

Activity Report Highlights

City of Staunton



STAUNTON PD EARNS REACCREDITATION

Since the spring of 1985, the Staunton Police Department has been accredited through the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA). The most recent reaccreditation occurred during the annual conference in Winston-Salem. To be accredited, the department must successfully meet more than 400 standards pertaining to all aspects of police operations and administration. City residents benefit from the process with the assurance that the police department maintains procedures to encourage, listen, and respond to citizen requests, needs, complaints, and inquiries. The City of Staunton Police Department is the longest continuously accredited department in the world.



July 2024

Dispatched Calls for Service*

Police 2,857 ↑

Fire & Rescue 309 ↓

Average Response Time month/year

Police 4'10"/4'04"

Fire & Rescue 4'36"/4'47"

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

By the Numbers

Horticulture saves **10,000** gallons of water per week by pumping from GHP spring to water flower beds and new trees.

477 readers participated in the Library's 2024 Summer Reading Games.

16 employees, with a combined service of **200** years to the city, were honored at the July Service Pin Luncheon.

Into the Future

Early voting begins **Sept. 20** at City Hall and continues until **Nov. 2**

Queen City Mischief and Magic is **Sept. 28 & 29**.



CITIZEN UNIVERSITY RETURNS

Staunton Citizen University (SCU) returns this fall, offering residents a unique, inside look at how their local government operates. Starting Sept. 10, the city will host the 10-week interactive course designed to give students streamlined, but robust, exposure to key departments of the city and several regional agencies. Each Tuesday through Nov. 12, the city will host a two-hour evening session on topics that include economic development, budget and taxes, public safety, parks and recreation, courts and corrections, public works, and much more.



WORK BEGINS ON NEW LIBRARY TERRACE

Renovation of the library's backyard has begun! Phase One of the Friends of the Staunton Library's Terrace Project started with tree removal on July 30. Trees had to be removed to prepare the site for the hardscaped terrace, seating, and accessible walkway. The Friends pledged to replant an equal number of trees as those taken down in preparation for the Terrace. Both WHSV and The News Leader featured the renovation project which is being fully funded by the Friends. The start date for the next phase is to be determined as design details are finalized.

COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

The city was fortunate to get a great response rate from the National Community Survey and was able to hear directly from residents on many topics. NCS is a scientific benchmarking survey used by communities across the country. The city will commission this survey every two years. The results from that survey are available at www.staunton.va.us/communitysurvey.

OVERALL PERCEPTIONS

The following percentages are for resident ratings of Excellent or Good.



Notes from the City Manager

August 8 seems to be a day destined for weather events in Staunton. 2003 and 2020 were major floods here in the City of Staunton. As Tropical Storm Debby approached Staunton, the city began preparing for heavy rain, possible flooding, and power outages. With Debby just on the horizon, Public Works ordered extra fuel and started checking emergency generators and equipment, including trucks and chainsaws. Parks & Rec and Public Works crews worked together to clear storm drain inlets and remove debris near pipes and

culverts that may have impeded the flow of runoff, leading to flooding. The city also started a slow release of water at Lake Tams in Gypsy Hill Park to increase stormwater retention capacity. Residents and business owners were also able to fill sandbags at Public Works and Montgomery Hall Park to help prepare areas susceptible to flooding.

While the rainfall was nearly 6 inches in some places, Staunton survived with very little damage and all the prep work of city crews was a success.

July 2024 Activity Report

Community Development

Key Construction Project Updates

Dunkin Donuts

Final inspections have been completed for the new Dunkin Donuts at 704 Greenville Ave. Certificate of Occupancy has been issued, job is complete, and the business is open.



Middlebrook Trace

A Certificate of Occupancy has been issued for building number one of Middlebrook Trace. At 6-1 Moore St., consisting of 41 units.

Middlebrook Trace II

Construction continues on a four-story apartment building consisting of 48 units with a total of 62,011 square feet to be located at 801 Moore St. All rough in inspections are done.



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. A building permit has been issued for Building 400, a 10-unit apartment building.

Arcadia Building

Footer and underslab inspections are complete at 119 E Beverley St., the Arcadia Building. Rough in inspections being scheduled.

1031 Richmond Ave

Demolition is underway of the Econo Lodge at 1031 Richmond Ave to build a Wawa convenience store/gas station and building plans are under review.



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 – 47 active sites with 87 inspections in July
- Commercial Construction – 9 active sites with 16 inspections in July

Housing and Grants Coordination

On Thursday, July 25, Staunton City Council adopted the 2024-2028 Consolidated Plan and the 2024 Annual Action Plan (AAP) for the City's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. Because Staunton is a CDBG Entitlement Community and receives annual funding, it is required to update its Consolidated Plan every five years and create a new AAP every year. The Consolidated Plan describes community needs, resources, priorities, and proposed activities to be undertaken through the community's CDBG program. The plan includes a housing and homeless needs assessment, a housing market analysis, a strategic plan for five years, and the Annual Action Plan for the upcoming fiscal year. The plan also includes the goals that the City's CDBG program will

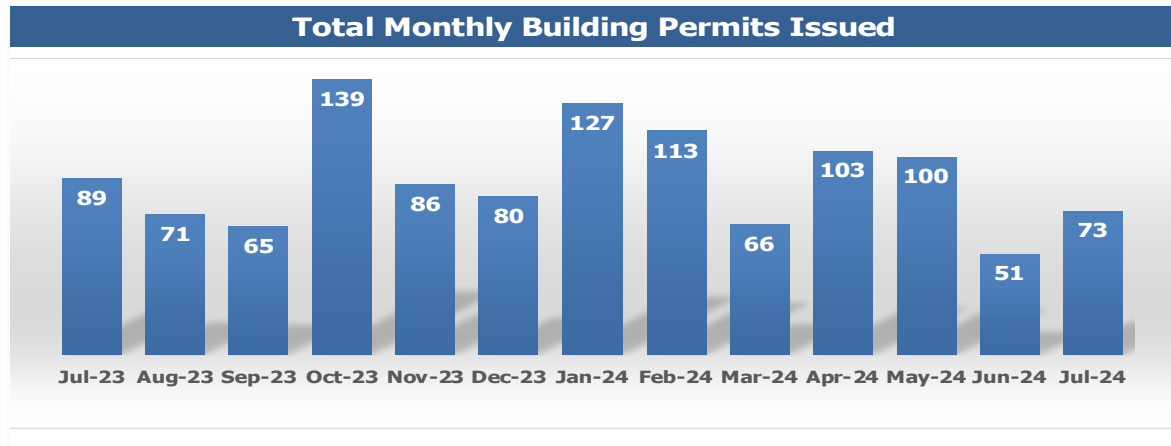
focus on during the next five years. Those goals include improving the access to and quality of housing, providing public services, improving public facilities and infrastructure, and slum and blight removal. Community engagement was a key part of the planning process through four stakeholder input sessions and two public hearings. The CDBG Consolidated Plan can be found on the City website at <https://www.ci.staunton.va.us/departments/community-development/housing-programs-division/hud-cdbg/>.

July 18, Planning Commission Actions

At its July 18 meeting, the Planning Commission recommended approval of a final plat to accept the newly completed extension of Crossing Way. Planning Commission deferred action on a requested Special Use Permit to construct 308 multi-family units at 206 Frontier Dr. The Commission requested additional information related to potential traffic impacts on Frontier Drive as well as stormwater management and grading for the lot. Planning Commission authorized staff to begin work to draft the following amendments to the Zoning Code: amendments to Chapters 18.10 and 18.140 to change the definition of roof sign and allow wall signs to extend above the line of a roof in certain situations, an amendment to Chapter 18.125 to reduce the number of parking spaces required for multi-family developments, and an amendment to 18.130 to alter the requirements for parking and storage of trailers in residential zoning districts.

Building Construction and Related Activity

Permits Issued	Jul-24	Jul-23	# Chg	% Chg
New Residential	4	6	-2	-33.3%
Residential Renovations	12	9	3	33.3%
Electrical Permits	18	28	-10	-35.7%
Mechanical Permits	7	12	-5	-41.7%
Plumbing Permits	11	17	-6	-35.3%
Commercial New-Renovations	13	6	7	116.7%
Miscellaneous	8	11	-3	-27.3%
Total	73	89	-16	-18.0%



Economic Development

Staunton West End Business Association

On July 30, Ms. DiMeo attended the Members' Meeting of the Staunton West End Business Association at Queen City Brewery. City Manager Leslie Beauregard gave an update on city efforts in the West End including the West End Revitalization Plan Strategy and construction of the J&DR Courts Building.



Hotel 24 South Celebration

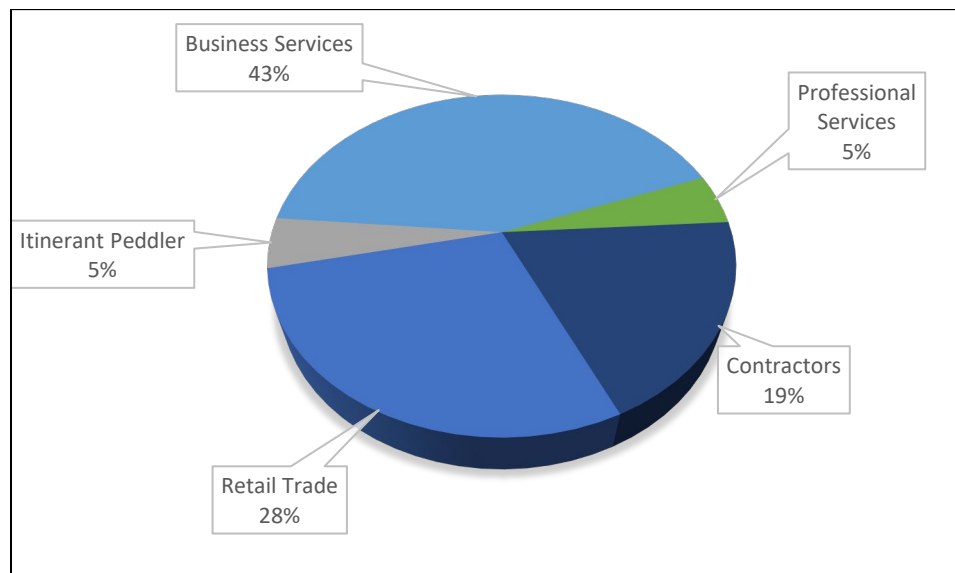
Hotel 24 South held their 100-year birthday on July 11. Special music was provided by the Heifetz International Music Institute, City Council member Mark Robertson presented the hotel with a special proclamation from the city, and Historic Hotels of America-Historic Hotels Worldwide recognized the hotel's century-long legacy.



Business License Activity

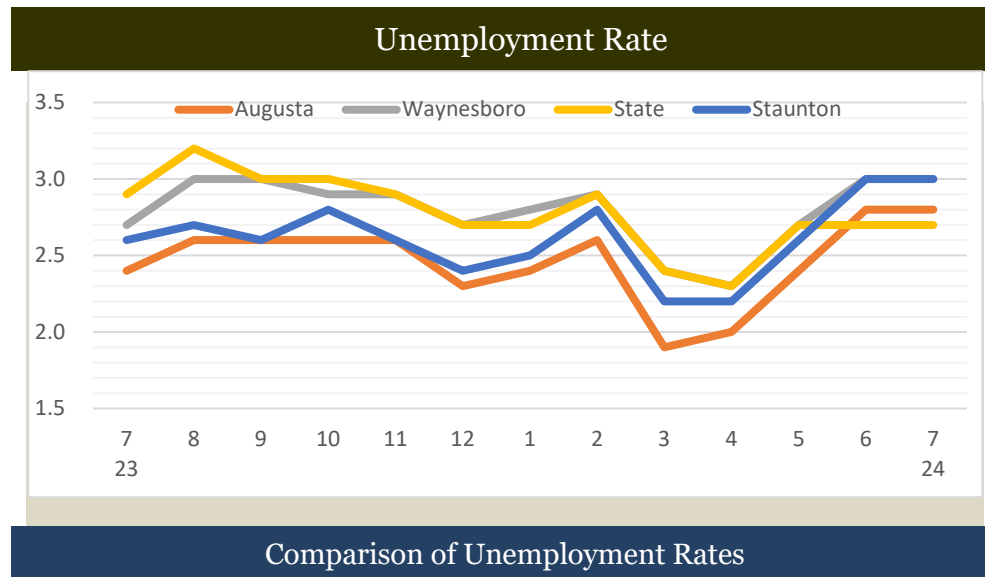
During the month of July, the Commissioner of Revenue's Office issued 21 new business licenses, compared to 30 the previous month, representing a 30% decrease. This month a year ago, 24 new business licenses were issued.

As seen in the following pie chart, the Business Services sector accounted for 43% of the total new licenses issued in July.



Unemployment Data

In June, Staunton's unemployment rate was 3.0%, having risen .4% from the previous month. As seen in the graph below, Staunton's rate was equal to Waynesboro's and slightly higher than the state's rate of 2.7%. Augusta County's rate rose .4% to a rate of 2.8%. With a labor force of 12,813, Staunton has 12,430 employed and 383 unemployed in June.



Finance

- The department issued 7,653 utility bills and general bills totaling \$1,064,041 during July.
- Collection activities in July resulted in the recovery of \$4,239 in delinquent utility invoices.
- The Utility Payment Office processed 3,146 receipts in the amount of \$655,520 during July.
- The department processed 381 City and 177 School accounts payable checks totaling \$6,008,287. 872 City and 533 Schools payroll-related advices totaling \$4,021,410 and 84 ACH debit/wire transactions totaling \$4,569,626 during July.
- The Finance Department continues to complete year-end processes, including inventory counts, accounts receivable reconciliation, general billing reconciliation, and purchase order reconciliation.
- Finance Business Manager Chad Horvat completed his Virginia Contracting Officer recertification.
- The Student Activity Funds audit was completed in July. Fieldwork for the regular city and school audit will be held on-site during the first week of October.
- Staff filed the mandatory quarterly reporting for the American Rescue Plan Act funds. All of the ARPA funds have been committed for various projects, but the city still has \$2.6 million unencumbered. All funds must be obligated before December 31, 2024 and expended by December 31, 2026.

Fire & Rescue

- Staunton Fire and Rescue responded to 309 incidents in July, with an average response time of 4 minutes 36 and seconds. The average response time for the year is 4 minutes and 47 seconds.
- Staff received over 437 hours of training in June.
- Staff conducted 68 business fire safety inspections and 32 re-inspections in June.
- Staff spoke with a group of children at Covenant Presbyterian's Preschool summer camp.
- Micah Miller joined the B-Shift team at Station 2.
- On July 3, Ladder 1 participated in a reverse parade that drove by local nursing homes for those residents who are unable to leave the facilities.
- Firefighter Savannah Snyder received Employee of the Quarter for her hard work and dedication to the department.

Human Resources

Employee Actions

The following employee actions were processed:

Terminated:

Full Time—5

Part Time/Seasonal—2

Hired:

Full Time—3

Part Time—4

Retired—0

Activities

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

Recruitment:

Initiated recruitment for the following positions:

- Firefighter/EMTs – Part-Time
- Recreational Program Aide – 2024-25
- Trades worker – Electrician
- School Crossing Guards – Police Department
- Utility Service Technician – Traffic Signals
- Police Officer
- Substitute Recreational Program Aide – 2024-25
- Superintendent of Utilities
- Regional Firefighter Testing Announcement
- Continued recruitment for the following positions:
 - Utility Electrical Technician/Utility SCADA Technician
 - Police Officer – Certified
 - Equipment Operator II – Public Works Utilities
 - Sanitation Worker
 - Paralegal – Commonwealth Attorney’s Office
 - Maintenance Worker – Traffic Control

Orientations:

- Conducted orientations for five full-time employees.

Other:

- A Service Pin Luncheon was held at Montgomery Hall Park on July 11 to honor 16 employees with a combined service of 200 years.

Information Technology

- Work continues at the Library for door access controls. This will provide better security for staff in work areas and areas not open to the public. Security cameras were also installed at Fire Station 1.
- Started the project to upgrade network connectivity at Gardner Springs. A new circuit is required for the new facility as well as the current carrier discontinuing the existing circuit method.
- The final detailed design and review meeting for the SAW Regional Radio project occurred. With a few minor design issues to resolve, the vendor can 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.

- The core network router was upgraded, replacing ten-year old hardware. The new router provides better throughput. The router provides backbone connectivity to all city and school facilities.

Library

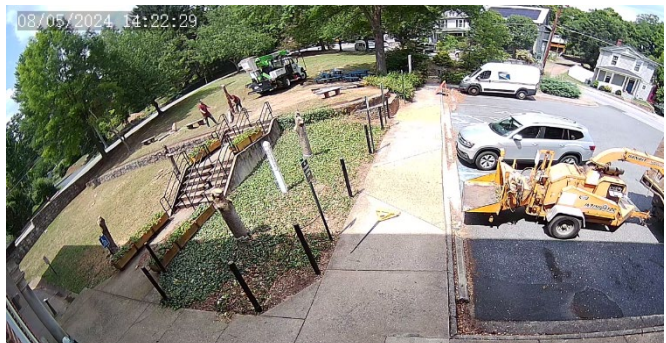
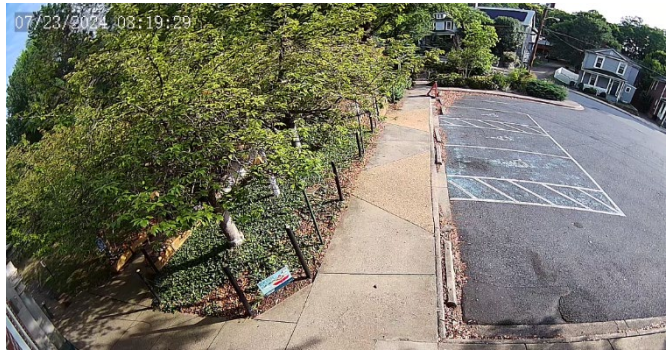
Renovation of the library's backyard has begun! Phase One of the Friends of the Staunton Library's Terrace Project started with tree removal on July 30. Trees had to be removed to prepare the site for the hardscaped terrace, seating, and accessible walkway. The Friends pledged to replant an equal number of trees as those taken down in preparation for the Terrace. Both WHSV and *The News Leader* featured the renovation project which is being fully funded by the Friends. The start date for the next phase is to be determined as design details are finalized.

The 2024 Summer Reading Games came to a close. Four hundred seventy-seven readers participated in this year's program, competing to complete bingo and win prizes.

Public Works assisted with the installation of gallery rails so the library can host rotating art exhibits throughout the year. The first exhibit is *This is Home*, a photojournalism series that highlights local housing insecurity.

Special programs included:

- A lecture from WHSV Chief Meteorologist Aubrey Urbanowicz
- A special mermaid storytime featuring Pearl the Mermaid
- And a magic show that welcomed 140 attendees!



Library Statistical Report: July 2024

CIRCULATION	Month		SERVICES	Month
Adult	10,634		ILLs Borrowed	7
Young Adult (YA)	893		ILLs Lent	0
Juvenile	7,820		Proctoring/Book-a-Librarians	1
Digital	5,871			
Total Circulation	25,218		PROGRAMS	
Talking Book Center Circulation	1,487		Adult	13
			Attendance	346
Items Checked In	21,651		YA	4
			Attendance	585
Outgoing to VLC Libraries	1,885		Juvenile	40
Incoming from VLC Libraries	1,658		Attendance	1,661
Total Holds Filled	5,414			
			PEOPLE	
Added to Collection	959		Library Visits	13,346
Withdrawn from Collection	5,128		Curbside Visits	39
			Computer Users	709
Database Use/Sessions	2,061		Juvenile Computer Users	1,838
			Meetings Held	3
			Volunteer Hours	148
			New Card Registrations	220
			Total Registered Cards	14,322

Parks & Recreation

Horticulture

Horticulture completed the following tasks:

- On July 1 Horticulture switched to pumping water from the springs in Gypsy Hill Park for the watering of flower beds and new trees. Pumping from the springs requires additional labor but saves around 9-10,000 gallons of water per week.
- Completed prep work for July 4th activities in Gypsy Hill Park.
 - Pruning low limbs in bandstand area and along park road for the parade.
 - Clean up and weeding of beds near east entry, pump house, dogwood beds, bear cage, flag plaza, Statler monument and dog park area.
- Completed work through our key downtown areas, weeding and doing touch up pruning at Greenthumb Park, underpass, city courts, Augusta/North New lot, Randall building, Johnson St. garage, Central Ave. beds, RMA lot, White Star lot and Augusta courts lot

Maintenance

- Park Maintenance installed new playground equipment at the tot lot in Gypsy Hill Park.

Community Outreach

Staff engaged in the following community outreach activities

- HEART registration was complete and current numbers are as follows:
 - McSwain, 71 participants
 - Ware, 70 participants
 - Bessie Weller, 30 participants
- Camp Staunton completed on Friday, July 26.
 - A few highlights of Camp Staunton included swimming, magic show, circus show, visit from the underground classroom, field trips to Mint Springs Park in Crozet, Yogis resort in Luray, and Dinosaur Land.
- Programs for July:
 - Morning Warmups, 17 participants
 - Little seedlings, 6 participants
 - Explorers Club, 13 participants
 - Jam Nights, 7 participants
 - Soap Making, 9 participants

Police

- The Department received its 12th Accreditation award through the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) during the month at the annual conference in Winston-Salem. The City of Staunton Police Department is the longest continuously accredited department in the world.
- The Department entered into an agreement with the National Policing Institute to participate in a research study examining stress in police officers. The study aims to identify organizational stressors and then develop strategies to help mitigate work-related stress in employees.
- The Police Department's E-911 Center handled a total of 4,747 telephone calls during the month, including 1,215 9-1-1 calls.
- Police personnel responded to 2,857 incidents during the month, including 1,590 citizen calls for service, 551 officer initiated activities, 230 administrative calls, and 486 directed patrols.
- The average response time for police emergency calls for service during the month was 4 minutes and 10 seconds; it is 4 minutes and 4 seconds for the year.

Public Works

- The Utility Office established 41 new owner accounts, 28 new rental residential accounts, and eight commercial accounts.
- The Utility Office collected \$49,753 in payments.
- Fourteen accounts were cut off for non-payment during one cut off week. Of those cut off, 10 were reconnected after payments were made or a payment plan established.
- Utility crews repaired eight water main breaks, two valves, and five water meters. The crew responded to one sewer main blockage and six sewer lateral blockages. The crew also replaced one fire hydrant.
- The Streets Division has been doing asphalt and concrete patches for water and sewer utility repairs. Crews have been mowing Right of Way and making and installing signs. A contractor was used to cut down six dead trees on city right of ways.
- The Facilities Division has been busy repairing HVAC systems, water leaks, and electrical issues in the city buildings.
- The Refuse Division assisted with Fourth of July festivities.

Tourism

Activities:

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

- July blog promotions featured [How To Have A Blast This 4th Of July In Staunton](#), [Unique Hobbies To Explore In Staunton](#), [Sweet Summertime In Staunton](#), [How To Plan A Multigenerational Family Vacation In Staunton](#), [Cheers To Craft Beers](#)
- Wright's Dairy Bar featured in [Garden & Gun Magazine's Top 7 Old-School Diners](#)
- New Staunton Visitors Guide has arrived and has been delivered to various regional attractions

Website Visitation

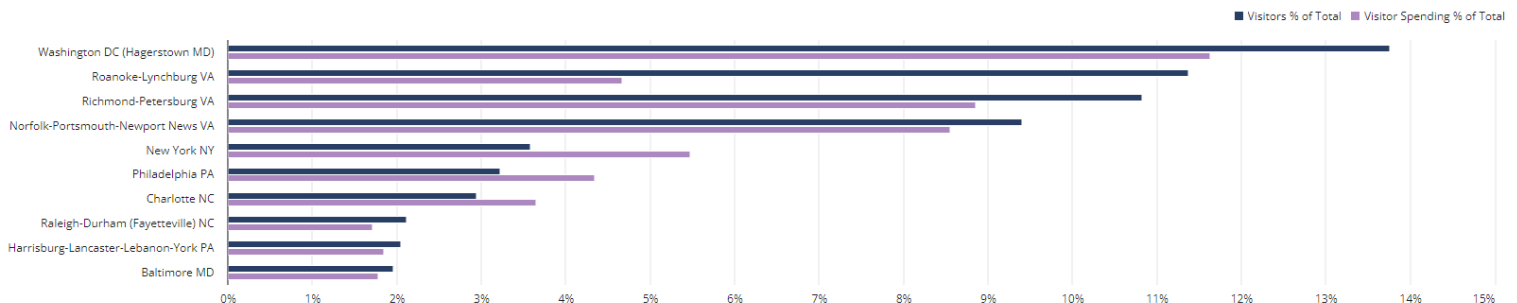
Website Traffic		
July 2023	July 2024	% Change
43,000 visitors	30,000 visitors	-30.23%
209 visitor's guide requests	169 visitor's guide requests 235 Digital Guides via Blue Ridge County Magazine	19.1%

PR Report

Date	Headline	Source	Reach
July 16	Hotel 24 South Receives Proclamations from Historic Hotels of America & the City of Staunton as it Celebrates its 100th Anniversary	Associated Press	49,992,567
July 14	10 Best Places to Live in the South, According to Local Real Estate Experts	Travel and Leisure	14,869,703
July 21	2024's 10 Most Beautiful Small Towns in Virginia	World Atlas	4,547,170
July 20	10 Ideal Virginia Destinations for a 3-Day Weekend in 2024	World Atlas	4,547,170
July 11	The Most Picturesque Small Towns in Virginia	World Atlas	4,547,170
July 8	2024's 9 Most Adorable Small Towns in the Mid-South	World Atlas	4,547,170
July 8	9 Affordable Mountain Towns You Can Actually Move To	Yahoo! Lifestyle	4,382,107
July 10	Add A Trip To Staunton, Virginia, To Your Summer Bucket List	Only In Your Town	393,082
July 28	Staunton art shop turns trash to treasure	WHSV-TV	366,940
July 30	American Shakespeare Center's 'MacBeth' breaks the fourth wall without breaking with convention	The Daily Progress	257,767
July 31	Staunton Jams expanding to three festivals a year, starting in September	News Leader	101,819
July 11	Staunton: Silver Line Theatre presents Tony Award-winning show, farm-to-table dinner	Augusta Free Press	93,256
July 19	Festivals Spotlight Virginia's Rich Diversity	Alexandria Living Magazine	33,544
July 16	Hotel 24 South Hosts 100-Year Event With Historic Hotels of America	Lodging Magazine	25,474
July 26	Discover these 10 presidential home sites in Virginia	The Dogwood	23,082
July 29	Visit to the FRONTIER CULTURE MUSEUM (Staunton, VA)	Rumble	unknown
		TOTAL	88,728,021

Top 10 Origin Markets and Visitor Spending

Top 10 Origin Markets by Visitation with their Spend



**Changes from May: Top 6 DMA visitation consistent MoM. DC, Richmond, Philly, Charlotte, Baltimore, Raleigh visitation increase. Norfolk spending increased by 3.5%. Harrisburg/Lancaster area and Baltimore pushed Atlanta out of Top 10. Visitors contributed 22.4% of overall monthly spending, with a \$54 daily average.

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
 - Loving Solutions, 11
 - WARM Shelter parenting programs, 6
 - Active Parenting, 6
 - Parenting and Divorce co-parenting program, 11

Outreach Programs

- A new Outreach Coordinator started July 15

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.
- Truancy prevention staff completed 15.5 training hours.

Community/Etc.

- Division Supervisor and Director attended the Opioid Abatement town hall July 18.
- Five OOO staff attended Children Service Act (CSA) Training and Resource Fair at James Madison University July 26.
- Six OOO staff participated in the Virginia Juvenile Community Crime Control Act (VJCCCA) Overview of Service and Program Presentation with Staunton and Augusta Juvenile Courts and Commonwealth Attorneys July 31.

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.