

City of Staunton

Activity Report Highlights



By the Numbers

Originally built in the **1950s**

New construction cost of
\$2.3M

Open daily **12 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.**

Lap Swim -
9:30-11:30 a.m. Sun/Wed
8-10 a.m. Tues/Thurs

New Pool House Opens for Summer 2026

The City of Staunton celebrated the completion of the new Gypsy Hill Park Pool House with a ribbon-cutting ceremony and public open house. The modern facility replaces the original 1958 pool house and includes zero-barrier access, private family restrooms, an updated concession area, and a covered patio. The project was funded primarily through federal ARPA dollars and interest earned on Capital Improvement Plan reserves, minimizing the impact on local revenues. Parks and Recreation Director Chris Tuttle said the new building better serves the accessibility, privacy, and comfort needs of today's families. The city also announced plans to extend weekend pool operations through Labor Day in 2026, pending lifeguard staffing.



June 2026

Dispatched Calls for Service*

Police 2,794↑

Fire & Rescue 374↑

Average Response Time month/year

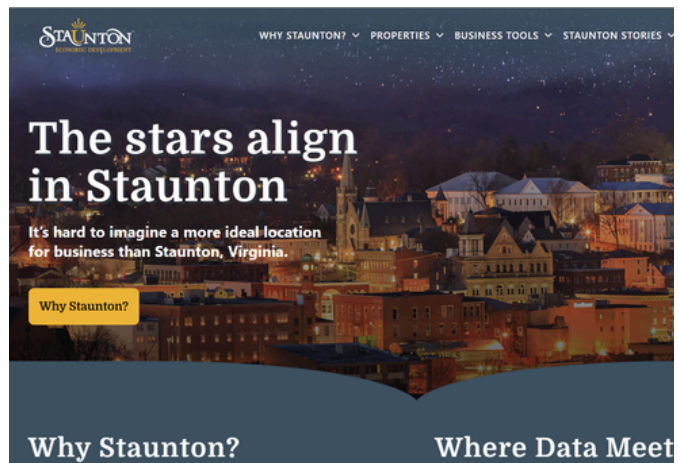
Police 4'08"/4'11"

Fire & Rescue 4'53"/4'49"

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

Business Site Wins Web Award

With the help of Whittington Consulting, the Staunton Economic Development website, www.stauntonbusiness.com, won a website design award from Web Excellence Awards. The new design transformed the template-driven site into a strategic asset built to attract and inform business decision-makers. The redesign focused on aligning the website with how economic development audiences actually research and evaluate locations.



900 households participate in the monthly Yard Waste program



From the City Manager

Permitting Software Live

Applying for permits in Staunton just got easier. The City has launched Civic Access, a new online portal that allows residents and contractors to submit permit applications, track their status in real time, schedule inspections, and receive approved permits electronically. The new system replaces a largely paper-based process with a more transparent and convenient digital experience. Applicants can now see where their permit is in the review process and receive updates and feedback without making phone calls or visiting City Hall.

The portal also helps city staff work more efficiently by allowing inspectors to complete reports in the field and update records instantly.

Residents who prefer to submit paper applications may continue to do so, with staff processing those applications through the new system.

To learn more, view tutorials, or start an application, visit staunton.va.us/onlineportal.



Welcoming Downtown Spaces

While construction continues in the Wharf area and parking remains free, the city is ensuring even infrastructure looks welcoming. Both the Wharf parking lot and Johnson Street garage booths have been wrapped with photography, helping create a more inviting experience for residents and visitors as they navigate downtown.



May 2026 Activity Report

Community Development

Key Construction Project Updates

Gypsy Hill Park Pool House

Construction is complete at the Gypsy Hill Park pool house! The city celebrated with a ribbon cutting on May 29.



Pictured above: The new pool house at Gypsy Hill Park.

Verizon Store

Development is officially underway at 1213 Richmond Ave. for a new 3,520-square-foot retail space that will house a Verizon Store. Site work is currently progressing, with the footer and underground rough-ins recently completed.



Pictured above: Interior and exterior progress on the new Verizon store.

McDonough Toyota

McDonough Toyota is expanding its service department at 1003 Richmond Ave. The new construction will add 4,196 square feet of dedicated service area to the facility. Progress is moving along, with rough-in inspections being scheduled.



Pictured above: Interior and exterior progress at the new Service Center for McDonough Toyota.

Reports

Environmental Division

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:

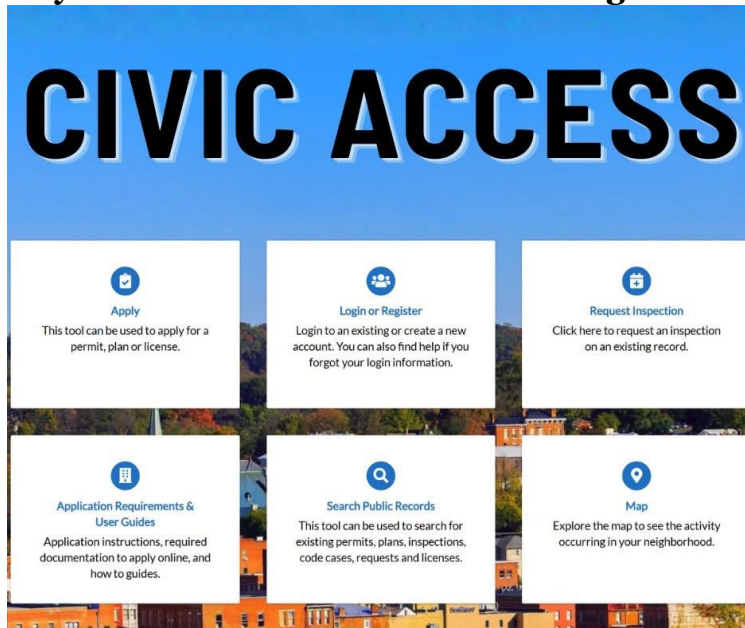
- Residential Construction – 57 active sites with 244 inspections in May
- Commercial Construction – 13 active sites with 53 inspections in May

Planning & Zoning Division

Planning Commission

At its May 21, meeting, the Planning Commission recommended approval of a request by Almarode, LLC (Staunton Wrecking) to vacate a portion of unaccepted Anthony Sreet. The portion of unaccepted street is situated between two properties that Almarode, LLC owns and no other properties are impacted by the vacation. The Commission also recommended approval of three requests by the Staunton Augusta YMCA. First, a request to rezone 802 N Coalter St. from B-3, Planned Business, to P-1C, Professional Conditional. The Y has offered proffers to remove all medium and high-density residential uses from the Professional zoning and only allow single-family uses. Second, a request to amend Title 18, Zoning, to add child daycare as a use permitted by special use permit in the R-1 and R-2, Low Density Residential, districts; and finally, a request for a special use permit at 575 New Hope Rd. to add child daycare, a teen center, a pickleball complex, and basketball courts to the existing facility. These items will be considered by June 25 City Council meeting.

City Launches New Online Permitting Software

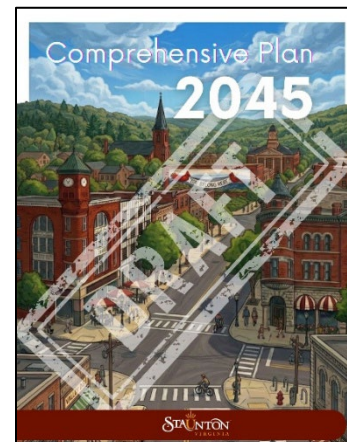


In May, Community Development had a soft launch of its new permit and plan review software. The project, which has been in development since June 2024, is powered by Tyler Technologies' Enterprise Permitting & Licensing (EPL) system. The launch transforms the city's workflow from a legacy, paper-heavy process into a transparent digital hub where users can submit applications, track progress in real-time, and schedule inspections. There has been very positive feedback from contractors and citizens over the last month while staff worked

through new processes. During this process, staff has updated the individual division webpages (Building Services, Planning & Zoning, and Environmental) on the city's website to provide detailed information on the application process for each type of construction project and what required documentation is to be provided during the online application process. Staff has published a library of tutorials and How-To documentation to assist users in creating accounts and navigating the portal. Information about applying online can be found on the website at: www.ci.staunton.va.us/onlineportal.

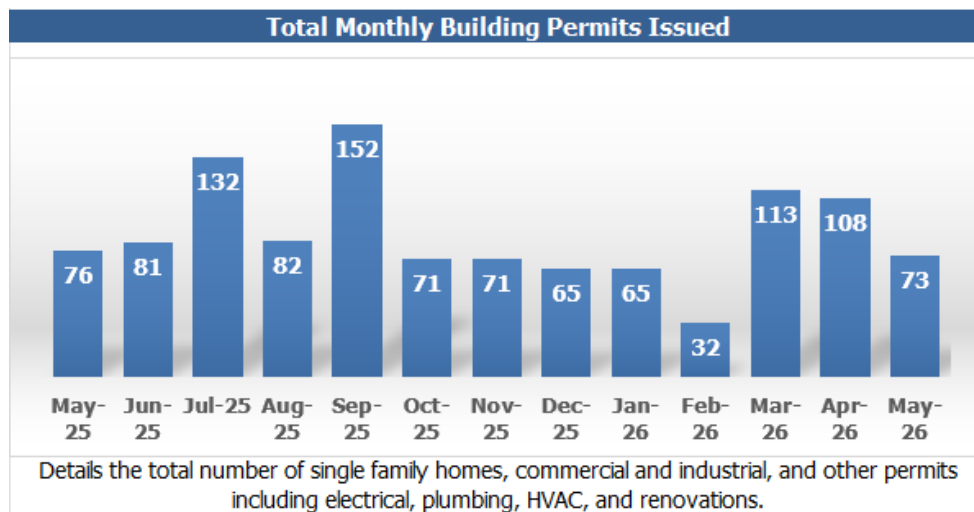
Comprehensive Plan

The **Staunton 2045 Comprehensive Plan** continues to move forward, thanks to the valuable engagement of the community and local leaders. The online draft was recently available for public review for just over two weeks, during which staff received more than 40 thoughtful comments from 18 individuals. Additionally, there was a joint work session with the City Council and the Comprehensive Plan Committee to gather further feedback directly from Council members. Staff is currently revising the draft to incorporate this input with guidance from the Committee. Later this summer, official public hearings will be scheduled with the Planning Commission and then the City Council to provide another opportunity for community engagement prior to the plan's final adoption.



Building Construction and Related Activity

Permits Issued	May-26	May-25	# Chg	% Chg
New Residential	0	1	-1	-100.0%
Residential Renovations	9	22	-13	-59.1%
Electrical Permits	26	20	6	30.0%
Mechanical Permits	15	9	6	66.7%
Plumbing Permits	15	14	1	7.1%
Commercial New-Renovations	4	3	1	33.3%
Miscellaneous	4	7	-3	-42.9%
Total	73	76	-3	-3.9%



Economic Development

Staunton Crossing

On May 20, Director of Economic Development Amanda Dimeo and Assistant Director of Economic Development Jessica Blythe participated in a manufacturers forum at the Valley Career and Technical Center (VCTC) in partnership with the Shenandoah Valley Partnership (SVP), maintaining active dialogue with regional industrial stakeholders as site development continues.

This month there were no new formal RFIs. This is true at the regional level as well.

Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) Efforts

Ms. Blythe and Ms. DiMeo attended the SAW Business Appreciation Breakfast on May 6, celebrating the area's business community and reinforcing relationships across the Staunton-Augusta-Waynesboro region. Ms. Blythe assisted in securing the Keynote speakers who presented data on the changing demographics in the SAW region and the

impact that would have on the local economy, and how we can work together to ensure continued growth. On May 8, both team members attended the SVP event featuring Virginia's Secretary of Commerce and Trade, engaging directly with state-level economic development leadership.

New business owners of Casa Rosa were welcomed on May 8 as part of ongoing BRE outreach. On May 26, Ms. Blythe met with Ciders from Mars to discuss business development needs and potential grant opportunities.

Staff met with a resident on May 20 regarding development interest, reflecting ongoing community-facing responsiveness.

Wharf District Infrastructure Project

A Wharf workshop on May 6 continued stakeholder engagement around the topic of data and tracking numbers, followed by a marketing-focused workshop on May 19 and the final Wharf workshop on May 27, which marked the conclusion of the formal workshop series for businesses navigating the construction period. Internal team coordination meetings on May 13 and May 27 kept staff aligned across departments throughout the month.

Ms. Blythe and Engagement and Communications Manager Josh Knight presented on the Wharf Project to the Staunton Rotary Club on May 19.

Brownfields & Adaptive Reuse

May included an intensive preparation push for the 2026 Virginia Brownfields Conference, hosted in Staunton June 8–10. Staff attended brownfields planning and prep sessions on May 21, May 26, and May 27, with Ms. Blythe and Ms. DiMeo coordinating logistics, site tour content, and co-presentation materials alongside Director of Community Development Rodney Rhodes covering Staunton Crossing and The West End brownfields projects. These sessions finalized the downtown adaptive reuse walking tour content, talking points, and contaminant/remediation documentation in advance of the conference.

Staunton Connect & Workforce Development

The department welcomed its summer intern on May 19, beginning the rotation that will support multiple city departments through the summer.

Partnerships, Planning & Regional Engagement

The Economic Development Authority (EDA) met on May 7 with staff in attendance, and EDA awarded three additional grants to qualified Wharf Businesses. So far, the program has awarded four grants for a total of \$20,000.

Ms. Blythe and Ms. DiMeo attended the VEDA ImpactedED conference on May 4. Ms. Blythe and Ms. DiMeo both participated in the VEDA Housing Forum on May 11, with workforce housing and affordability a growing focus tied to the department's Opportunity Zone 2.0 work. A HUD CDBG allocation review was completed on May 5.

Ms. DiMeo worked alongside Public Works to oversee the public art installation at Green Thumb Park on May 15. A public art planning meeting with Artist and Staunton Augusta Art Center Director was held on May 28 to talk about potential future projects for the Ccty's public arts initiative.

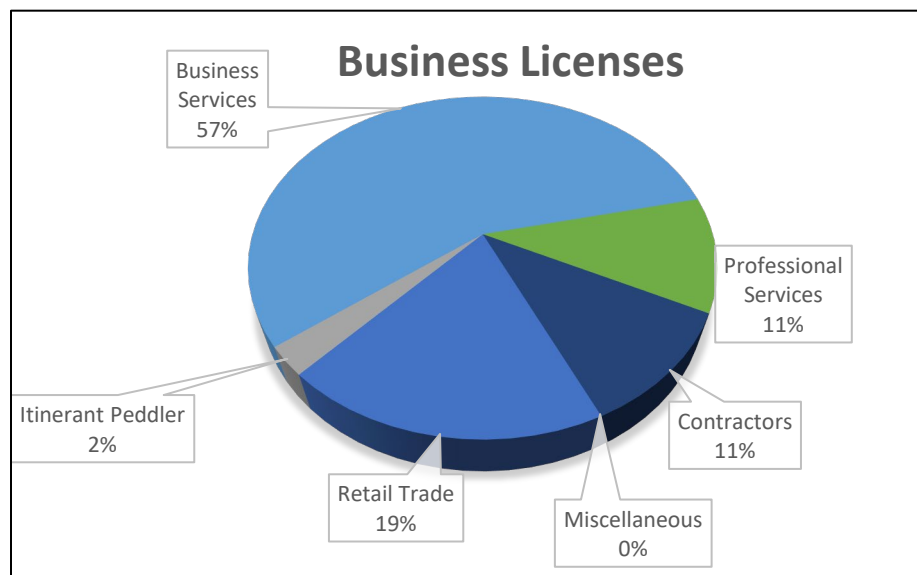
Ms. DiMeo attended several community events: an AI webinar hosted by ICMA on May 28, exploring emerging tools in local government practice, a Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library Tour on May 18 offered a staff development and community engagement opportunity with one of Staunton's key cultural anchor institutions, and the Queen Miller Highway Marker Unveiling on May 30 marked a significant moment of heritage recognition in the city.

Business License Activity

During the month of May, the Commissioner of Revenue's office issued 37 business licenses, compared to 44 the previous month, representing a 15.9% decrease. This month a year ago, 35 business licenses were issued.

The Business Services sector accounted for 57% of the total licenses issued in May 2026. Retail Trade accounted for 19%, Contractors accounted for 11%, Professional Services accounted for 11%, and Itinerant Peddlers accounted for 3%.

- Year to date licenses issued: 203
- Licenses issued previous year for same period: 153



Unemployment Data

In April, Staunton's unemployment rate of 3.0% decreased by .5% in comparison to the previous month. Staunton's rate is lower than the State's rate of 3.4%. Waynesboro also saw a decrease in unemployment by .3% to 3.0%. Augusta County's rate was 2.4%, a

decrease of .2% from the previous month. With a labor force of 13,274, Staunton had 12,871 employed and 403 unemployed in April.

Finance

- The department issued 7,701 utility bills and general bills totaling \$1,190,012 during May.
- Collection activities in May resulted in the recovery of \$4,514 in delinquent utility invoices.
- The Utility Payment Office processed 2,826 receipts in the amount of \$736,771 during May.
- The department processed 429 City and 229 School accounts payable checks totaling \$7,047,700 and 80 ACH debit/wire transactions totaling \$1,819,248 during May.
- Payroll processed 1,382 City and 607 Schools payroll-related advices totaling \$5,308,643.
- The department issued an Invitation for Bid (IFB) for Parks and Recreation Facility Improvements on behalf of the Parks and Recreation Department. Bids were due on June 2.
- The department assisted Public Works in issuing an Invitation for Bid (IFB) for the Health Department Roof Replacement Project. Bids were received on May 12.
- The department posted an unsealed Request for Proposal (RFP) for obtaining a concessions vendor for the Gypsy Hill Park Pool House. Proposals were due on May 12. The department, based on the proposals received, has awarded the contract to Collins Market.
- Preliminary work has begun on the FY2026 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.

Fire & Rescue

- Staunton Fire and Rescue responded to 374 incidents in May, with an average response time of 4 minutes and 53 seconds. The average response time for the year is 4 minutes and 49 seconds.
- Staff received over 517 hours of training for the month.

- The annual Rescue Challenge training event was hosted in the region for the second year. This year, Staunton's site was at the Rogers Group Quarry off Statler Blvd. The event moves to Roanoke next year and will return to this region in eight years.
- Staff conducted 29 business fire safety inspections and 25 re-inspections in May.
- Attended the career fair at Elk Hill School
- Master Firefighters Barbour and McGuire taught CPR and First Aid classes to Public Works employees, along with Parks and Recreation summer staff.
- Ladder 1 crew spoke with a group of 18 pre-school children at St Johns Methodist Church.
- With the assistance of Horticulturist Matt Sensabaugh, the shrubbery around Station 1 was replaced. B-Shift aided in preparing the flower beds and replacing the mulch with rock.
- Staff conducted door-to-door visits on Walnut St, Springhill Rd and Hull St, with the areas selected due to recent fires. A total of 122 homes were contacted, with 48 smoke detectors installed.
- Participated in Kids Matter Day with the Fire Safety Trailer.
- Firefighters for Literacy wrapped up at Bessie Weller Elementary. This year, Parker was the grand prize winner and was given a ride home on Ladder 1.
- Station 1 hosted the Trail Life Scouts, a group of individuals from Wall Residences, and 70 kindergartners from Bessie Weller Elementary for a station tour and safety talk.
- Deputy Chief Dolan assisted the Fire Department in becoming a partner with the Police Department and Staunton City Schools in the Handle with Care program.
- The Fire Marshal's Office reviewed one rezoning request, one fire alarm panel plan, two sprinkler plans, two site plans, and one sale of fireworks permit in addition to investigating three house fires and attending a City Council Meeting.



Human Resources

Employee Actions

The following employee actions were processed:

Terminated:

Full Time—5

Part Time/Seasonal—4

Hired:

Full Time—2

Part Time—36

Retired—0

Activities

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

Recruitment:

Initiated recruitment for the following positions:

- Plumber – Public Works
 - Traffic Signal Technician – Public Works
 - Equipment Operator I – Utilities, Public Works
 - Equipment Operator I – Park Maintenance
 - Library Assistant I – Circulation
 - PT Custodian – Public Works
 - Probation Officer – Blue Ridge Court Service
 - Accounting Technician I – Utility Collections
 - FT Custodian – Public Works
- Continued recruitment for the following positions:
 - Water Treatment Plant Operator
 - Maintenance Worker – Traffic Control
 - Operations Superintendent – Public Works
 - Library Assistant II – Communications, Library
 - Referees/Umpires – Parks and Rec
 - Public Safety Dispatcher
 - Recreational Program Assistant Supervisor

Orientations:

- Conducted orientations for two new full-time employees.

Information Technology

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

- Tyler EPL (electronic permitting) went live in early May. Public response has been positive. Minor configuration adjustments continue behind the scenes.
- Systems Engineer Zach Henry attended the AI for Government Summit in Reston, VA.
- Completed IT infrastructure work at the Gypsy Hill Park Pool House, including cameras, credit card machine, network drops, timeclock and phones.
- Preparation work is underway for the mobile device refresh. Upgraded cell phones should be deployed in late June.
- Over 90% of assigned users completed mandatory cybersecurity awareness training by the end of the month. Users that did not complete the training have been notified and will need to complete training to retain access to the City's network.
- General IT support including system updates and patching and Windows Server upgrades on several systems.
- Meeting with vendors regarding network requirements for the new Blue Ridge Court Services site. Network wiring should commence in June.
- Completed renewal of the Microsoft Enterprise Agreement for server licensing.
- Dispatch consoles were installed for the SAW Regional radio project. An updated project timeline has been proposed for go-live in late summer.

Library

Local artist Brigitte Huson led a series of successful paint and sip art programs. Attendees followed her directions to create their own unique masterpiece based on one theme. This program was partially funded by a grant from the Artist in Residence program from Virginia Commission for the Arts.

The library launched a new informal book club: Audiobook Walking Club. Attendees will meet monthly to walk and discuss or listen to their favorite audiobooks.



May's exhibits included paintings by local artist Billie Rosenberger and the fourth annual mini art show submissions from over 40 library patrons.

Seasonal Sunday hours ended and will resume in the fall on Sept. 13.

Staff made final preparations for the all-ages Summer Reading Program that will run June 1 – July 31.

Librarians reorganized a staff vacancy to create a new Communications Assistant position. Recruitment and interviews were conducted for this and Circulation Assistant positions in May.



Special programs included

- Mother's Day card craft
- Homeschool Hour: Learn About Bowerbirds with the Augusta Bird Club

Outreach events included

- Kids Matter Day
- Brookdale Senior Living
- Gypsy Hill House
- Aviva Baldwin Park
- Ten childcare and early education organizations



Library Statistical Report: May 2026

CIRCULATION	Month	YTD		SERVICES	Month	YTD
Adult	15,862	181,864		ILLs Borrowed	18	150
Young Adult (YA)	1,292	14,998		ILLs Lent	0	0
Juvenile	13,282	146,614		Proctoring/Book-a-Librarians	6	51
Digital	6,722	70,318				
Total Circulation	37,158	413,794		PROGRAMS		
Talking Book Center Circulation	1,692	15,747		Adult	19	161
				Attendance	267	2,448
Items Checked In	18,758	195,858		YA	4	54
				Attendance	1,203	11,048
Outgoing to VLC Libraries	1,473	17,947		Juvenile	34	384

Incoming from VLC Libraries	1,316	15,133		Attendance	1,807	18,430
Total Holds Filled	4,600	49,309		General	1	6
				Attendance	95	501
Added to Collection	1,119	13,808				
Withdrawn from Collection	6	7,353		PEOPLE		
				Library Visits	13,726	145,101
Database Use/Sessions	2,428	42,227		Curbside Visits	13	140
				Meetings Held	24	216
				Volunteer Hours	72.75	1,366
				New Card Registrations	161	1,797
				Total Registered Cards		16,490

Parks & Recreation

Horticulture

Horticulture completed the following tasks:

- Interviewed candidates for the Susan Blackley Horticulture internship. The position was offered to, and accepted by, Adelyn Holsinger, a recent graduate of Wilson Memorial High School. The internship is made possible by a grant from the Community Foundation of the Central Blue Ridge.
- Horticulture staff met with the local VFW Quartermaster. Staff coordinated safety signage with the group for a volunteer project on May 2. The project involved clean up and care for a section of the American Legion Avenue of trees along Statler Boulevard.

Tree Work:

- Treated red maples in the parks to protect them from Spotted Lantern Fly. A systemic chemical was applied to prevent damage from this invasive pest. A total of 16 trees in Gypsy Hill, Montgomery Hall Park, and RMA parking lot received treatment.
- Worked with a contractor to prune three large mature ash trees in Gypsy Hill Park. Trees received treatment to protect them from invasive pests.
- Pruned the outfield hedge at Moxie Stadium in preparation for summer baseball, approximately 45 trees were pruned.
- Trimmed suckers from the base of the American Legion Ave of trees in preparation for Memorial Day weekend.

Hardscape work:

- Installed a 6' ft park bench on brick pad in Gypsy Hill Park, donated by Mike and Viki Stone.
- Repaired the cap blocks on the retaining wall of the overlook at Wilson Park on Sears Hill. Removed damaged caps, reset and filled joints due to water damage.

Flower beds:

- Began to plant our summer annual displays, planted, mulched, and watered the Wharf planters and bed, North New St parking garage, and Landes Park.

Maintenance and clean-up work:

- Cleaned up/removed brush from creek area at RMA parking lot.
- Began spot treatment for weeds in various locations.

Maintenance

Park Maintenance completed the following duties:

- Continued to water sod at the new pool facility located in Gypsy Hill Park.
- Provided field maintenance for all Staunton High School Athletic programs.
- Mowing continues in both Gypsy Hill, Montgomery Hall, and all satellite areas.
- Completed playground safety inspections in both parks.
- Assisted with maintenance support for the annual senior and kids fishing days held at Lake Tams.
- Assisted with maintenance support for Art in the Park.
- Completed CIP project porch replacement at Montgomery Hall and Gypsy Hill Garden Center.
- Assisted with preparation for pool openings during Memorial Day weekend.
- Continued preparation and planning for the upcoming July 4 activities.
- Painted overlook at Betsy Bell Park.

Community Outreach

Staff engaged in the following community outreach activities:

- Afterschool program concluded for the school year which was celebrated with pizza parties at all sites.
- Completed Camp Staunton interviews and hiring of summer staff.
- Held staff orientation for lifeguards and Camp Staunton summer staff.
- Youth Fishing Derby was held at Lake Tams with over 150 children participating.
- Senior Fishing Derby was a success with over 100 participating.
- Superintendent of Recreation Steve Taetzch spoke to the Youth Commission as part of an area Parks and Recreation panel. Waynesboro and Augusta County participated in this discussion.
- Completed Red Cross Certification Training for new and returning lifeguards.
- Installed ADA pool lifts at Montgomery Hall and Gypsy Hill Park pools.
- Gypsy Hill Park baby pool was replastered for the season.

Scheduled Programs for the Month:

- Japanese Swordsmanship
- Youth fishing derby
- Kids Matter Day
- Senior Fishing derby

- Gypsy Hill and Montgomery Hall Pools opening day
- Staunton Gold Cup Soccer
- Via Ferrata and Rocks
- Adults Co Ed Softball League
- Archery Club
- Pickle Picnic in the Park
- Youth Pickleball Basics
- Red Cross Blood Drive
- Adult Lap Swim
- An evening with Bats
- Junior and Senior Chess
- Fit Fridays in the Park

Police

- All sworn personnel completed annual less lethal/ use of force training.
- Hunter Warren, Grant Brown, and Samantha Fetty graduated from the Basic Law Enforcement Academy.
- The E-911 Center received 3,153 calls during the month, including 1,263 9-1-1 calls and 27 text-to 9-1-1.
- Police personnel responded to 2,794 incidents during the month, including 1,531 citizen calls for service, 717 officer-initiated activities, 184 administrative calls, and 362 directed patrols.
- The average response time for police emergency calls for service during the month was 4 minutes and 08 seconds; it was 4 minutes and 11 seconds for the year.

Public Works

Employee Spotlight – Jason Byram



This month's spotlight features Jason Byram, Traffic Supervisor in the Operations Division. Byram has been with the city for more than seven years, beginning as a Traffic Signal Technician in 2019. Most recently, through his outstanding and dedicated service, Byram was promoted to Traffic Supervisor in May. In this new capacity, he will not only oversee traffic signals, but all traffic work generally, including traffic control pavement marking as well as all signs in the city. Byram's steadfast commitment to this important function of the community is much appreciated.

Administration Division

The utility office established 45 new owner accounts, 24 new residential rental accounts, and 6 new commercial accounts. The office collected \$212,249 in payments. A total of 35 accounts were cut off for non-payment. Of those cut off, 31 were reconnected after payments were made or a payment plan established.

Engineering Division

The Engineering Division of Public Works offers the following project updates:

Johnson, Byers, & New Street Tunnel Repairs Project

The concrete stem wall on the south side of Byers Street was poured (*pictured right*), and the existing tunnel wall on the north side was removed. Excavation is underway to prepare for the north side foundation and stem wall. The new precast concrete tunnel is scheduled to be set in July with this phase of the project to be completed and open to traffic by August, after which the work will shift over to the Johnson Street work area. Due to work progressing ahead of schedule on Byers Street, the contractor anticipates beginning work on the New Street project area concurrently, beginning in late June.



Gypsy Hill Park Pool House



The project was completed on time, and in time for the opening of the 2026 pool season Memorial Day weekend. A ribbon cutting was held on May 29. The \$2.3M facility (construction cost) replaces the previous pool house constructed in the 1950's, which had structural deficiencies and access limitations.

Operations Division

Street crews completed the collection of heavy brush for the season and have pivoted to mowing and clearing street Rights-of-Way (ROW) alongside the city's ROW clearing contractor who continues to mow and clear preselected long, linear areas whereas city staff

will be mowing and clearing smaller spot locations and traffic islands.

The spring paving schedule has been completed by the milling and paving contractor. In the meantime, street crews have resumed minor patching and repairs on other streets throughout the city.

The city's contractor has started pavement marking operations throughout the city, beginning with the streets recently paved.

Refuse and Facilities Division

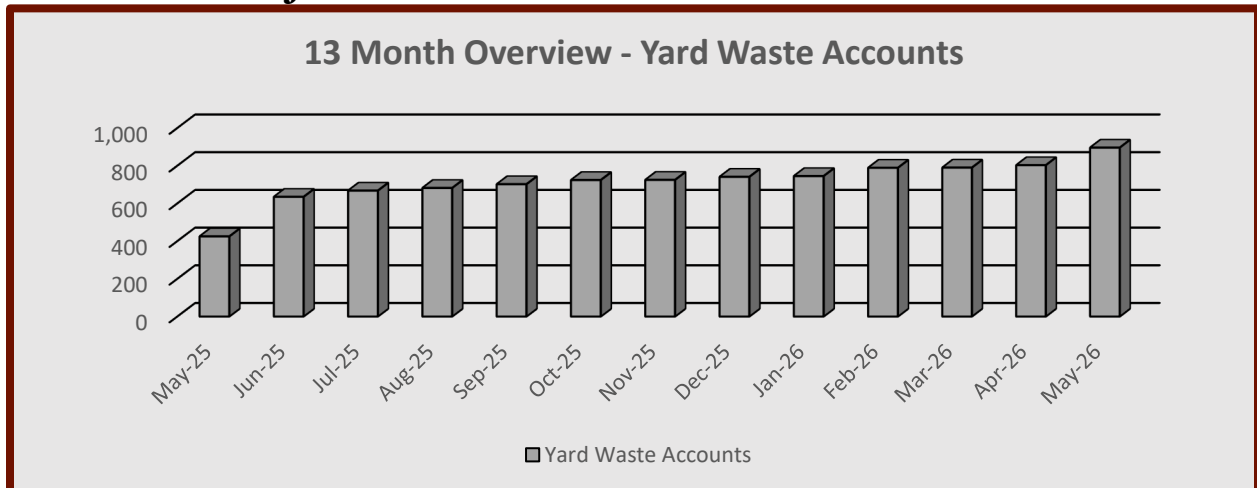
The facilities maintenance crew, with help from additional Public Works staff and Parks and Recreation, completed electrical enhancements at Gypsy Hill Park in preparation of the upcoming Happy Birthday America (HBA) celebration. The enhancements are designed to provide easier power connections for event vendors.

The recycling center received a total of 5,108 visitors for May.

A contractor has replaced the rooftop AC unit for the Police Department on top of City Hall. The contractor and building maintenance staff are completing final testing of the unit.

A contractor has replaced the roof of the salt storage shed on Middlebrook Avenue.

Featured Chart of the Month: Yard Waste Accounts



After nearly a year of the city's new yard waste collection program, interest and participation in the program continue to grow. As indicated in the chart above, there were nearly 400 customers who had initially signed by May, 2025. The first collection occurred in June, 2025 with nearly 600 customers at that time. Since that time, the monthly yard waste accounts have steadily grown to nearly 900 customers in May, 2026.

Utilities Division

Utility field crews repaired five water main breaks, two meters, three water valves, one sewer main, three sewer laterals, and two sewer cleanouts. Crews responded to one sewer main blockage and seven sewer lateral blockages. They also installed three new water service connections, five new sewer connections, and one sewer manhole. Utilities staff responded to 550 VA811 locate tickets.

The Utilities Division welcomes Jason Weber at the Water Treatment Plant (WTP) as Plant Operator IV (trainee).

Utility Technical Services staff completed a second round of mowing at the city's remote water and sewer facilities and removed a large tree from above the spillway at Staunton Dam. Additionally, staff changed out 111 old water meters for new "smart" meters.

Tourism

Activities:

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

- Staunton blog promotions featured Staunton Soundtrack: Your Guide to Live Summer Music (5/7) and Staunton's Craft Beer Scene (5/21)
- The U is Silent; We Aren't podcast featured The Silver Line: What Happens When You Stop Waiting for Permission to Build Something Beautiful and Would You Survive the 1700s? Inside Staunton's Living History Museum
- Delivered cookies to 50 local hospitality and tourism partners in celebration of National Travel & Tourism Week
- Hosted nine international travel agents from the United Kingdom, Australia, and Ireland for a familiarization tour
- Shenandoah Valley Beerwerks Trail celebrated its tenth anniversary
- Sales & Marketing Manager Sheena Logan attended Virginia Society of Association Executives conference in Williamsburg to meet with meeting planners and association executives
- Group Travel Collaboration visits with Route 11 Chips, Cooter's, and Clayground
- Attended Virginia Main Street's Rev Up event with SDDA, Economic Development, and City Council representatives
- Director of Tourism Samantha Johnson represented Visit Staunton, VA as a presenter at the Kentucky Tourism Industry Association's Spring Forum
- Tourism, Economic Development, and City Manager personnel participated in a curator-led "Slavery in Wilson's Birthplace" Tour at Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library
- Were interviewed by WHSV to promote the recent award announcement of the Virginia Tourism DMO Marketing Grant



Public Relations

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

Date	Source Name	Headline	Reach	AVE
May 15	The New York Times	Summer Vacation Travel Ideas: Perfect Beaches And Pools, Great American Road Trips	150,494,258	\$1,392,071.89
May 14	AOL	Art On the Town Festival Returns to Gypsy Hill Park	33,150,522	\$306,642.33
May 13	AOL	This Virginia Town Has a Train Ride with Some of The Best Views in The Shenandoah Valley	33,150,522	\$306,642.33
May 8	AOL	SDDA Hires Executive Director, Reclaims National Main Street Status	33,150,522	\$306,642.33
May 6	AOL	Photos Of White House Cars Throughout History	33,150,522	\$306,642.33
May 26	Yahoo! Entertainment	Heifetz Institute's Summer Festival Celebrates 30th Anniversary	29,696,738	\$274,694.83
May 23	Southern Living	This Virginia Town Is Home to One of The Shenandoah Valley's Most Scenic Train Rides—And the Views Are Unforgettable	15,694,465	\$145,173.80
May 13	Southern Living	This Virginia Town Has a Train Ride with Some of The Best Views in The Shenandoah Valley	15,694,465	\$145,173.80
May 9	Southern Living	16 Small Towns in Virginia That Make the Perfect Weekend Getaway	15,694,465	\$145,173.80
May 27	NewsBreak	The 2026 Semiquincentennial Summer of Big Steam	13,350,906	\$123,495.88
May 26	NewsBreak	Staunton: Arcadia Project Set to Launch Second Season of Summer Concert Series	13,350,906	\$123,495.88
May 21	NewsBreak	Staunton's Craft Beer Scene	13,350,906	\$123,495.88
May 14	NewsBreak	This Whimsical Virginia Train Ride Feels Like Something Straight Out of a Storybook	13,350,906	\$123,495.88
May 13	NewsBreak	You'd Never Guess This Little Virginia Town Has Some of The Best Food in The Entire State	13,350,906	\$123,495.88
May 13	NewsBreak	This Virginia Town Has a Train Ride with Some of The Best Views in The Shenandoah Valley	13,350,906	\$123,495.88
May 13	NewsBreak	14 Little-Known Virginia Towns Where the Neighbors Still Wave and Know Your Name	13,350,906	\$123,495.88
May 7	NewsBreak	Staunton Is Stanton in Virginia— Shakespeare in Stanton	13,350,906	\$123,495.88
May 22	Patch.com - Herndon, VA	6 VA Towns Among 250 Best Places to Live in US News Ranking	7,959,729	\$73,627.49
May 22	Islands Magazine	Virginia's Small City Is a Senior-Friendly Hot Spot with Antique Shopping and Walkable Charm	2,480,885	\$22,948.19

Date	Source Name	Headline	Reach	AVE
May 27	Trains	The 2026 Semiquincentennial Summer of Big Steam	595,804	\$5,511.19
May 30	WSLS-TV	New 611 Paint Scheme Revealed Honoring America's 250th Birthday	584,598	\$5,407.53
May 25	WHSV-TV	City Of Staunton Regains Main Street Accreditation	358,137	\$3,312.77
May 19	WHSV-TV	Staunton Awarded \$15,000 Tourism Grant to Produce Digital Documentary Series	358,137	\$3,312.77
May 26	Family Travel Forum	These 10 Virginia Villages Are Struggling to Stay Peaceful Under the Weight of Overtourism	304,034	\$2,812.31
May 25	WVIR	City Of Staunton Regains Main Street Accreditation	215,553	\$1,993.87
May 22	Sandusky Register	Celebrate America 250 With A Summer Trip	181,496	\$1,678.84
May 8	World News	SDDA Hires Executive Director, Reclaims National Main Street Status	168,122	\$1,555.13
May 29	Cheapism.com Blog	The Most Affordable Small Cities in America for A Stress-Free Long Weekend	110,578	\$1,022.85
May 1	News Leader	Pour Decisions Winery Opens in Downtown Staunton	90,837	\$840.24
May 25	Public Radio Exchange (PRX)	Episode 172: In The Bard's Nest	88,995	\$823.20
May 30	The Daily Progress	Heifetz Institute's Summer Festival Celebrates 30th Anniversary	83,786	\$775.02
May 11	The Daily Progress	Staunton's 'The U Is Silent' Podcast Returns for Second Season	83,786	\$775.02
May 21	The Courier	Family's Road Trip Reaches End of U.S. 250	71,083	\$657.52
May 26	News Leader	Heifetz Institute's Summer Festival Celebrates 30th Anniversary	70,766	\$654.59
May 18	News Leader	Ciders From Mars Is Moving and Expanding in Downtown Staunton	70,766	\$654.59
May 8	News Leader	SDDA Hires Executive Director, Reclaims National Main Street Status	70,766	\$654.59
May 7	News Leader	The U Is Silent Podcast Returns for Season Two	70,766	\$654.59
May 9	Fast Food Club	10 Iconic Fried Chicken Restaurants in Virginia That Are Worth Traveling For	29,602	\$273.82
May 11	The News Virginian	Staunton's 'The U Is Silent' Podcast Returns for Second Season	3,676	\$34.00

Date	Source Name	Headline	Reach	AVE
Jun 3	The Northern Virginia Daily	Scenic Railroad Prepares For 'Summer of Steam'	43,951	\$406.55
Jun 3	Daily News-Record	Scenic Railroad Prepares For 'Summer of Steam'	48,802	\$451.42
Jun 1	Railway Supply	Norfolk & Western 611 Shows Its Red-White-Blue Side	49,371	\$456.68
May 27	Virginia Living	All Aboard: Virginia's Summer of Steam Celebrates America250	27,720	\$256.41
TOTALS			480,905,473	\$4,448,375.66

Website Visitation

Website Traffic		
May 2025	May 2026	% Change
43,835 users	45,138 users	+3%
185 guide requests	155 visitor's guide requests	-16.2%

Top 10 Origin Markets and Visitor Spending -April 2026-

Top Visitor Markets - Table ▾

Visitor Origin Market	% of Visitors ▾	Same time previous year
Washington DC-Hagerstown MD	17%	17%
Roanoke-Lynchburg VA	14%	19%
Richmond-Petersburg VA	11%	11%
Norfolk-Portsmouth-Newport News VA	8%	13%
New York NY	6%	5%
Harrisburg-Lancaster-Lebanon-York PA	3%	2%
Philadelphia PA	3%	2%
Raleigh-Durham-Fayetteville NC	2%	2%
Atlanta GA	1%	1%
Pittsburgh PA	1%	1%

Top Spend Markets - Table ▾

Visitor Origin Market	% of Visitor Spend ▾	Same time previous year
Washington DC-Hagerstown MD	16%	14%
Norfolk-Portsmouth-Newport News VA	12%	8%
Richmond-Petersburg VA	10%	12%
Roanoke-Lynchburg VA	7%	10%
New York NY	4%	4%
Columbus OH	3%	1%
Philadelphia PA	3%	3%
Harrisburg-Lancaster-Lebanon-York PA	2%	3%
Baltimore MD	2%	2%
Raleigh-Durham-Fayetteville NC	2%	3%

Key Insights

Visitor Spending Is Up Year Over Year

Average daily visitor spend reached \$49 in April 2026, up from \$42 during the same period in 2025, a \$7 increase. Visitors accounted for 16% of all spending in the destination, up from 12% the prior year, a 4-point gain. These trends together suggest that

visitors coming to Staunton are spending more per day and representing a growing share of the local economy. Food & Beverage remained the top spending category at 42%, consistent with last year, while Accommodations grew notably to 22% of visitor spend, up from 15%, a positive indicator for the lodging sector.

Out-of-State Visitation Continues to Grow

Out-of-state visitors made up 53% of all visitors in April 2026, up from 48% in April 2025, a 5-point increase. This growth points to Staunton's expanding regional and national appeal. Washington DC-Hagerstown MD held the top spot as both the leading visitor origin market (17%) and the leading spend market (16%), reflecting a consistent and growing pipeline from the DC metro area. The Roanoke-Lynchburg VA market ranked second in visitation at 14%, while Richmond-Petersburg VA came in at 11%. New York NY also appeared as a notable long-distance market, generating 6% of visitors and 4% of visitor spend, an area worth watching as it represents an opportunity for targeted outreach.

What This Means

The April 2026 data paints an encouraging picture for Visit Staunton. Visitors are arriving from farther away, spending more per day, and directing a larger share of their dollars toward local businesses and accommodations. The growth in out-of-state visitation, led by the DC corridor, suggests that Staunton's positioning as a drivable, intentional escape is resonating. The increase in accommodation spend is a particularly positive signal for the lodging community. The Food & Beverage sector continues to be the top category both in visitation and spending, reflecting Staunton's culinary identity as a strong draw.

Office on Youth

Crime Control Programs

- Four youth received detention alternative services.
- Five youth completed *3rd Millennium Classrooms* programming.

Parenting Programs

- The following number of adults participated in the Office on Youth's parenting programs:
 - *Preparing Our Kids for Success*, 7
 - *Active Parenting - First 5 Years*, 13
 - *Parenting and Divorce* co-parenting program, 11
 - *Inside Out Dads* at Middle River Regional Jail, 7

- *Active Parenting*, 14
- *Parent Project*, 11
- Megan Demastus was named the new Family Services Coordinator. She completed certification in *Trauma-Informed*.
- Ms. Demastus and the Program Supervisor held a Co-Parenting session at Cold Springs Correctional Unit on May 28.

Substance Abuse Prevention

- Coordinator attended *Transforming Youth Engagement in Substance Use Prevention Programming and Community Readiness: What Now?* Webinar, presented by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, May 12-13.
- Coordinator performed counter tools environmental scanning with Prevention Specialist Casey Rolfe at the Community Services Board on May 13.
- Coordinator completed *Botvin LifeSkills* middle school facilitation training May 21.
- Coordinator attended *Impairing Hemp Beverages: What Parents and Law Enforcement Need to Know to Keep Kids Safe* webinar hosted through responsibility.org, May 27.

Truancy Prevention - Check and Connect

- Participants include 77 students from 14 schools.
- Truancy Board was held with two Staunton City Schools student attendees and their families May 12.

Community/Etc.

- Three OOH staff attended the Champions for Youth Summit sponsored through Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth (VFHY), Held in Reston, VA, May 3-5.
- Five OOH Staff participated in the *Kids Matter Day* event at Gypsy Hill Park May 9.
- Division Supervisor and Co-Parenting Facilitator, April Chu, attended *Parent Educators Symposium* through the Dispute Resolution Services of the Supreme Court of Virginia in Hanover, May 15.
- Director held Regional Youth Commission Meeting with speakers from 3 local Parks and Rec departments, May 20.

Staunton Downtown Development Association¹

Downtown Staunton continued to build momentum throughout May with the launch of the SDDA Downtown Flower Program, including the installation and maintenance of thirty-eight 23-inch hanging flower baskets throughout the downtown district. The program enhances the visual appeal of downtown and contributes to a more vibrant and welcoming experience for residents and visitors alike.

Community activation efforts also saw strong success during the month. Staunton Jams drew large crowds downtown and generated significant engagement for participating businesses, while Collins Market expanded its operations by partnering with the City to provide concessions at the newly opened Gypsy Hill Park Pool house. These initiatives reflect continued collaboration between local businesses, community organizations, and the City to strengthen downtown vitality and visitor experiences.

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.