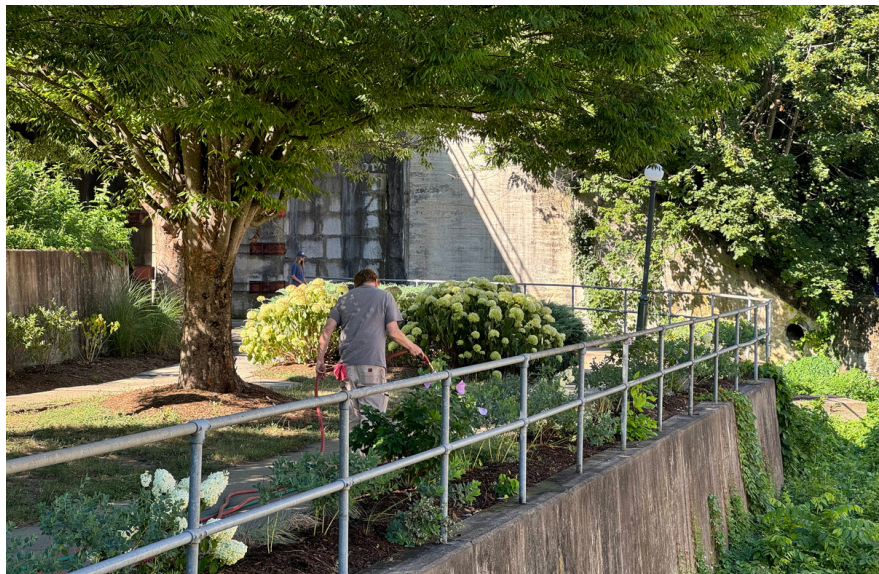


Activity Report Highlights

City of Staunton



VOLUNTARY CONSERVATION CONTINUES

The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality issued a drought warning advisory for the Shenandoah Drought Evaluation Region, which includes the City of Staunton, at the end of June. The water level in the Staunton Reservoir, one of the city's drinking sources, continues to drop. Water stopped overflowing the dam mid-June, and groundwater levels have also dropped from low to very low. Hotter temperatures and lack of rainfall have led to higher water usage. Until the water levels return to normal, the City of Staunton continues to ask all community members to voluntarily reduce their water use. City departments have begun water conservation tactics, such as suspending the testing of fire hydrants, the flushing of water mains, and Parks has begun to water plants using spring water pumped from Gypsy Hill Park.



June 2024

Dispatched Calls for Service*

Police 2,312 ↓

Fire & Rescue 316 ↑

Average Response Time month/year

Police 4'34"/4'03"

Fire & Rescue 4'46"/4'49"

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

By the Numbers

As of June 30, over **260** readers of all ages signed up and earned over **1,800** reading challenge badges.

Since opening in July 2023, the Recycling Center has seen over **31,653** people.

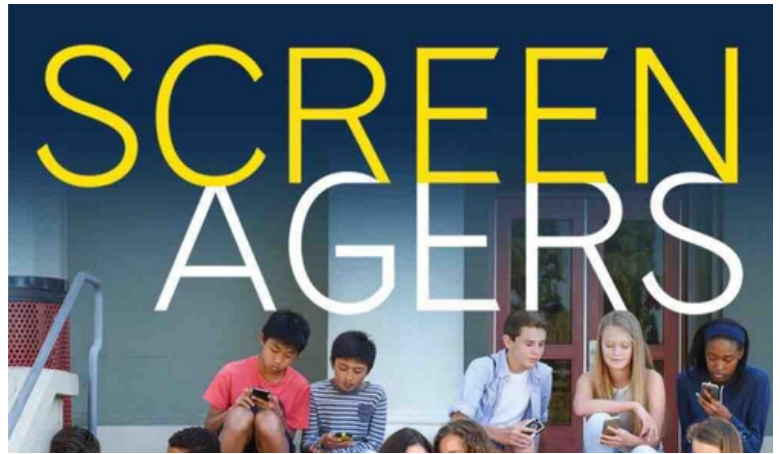
Into the Future

Summer music in the park continues with the Stonewall Brigade Band on **Mondays**; Praise in the Park on **Tuesdays**, Bluegrass on **Wednesdays**; and Jazz on **Thursdays**.

STAUNTON
VIRGINIA

GRANTS HELP OFFICE ON YOUTH

Grants help the Office on Youth bring awareness to the local community about the impact of social media, gaming, internet addiction, vaping, and drug use among teens in our community. The Augusta Health Foundation awarded \$12,500 to the OOOY for the Screenagers Project. Staunton City Schools, in collaboration with OOOY, have received one of the three-year licenses to participate in the project. Screenagers is a collection of three films exploring the vulnerable family dynamics around the impacts of technology today.



STORY WALKS

Story Walks are a set of outdoor kiosks that hold pages of a book so that a family can engage in both physical activity and literacy at the same time! The Story Walk pictured is installed at the NatureRidge Natural Park in Montgomery Hall Park and was made possible from a grant from the Community Foundation of the Central Blue Ridge and funding from the Friends of the Staunton Library. This book features nature activities so that families can observe, explore, and learn about the natural world around them at the park. Many thanks to Parks & Recreation for help with the installation.

NEW CITY LEADERSHIP

There have been quite a few new faces in City of Staunton leadership, and familiar faces in new roles. Samantha Johnson is the new Director of Tourism; Douglas Flinn (far right) is the new City Assessor; and Rodney Rhodes was promoted to Director of Community Development, Dave Irvin (middle) is now Director of Public Works, and Amanda DiMeo (right) is the new Director of Economic Development.



Notes from the City Manager

The Virginia Department of Transportation's (VDOT) recently adopted 6-year plan includes the City's revenue sharing application to complete the streetscape along Churchville Avenue, from Albemarle Avenue to Thornrose Avenue (in front of the old high school). The revenue sharing project is scheduled to be funded in fiscal year 2027-2028. Under the revenue sharing program, VDOT will reimburse localities for 50% of eligible costs for projects accepted into the program. The project includes milling and repaving the

street, a new brick sidewalk, moving overhead utilities underground, new street lights, and additional landscaping. The project was included in the Capital Improvement Plan FY2025-FY2029 and the Staunton Greenways Plan. Implementing the streetscape plan along this block will complete an enhanced pedestrian route from downtown, by way of Central Avenue, along Churchville Avenue to Gypsy Hill Park.

June 2024 Activity Report

Community Development

Key Construction Project Updates

Dunkin Donuts

Final inspections are underway for the new Dunkin Donuts at 704 Greenville Ave.



Firestone Complete Auto Care Center

The construction of the Firestone Complete Auto Care Center at 1008 Richmond Ave. has been completed.

Middlebrook Trace

A Certificate of Occupancy has been issued for building number one, consisting of 41 units, at 601 Moore St. Construction continues on the second three-story apartment building, also consisting of 41 dwelling units.



Staunton Apartments II

A Certificate of Occupancy has been issued for building number 100, and temporary Certificates of Occupancy have been issued for buildings numbered 200 and 300 at 1013 Seth Dr. Five additional apartment buildings are planned for the development. Upon completion there will be a total of 72 new housing 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 – 49 active sites with 92 inspections in June
- Commercial Construction – 9 active sites with 17 inspections in June

The City of Staunton – Watershed Awareness Facebook page had a post reach 2,594 people last month.

Community Development

On June 20, City Council members Arrowood, Edwards, and Woods, along with city staff attended a screening of *The Street Project*, a film about creating safer streets for all road users. The documentary covered the current crisis in bicyclist and pedestrian traffic accidents and provided examples of infrastructure, planning and design strategies to improve road safety for all users. The screening was followed by a panel discussion and open dialogue with the audience. *(Picture following)*



Panelists at The Street Project included City of Staunton Director of Community Development Rodney Rhodes (second from right) and Staunton Planning Commissioner and City of Waynesboro Engineer Scott Kesecker (second from left). (Picture courtesy of Katie Kesecker)

The Gypsy Hill Park Stream Restoration project was featured on WHSV-TV3:
<https://www.whsv.com/2024/07/02/gypsy-hill-park-stream-restoration-project-track-be-completed-2025/>



Housing and Grants Coordination

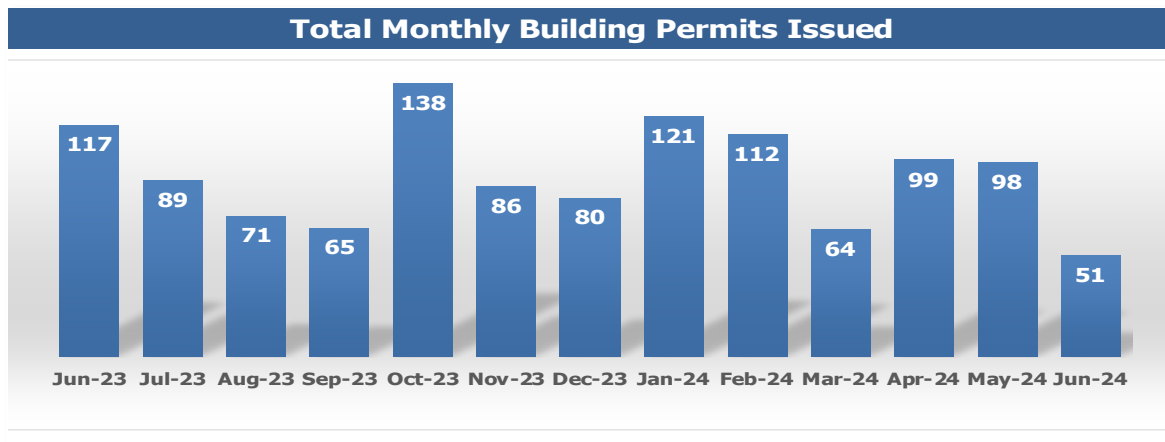
On June 27, Mayor Claffey, City Council members Arrowood, Edwards, and Woods, along with city staff attended the SAW Housing Summit's Next Steps meeting to discuss the work that had gone on since the initial meeting in October 2023. The Regional Housing Study will soon be available at the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission website, www.cspdc.org



Mayor Claffey (far left) and Councilor Woods (far right) were among the attendees at the SAW Housing Summit on June 27 at The Great Hall at the Blackburn Inn & Conference Center. (Picture courtesy of Randall Wolf)

Building Construction and Related Activity

Permits Issued	Jun-24	Jun-23	# Chg	% Chg
New Residential	1	10	-9	-90.0%
Residential Renovations	13	10	3	30.0%
Electrical Permits	17	42	-25	-59.5%
Mechanical Permits	3	13	-10	-76.9%
Plumbing Permits	5	21	-16	-76.2%
Commercial New-Renovations	6	5	1	20.0%
Miscellaneous	6	16	-10	-62.5%
Total	51	117	-66	-56.4%



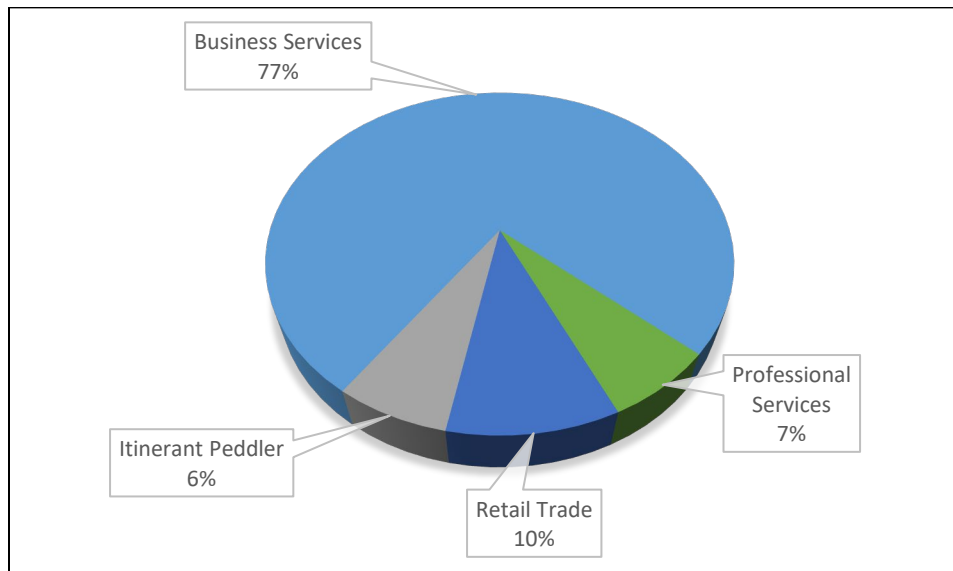
Permit Fees Collected	Jun-24	Jun-23	# Chg	% Chg
New Residential	\$286	\$5,785	-\$5,499	-95.1%
Residential Renovations	\$1,464	\$1,002	\$462	46.1%
Electrical Permits	\$1,571	\$3,920	-\$2,349	-59.9%
Mechanical Permits	\$275	\$1,258	-\$983	-78.1%
Plumbing Permits	\$459	\$2,043	-\$1,584	-77.5%
Commercial New-Renovations	\$581	\$1,431	-\$849	-59.4%
Miscellaneous	\$254	\$1,002	-\$748	-74.7%
Total	\$4,891	\$16,441	-\$11,550	-70.3%

Economic Development

Business License Activity

During the month of June, the Commissioner of Revenue's office issued 30 new business licenses, compared to 29 the previous month, representing a 3.4% increase. This month a year ago, 25 new business licenses were issued.

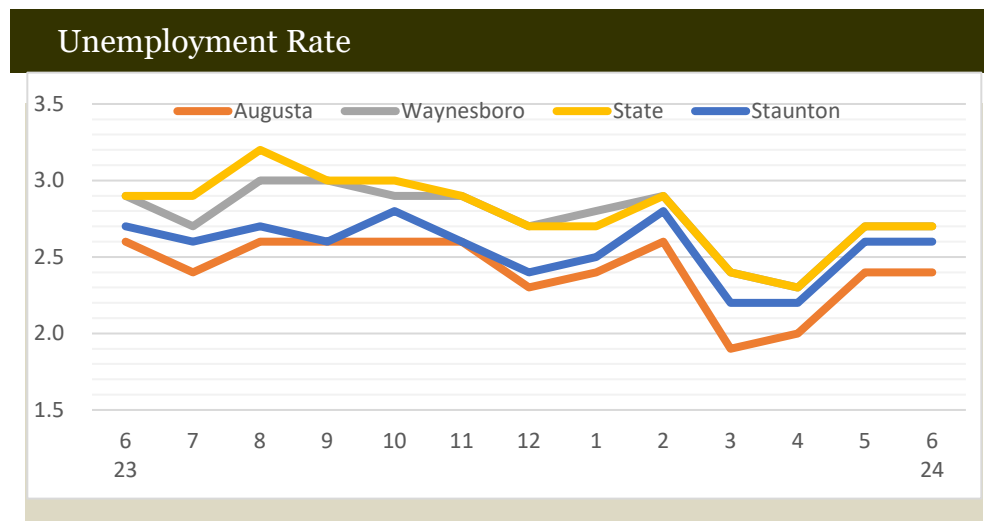
As seen in the following pie chart, the Business Services sector accounted for 77% of the total new licenses issued in June 2024.



Unemployment Data

In May, Staunton's unemployment rate of 2.6% rose .4% from the previous month. As seen in the graph below, Staunton's rate was lower than Waynesboro and the state's rate,

both at 2.7%. Only Augusta County had a lower rate at 2.4%. With a labor force of 12,753, Staunton has 12,421 employed and 332 unemployed in May.



Finance

- The department issued 7,216 utility bills and general bills totaling \$1,178,591 during June.
- Collection activities in June resulted in the recovery of \$8,149 in delinquent utility invoices.
- The Utility Payment Office processed 3,259 receipts in the amount of \$647,155 during June.
- The department processed 612 City and 213 School accounts payable checks totaling \$3,644,569. 904 City and 555 Schools payroll-related advices totaling \$4,064,316 and 70 ACH debit/wire transactions totaling \$137,658 during June.
- The department assisted the Environmental Programs staff in issuing an invitation for bids for the Cole Avenue Stream Restoration & Sanitary Sewer project; Atkins Excavating, Inc. was the low bidder and has been awarded a contract to complete the project.
- The department assisted the Tourism Department in publishing an unsealed request for proposal for data gathering, analysis, marketing research, and reporting services and software, which was due on May 21. After review, Zartico, Inc. was awarded a contract to complete the project.
- The Finance department completed year-end processes including inventory counts, accounts receivable reconciliation, and general billing reconciliation.

Fire & Rescue

- Staunton Fire and Rescue responded to 316 incidents in June, with an average response time of 4 minutes 46 and seconds. The average response time for the year is 4 minutes and 49 seconds.
- Staff received over 429 hours of training in June.
- Staff conducted 65 business fire safety inspections and 10 re-inspections in June.
- Firefighter Jordan Taylor graduated from the Virginia Fire Officers Academy. The Academy is a one-week residency program at the University of Richmond sponsored by the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association.
- Firefighter Savannah Snider served as an instructor for the Camp L.I.T. program. Camp L.I.T. is an all-girls day camp for ages 14-16 who want to learn what it takes to become a firefighter.
- A group of personnel began an American Sign Language class that provides the skills needed to communicate with our deaf community.
- With the assistance of a grant through the Virginia Department of Emergency Management, the department was able to place three new thermal imaging cameras on the apparatus.
- B-Shift responded to a fire at the Depot Restaurant. The fire caused an estimated \$25,000 worth of damage causing the restaurant to remain closed for repairs and to replace aging equipment.

Human Resources

Employee Actions

The following employee actions were processed:

Terminated

Full Time—1

Part Time/Seasonal—8

Hired:

Full Time—3

Part Time—5

Retired—o

Activities

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

Recruitment:

- Initiated recruitment for the following positions:
 - Paralegal – Commonwealth Attorney’s Office
 - Deputy City Engineer
 - Water Treatment Plant Operator
 - Fire Chief
 - Maintenance Worker – Traffic Control
- Continued recruitment for the following positions:
 - Utility Electrical Technician/Utility SCADA Technician
 - Equipment Operator I – Public Works Utilities
 - Police Officer – Certified
 - Equipment Operator II – Public Works Utilities
 - Sanitation Worker
- Human Resource staff attended Craigsville Career Day

Orientations:

- Conducted orientations for two full-time employees.

Information Technology

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

- Upgraded the server and software for the Intranet.
- Structurals have been completed on most of the tower sites for the SAW Regional Radio project. Two tower sites will require minor upgrades, but overall, no significant issues were identified. The final detailed design and review meeting is scheduled for July, releasing the vendor to proceed with installation. Factory acceptance testing for the core L3Harris equipment is scheduled for August. Actual construction and implementation at tower sites and dispatch centers should start in September.
- Presented an update on the new *Acceptable Use Policy* and other cybersecurity topics to Management Team.

- Preliminary work has started for the Enterprise Licensing and Permitting project that will improve planning, permitting, inspections, code enforcement, and compliance. This is a significant multi-departmental project that will transform how Community Development functions and will improve citizen interactions.

Library

Summer Reading Games kicked off on June 1 with a family event featuring music from the Hot Mamas, Nolia's Lemonade, and lawn activities. Roughly 80 people enjoyed the afternoon celebrating literacy and books on the library lawn. As of June 30, over 260 readers of all ages signed up and earned over 1,800 reading challenge badges!

The library hosted its portion of the three-weekend Local Authors Fest series in collaboration with Augusta County and Waynesboro libraries. The Staunton event featured a meet and greet with local nonfiction authors and included workshops on nature writing and the path to publication.

A new partnership with the Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library & Museum now allows library patrons to check out a pass that admits two adults. An SPL library card now gives local residents access to this museum, the Frontier Culture Museum, the state park system and the American Shakespeare Center!

The Young Adult and Juvenile Nonfiction areas got a light makeover with the arrival of some new furniture. Replacing decades-old wooden furniture, the new colorful pieces allow for more flexible arrangements and for more people to use table space.

Library staff began implementation of a new app to streamline the patron experience on mobile devices.



Special events included:

- Spiderman storytime with over 100 attendees!
- Lecture featuring Jonathan Mingle, author of *Gaslight: The Atlantic Coast Pipeline and the Fight for America's Energy Future* with 54 attendees
- Goodlife Puppet Theater performance
- Grand opening storytime celebration of the StoryWalk at NatureRidge Natural Playground at Montgomery Hall Park
- Basics of Wilderness Survival discussion and workshop
- Summer Scares book clubs for tweens and teens

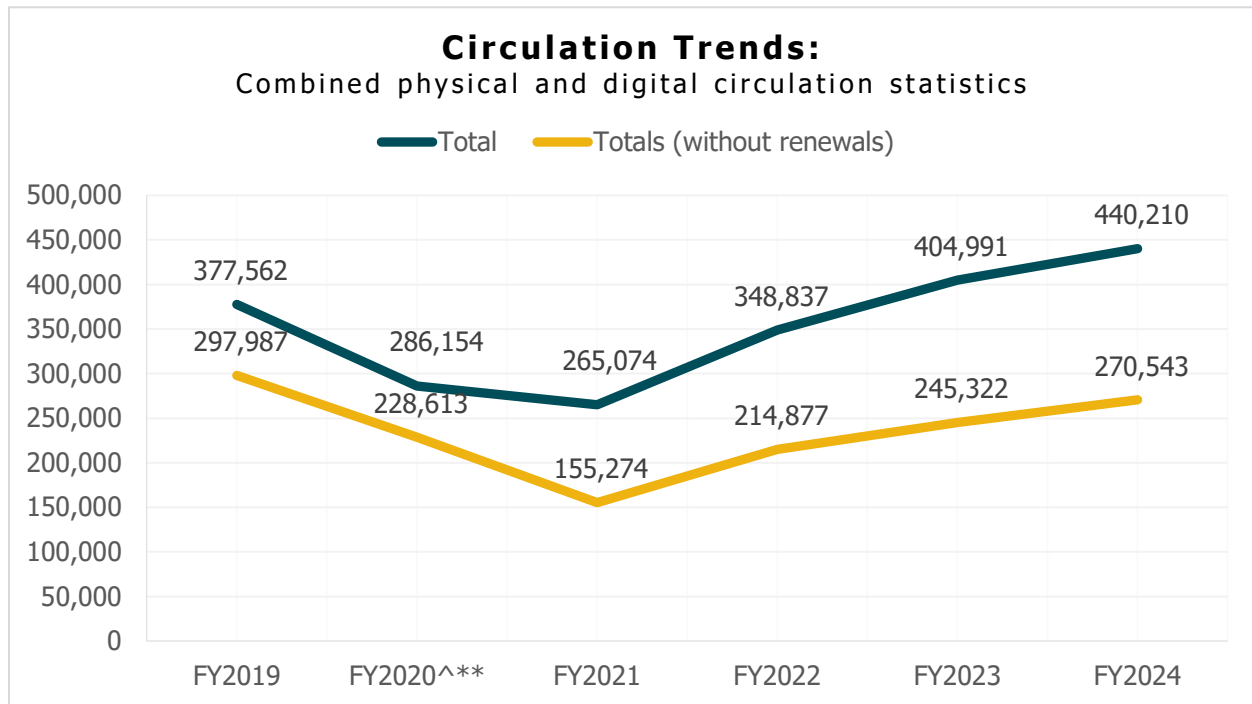


Statistical Report: June 2024 and End of Year Wrap-Up

CIRCULATION	Jun-24	FY 2024	FY 2023		Change
Adult	9,961	121,516	117,282		4%
Young Adult (YA)	1,026	9,588	8,235		16%
Juvenile	7,472	82,346	81,971		0%
Digital	5,501	61,897	46,230		34%
Total Circulation	23,960	275,347	253,718		9%
Talking Book Center Circulation	1,331	15,162	15,133		0%
Items Checked In	20,207	239,427	233,506		3%
Outgoing to VLC Libraries	1,793	23,263	23,824		-2%
Incoming from VLC Libraries	1,490	20,082	19,711		2%
Total Holds Filled	4,923	60,514	62,024		-2%
Added to Collection	891	10,877	10,797		1%
Withdrawn from Collection	53	15,619	9,649		62%
SERVICES					
ILLs Borrowed	11	161	173		-7%
Book-a-Librarians and Proctoring Appointments	-	54	30		80%

PROGRAMS					
Adult	13	145	103		41%
Attendance	269	3,624	2,078		74%
YA	4	79	89		-11%
Attendance	584	7,804	6,640		18%
Juvenile	37	477	442		8%
Attendance	1,656	19,424	17,662		10%
PEOPLE					
Library Visits	12,913	156,341	133,582		17%
Curbside Visits	37	868	941		-8%
Computer Users	611	8,287	7,879		5%
Juvenile Computer Users	1,526	11,271	7,962		42%
Meetings Held	3	47	2		2250%
Volunteer Hours	122	1,549	1,347		15%
New Card Registrations	167	2,195	1,901		15%
Total Registered Cards		18,225	19,879		-8%

Statistics Discussion: Comparison to Previous Fiscal Years



[^]Automatic renewals went into effect February 2020: due to state report circulation statistic definitions, SPL cannot count computer-generated renewals toward circulation stats. ^{**}Overdue fines paused during March 2020 due to pandemic; permanently eliminated July 1, 2020.

Parks & Recreation

Horticulture

Horticulture completed the following tasks:

- City Horticulturist Matt Sensabaugh presented a brief talk to the Staunton Kiwanis Club about the Spotted Lantern Fly.
- Staunton resident Thelma Newman was honored with a park bench in Gypsy Hill Park on June 29.
- Effective July 1, staff switched watering of the flower beds to water pumped from the springs in Gypsy Hill Park.
- Tree Work:
 - A large Fraser Fir took a direct lightning strike in Gypsy Hill Park, requiring an emergency removal. Nine additional dead trees were removed from the park as well.



Maintenance

Park Maintenance completed the following:

- Made repairs to the irrigation system at Moxie Stadium in Gypsy Hill Park and the soccer complex located in Montgomery Hall Park.
- Assisted with ribbon cutting ceremony at Staunton Crossing.
- Painted handrails at the Gypsy Hill Park gym.
- Assisted with preparation for the July 4th activities in Gypsy Hill Park.

Community Outreach

Staff engaged in the following community outreach activities

- HEART registration opened on June 11 at the Gypsy Hill Gym. McSwain is at capacity for the upcoming school year with 70 children enrolled, Ware has 67 participants, and Bessie Weller has 20.
- Camp Staunton began with an average of 100 children total participating at the camps in the Gypsy Hill Gym and Garden Center locations.
 - Highlights for Camp Staunton include swimming, archery, petting zoo, talent show, and weekly field trips.

Police

- The new Priority Emergency Medical Dispatch project was completed, with the E-911 Center utilizing the software beginning on June 11.
- Captain Chad Kauffman graduated from the Police Executive Research Forum's Senior Management Institute in June.

- All sworn personnel completed annual biased-based policing and cultural diversity training during the month.
- The Police Department's E-911 Center handled a total of 4,319 telephone calls during the month, including 1,244 9-1-1 calls.
- Police personnel responded to 2,312 incidents during the month, including 1,207 citizen calls for service, 521 officer initiated activities, 148 administrative calls, and 436 directed patrols.
- The average response time for police emergency calls for service during the month was 4 minutes and 34 seconds; it is 4 minutes and 3 seconds for the year.

Public Works

- Dave Irvin was named the new Director of Public Works.
- The Utility Office established 52 new owner accounts, 26 new rental residential accounts, and 8 commercial accounts.
- The Public Works Utility Office collected \$45,357 in payments.
- 32 accounts were cut off for non-payment during two cut off weeks. Of those cut off, 24 were reconnected after payments were made or a payment plan established.
- Utility crews repaired two water main breaks, one valve, and four water meters. The crew responded to one sewer main blockage and five sewer lateral blockages.
- The Streets Department mowed and completed weed eating and brush cutting throughout the city, installed a guardrail on St. Clair St., installed signs, painted, and did asphalt patches.
- The Facilities Department has been busy working on HVAC systems, replacing light bulbs, fixing water leaks, and small construction projects throughout the city.
- The Recycling Center has seen over 31,653 people since it opened up at its new location in July 2023

Tourism

Activities:

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

- June blog promotions featured [Pet-Friendly Staunton: Where To Stay, Eat, And Play!](#), [Celebrate Juneteenth And African American History Day](#), [Summer Begins! How To See Virginia's Flora And Fauna](#), [How To Have A Blast This 4th Of July In Staunton](#)
- Partnered with VTC International to host German travel writer Domonik Mohr
- Provided welcome bags for the Local Government Attorneys of Virginia conference

Public Relations

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

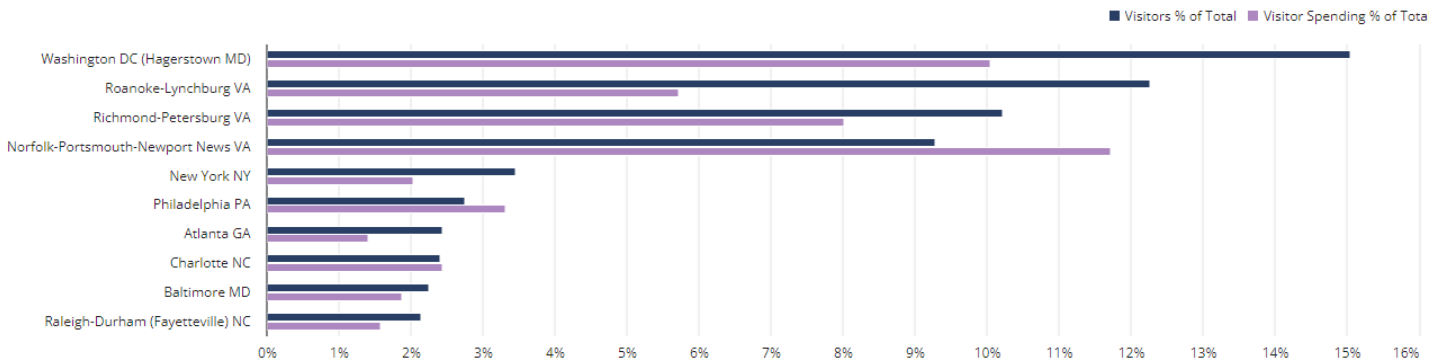
Date	Headline	Source	Reach
June 14	The 9 Best Towns in Virginia for Antiquing	Southern Living	14,483,139
June 2	10 Towns Perfect for Retirement in Virginia	World Atlas	5,483,253
June 23	These 7 Towns in Virginia Have Beautiful Architecture	World Atlas	5,132,971
June 20	8 of the Most Walkable Towns in Virginia	World Atlas	5,132,971
June 19	8 Towns in Virginia with the Best Downtown Areas in 2024	World Atlas	5,132,971
June 17	7 Delightful Towns to Visit in Mid-South	World Atlas	5,132,971
June 17	10 Coziest Towns to Visit in Virginia	World Atlas	5,132,971
June 28	9 of the best places in the US to escape the crowds	Lonely Planet	4,573,891
June 13	Staunton Underground Comics and Zine Fest returns to the Queen City	WHSV-TV	363,880
June 4	Staunton: New director of tourism says city knows its worth as place to live, visit	The Augusta Free Press	269,729
June 26	Happy Birthday America: Staunton tradition welcomes Fairland Ferguson as grand marshal	The Augusta Free Press	189,998
June 14	Staunton among 25 Virginia localities awarded tourism funds from VA250	The Augusta Free Press	189,998
June 5	Heifetz 2024 Festival of Concerts	News Leader	118,685
June 24	Music to the ear: Free summer concert series set for Staunton's Gypsy Hill Park bandstand	News Leader	101,134
June 21	Summer Grubbin'	Richmond Magazine	40,037
June 21	Hear the 'stars of tomorrow' today at Heifetz International Music Institute festival in Staunton	The News Virginian	34,984
			51,513,583

Website Visitation

Website Traffic		
June 2023	June 2024	% Change
34,000 visitors	38,000 visitors	+11.77%
135 visitor's guide requests	169 visitor's guide requests	+25.1%

Top 10 Origin Markets and Visitor Spending

Top 10 Origin Markets by Visitation with their Spend



****Changes from May:** Top 6 markets no change. DC & Richmond visitation increased slightly but spending dropped. Newport News spending increased over 6%. Increased visitation from Atlanta, Baltimore, and Raleigh. Top visitor pools were surveyed at accommodations, meeting/event space, railway, and Staunton attractions.

Office on Youth

Crime Control Programs

- Twelve youth received detention alternative services.

Parenting Programs

The following parenting classes were conducted:

- Active Parenting - First 5 Years, 3 participants
- Active Parenting, 6
- Parenting and Divorce co-parenting program, 15
- Loving Solutions, 11
- WARM Shelter parenting programs, 6

Outreach Program

- Community in Motion participated in “Things That Go Adventure” at the Fishersville Library June 4 and the Waynesboro Farmer’s Market June 29

Check and Connect– Truancy Prevention

- 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.
- One Check and Connect participant attended the Girls Empowerment Retreat through New Directions.

Personal Responsibility Education Programs (PREP)

- PREP facilitated the Screenager Project *Under the Influence* viewing and discussion for 25 rising 9th-grade students participating in the Bridge program at Staunton High School on June 21.

Safe Routes to School

- Coordinator met with City of Staunton Intern Caroline Motley to discuss the OOY SRTS program on June 25.

Community/Etc.

- Division Supervisor and Director attended awards ceremony as recipient of a Community Foundation grant on June 13.
- Division Supervisor and Director participated in a site visit from Augusta Health as recipients of a Strategic Funding Grant on June 21.

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.