

CITY OF STAUNTON

# ACTIVITY REPORT HIGHLIGHTS



## By the Numbers

**May 22, 1993** the market officially opened

More than **44** vendors and live music every weekend

April - Sept., **7 a.m. to noon**

Oct. - Nov. 21, **8 a.m. to noon**

## Farmers Market Succeeds in New Home

The Staunton Farmers Market continues to thrive in its temporary location at 2020 West Beverley St., in front of Staunton’s new J&DR courthouse. Ongoing collaboration with City staff has led to additional improvements at the site, including new power connections installed through the efforts of Public Works staff and Dominion Energy, eliminating the need for vendors to rely on generators. Live music each weekend, combined with the expanded space, provides visitors with an enhanced shopping experience and a welcoming atmosphere. Vendors for the 2026 season offer a wide variety of products, including farm goods, doughnuts, baked items, beverages, honey, mushrooms, crafts, and coffee. The Staunton Farmers Market continues to provide something for everyone in the community.



## April 2026

### Dispatched Calls for Service\*

Police	2,607 ↓
Fire & Rescue	290 ↓

### Average Response Time month/year

Police	3'59"/4'11"
Fire & Rescue	4'32"/4'48"

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

## Visit Staunton Awarded Grant

The City of Staunton is set to showcase the passion and craftsmanship of its local artisan community through a new digital documentary series titled *For the Love of*. The project is made possible by a \$15,000 grant recently awarded to Visit Staunton by the Virginia Tourism Corporation's Destination Marketing Organization Grant Program. The mini-documentary series will go behind the scenes with the creatives whose hands-on work shapes Staunton's unique identity.



The Recycling Center had 3,616 visitors in April



*From the City Manager*

## Need Input on Comp Plan Draft

We have entered one of the final stages of the 2045 Comprehensive Plan Update. Since fall of 2024 we have held stakeholder meetings, open houses, surveys, and workshops. And now we're asking for our community's input once again. Key highlights in this draft of the Comp Plan, driven by community input include walkable communities; infrastructure priorities; preserving character; and natural resources. Now through May 25, we're looking for input on our "roadmap to the future" and you can get there by visiting <https://arcg.is/1PTXmP0> and using the comments boxes located below each section or email direct comments to Long Range Planner Meggie Taylor at [taylormj@ci.staunton.va.us](mailto:taylormj@ci.staunton.va.us).

This window of input is timed to conclude ahead of a special City Council Work Session scheduled for 6 p.m. on Wednesday, June 3 in the large meeting room on the 2nd-floor of the Staunton Public Library.



## Adventure Awaits at the Library

Since launching camping gear checkouts last fall, the Staunton Public Library has continued expanding its outdoor offerings with a state park pass and a new birding backpack complete with stuffed animal buddies for young explorers. Ready to head outside? Attend one of the upcoming information sessions from 2-4 p.m. on June 13, July 11, or Aug. 8 to learn how to check out camping gear and start planning your next adventure.



## April 2026 Activity Report

### Community Development

#### Key Construction Project Updates

##### **Gypsy Hill Park Pool House**

Construction is moving forward at the Gypsy Hill Park pool house. Inspections are ongoing, and the facility is scheduled to open for the 2026 pool season on Saturday, May 23.



#### 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 – 56 active sites with 131 inspections in April
- Commercial Construction – 14 active sites with 30 inspections in April

##### **Adopt-A-Spot Update**

Brookdale Senior Living has joined the Adopt-A-Spot program. They have officially adopted the area surrounding the Bandstand in Gypsy Hill Park.

##### **Earth Day & Clean the Bay Day Success**

Many thanks to the groups that stepped up this spring to coordinate clean-up events in honor of Earth Day and Clean the Bay Day:

- Friends of the Staunton Public Library
- The Musselman Family
- Trinity Church
- The Augusta Bird Club
- Brookdale Senior Living
- Staunton West End Business Association

Volunteer groups are the backbone of this program, ensuring shared spaces remain vibrant and welcoming for everyone.

### **Envirothon Participation**

During the month of April, Environmental Programs Specialist Hunter Moore served as a judge for the Envirothon oral presentation competitions held at Grand Caverns. This year's theme, "Non-Point Source Pollution: It Begins at Home!", challenged students to develop solutions for mitigating runoff and pollution originating from residential properties.

- *Local Event (April 8):* Staff judged presentations from three local high school teams, engaging with 15 students on their specific watershed protection strategies.
- *Regional Event (April 28):* Staff returned to Grand Caverns to evaluate the regional qualifiers. This session included four presentations from three high school teams, totaling 20 students in the oral presentation section.



*Pictured above: Envirothon event at Grand Caverns.*

### **Flood Resiliency Plan Listening Session**

On April 15, Environmental Staff hosted a second community listening session for the draft flood resilience plan at the Public Library. Eleven residents attended the meeting to provide direct feedback and share local insights on the proposed strategies. This valuable community input will be instrumental in refining the plan as we work toward long-term flood mitigation.

### **Earth Day Event**

Environmental Programs Administrator Willow Hughes attended the Earth Day event held at the Gypsy Hill Park gymnasium. During the celebration, staff engaged with attendees to provide practical education on sustainability and effective ways to protect our local ecosystem. This outreach effort remains a vital part of our mission to promote environmental stewardship throughout the community. *Pictured right: Posters set up at the Earth Day event.*



## ***Planning & Zoning Division***

### **Planning Commission**

At its April 16 meeting, the Planning Commission recommended approval of a request by Fisher Auto Parts to rezone 855 Statler Blvd and a portion of 851 Statler Blvd from I-1, Light Industrial, to B-2 General Business. The Commission also gave further consideration to a request for a Planned Residential Development known as McIntosh Village, a 267-unit single-family Development. After extensive discussion, the Commission recommended approval of the request with 21 conditions. Steve Tomaso took his seat as the newest member of Planning Commission and participated in his first meeting.

### **Comprehensive Plan**

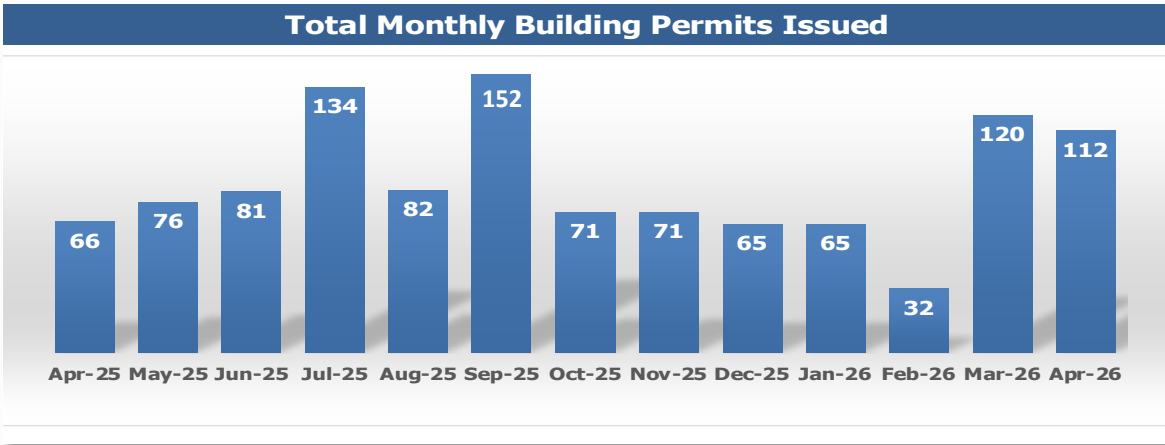
Beginning May 8, the community is invited to explore the draft of the 2045 Comprehensive Plan, driven by over a year of engagement, featuring priorities like creating walkable neighborhoods, "closing the gaps" in the sidewalk network, and protecting Staunton's historic character through compatible infill development. Residents can share their feedback through the comment boxes on each section of the [Comprehensive Plan Website](#) or by emailing Meggie Taylor at [Taylormj@ci.staunton.va.us](mailto:Taylormj@ci.staunton.va.us). Following the public review period, City Council will hold a work session to discuss the plan on **June 3 at 6 p.m. at the Staunton Public Library.**



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**Building Construction and Related Activity**

Permits Issued	Apr-26	Apr-25	# Chg	% Chg
New Residential	10	3	7	233.3%
Residential Renovations	14	16	-2	-12.5%
Electrical Permits	42	27	15	55.6%
Mechanical Permits	14	7	7	100.0%
Plumbing Permits	18	7	11	157.1%
Commercial New-Renovations	2	1	1	100.0%
Miscellaneous	12	5	7	140.0%
Total	112	66	46	69.7%



**Economic Development**

**Business Retention and Expansion Efforts**

Assistant Director of Economic Development Jessica Blythe participated in a GoTec discussion on April 13, continuing exploration of workforce and industry partnership opportunities. On April 29, she and Director of Economic Development Amanda DiMeo attended the GoVA GoTec demonstration at Shelburne Middle School, showcasing career and technical education pathways for students.

Reality Town at Staunton High School on April 24 offered another opportunity to engage with local students on financial literacy and career readiness. Ms. Blythe, along with Alex Efird, the City Manager’s Office intern, participated.

**Enterprise Zone Efforts**

Enterprise Zone activity reached a significant milestone in April with the Economic Development Authority’s review of FY2026 grant applications on April 16. This meeting

represented the culmination of the department's first formal competitive grant award cycle under the restructured local incentive program, which was redesigned and relaunched effective January 1, 2026. Ms. Blythe presented the reviewed applications to the EDA for deliberation, completing a multi-month process of application intake, staff review, and committee evaluation. Three awards were made from an applicant pool of 18. The total requests for support were over \$90,000 and represented over \$300,000 in investments from the applicants.

### **Wharf District Infrastructure Project**

The month opened with the Wharf Stakeholder Meeting and Shenandoah Valley Small Business Development Center (SBDC) Workshop #1 on April 1, marking the launch of the coordinated marketing support workshop series for Wharf-area businesses navigating the impacts of ongoing infrastructure construction. This first session, facilitated in partnership with the SBDC, focused on tools and resources available to small businesses during the construction period from the SBDC and how to identify target audiences.

A second Wharf workshop — focused specifically on marketing — was held on April 15, continuing the support series and deepening engagement with affected business owners. The Flood Resilience Meeting also took place on April 15, underscoring the department's attention to long-term infrastructure planning alongside the immediate construction response. The cross-departmental internal group of stakeholders continues to meet regularly to support the ongoing tunnel repairs and provide updates to all involved stakeholders.

### **Partnerships & Regional Engagement**

Brownfields Conference planning continued to advance throughout the month, with meetings on April 9 and a planning team session on April 24 in preparation for the June 8–10 conference at Hotel 24. Public Art discussions on April 16 continued interdepartmental coordination on creative placemaking efforts.

The department also conducted an intern interview on April 27 in preparation for the JMU student session beginning in mid-May, which will place an intern across Economic Development, Economic Mobility, Community Development, and the Environmental Department for a summer rotation.

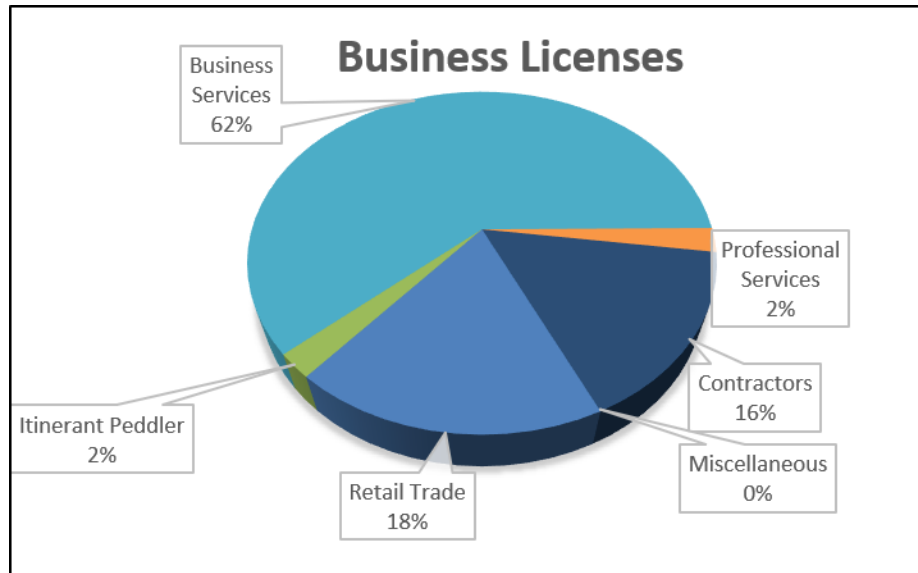
### **Business License Activity**

During the month of April, the Commissioner of Revenue's Office issued 44 business licenses, compared to 64 the previous month (March), representing a 31.25% decrease. This month a year ago, 46 business licenses were issued.

The Business Services sector accounted for 62% of the of the total licenses issued in April 2026, and the Retail Trade sector accounted for 18%, Contractors accounted for 16%. Professional Services accounted for 2% and 2% each for Itinerant Peddlers licenses.

Year to date licenses issued: 166

Licenses issued previous year for same period: 125



### **Finance**

- The department issued 7,341 utility bills and general bills totaling \$1,382,257 during April.
- Collection activities in April resulted in the recovery of \$6,018 in delinquent utility invoices.
- The Utility Payment Office processed 3,083 receipts in the amount of \$767,797 during April.
- The department processed 547 City and 204 School accounts payable checks totaling \$5,135,784 and 71 ACH debit/wire transactions totaling \$2,091,893 during April.
- Payroll processed 881 City and 597 Schools payroll-related advices totaling \$4,142,581.
- The department issued a request for proposal (RFP) for a Utility Rate Study. Proposals were received on April 30. Proposals are currently under review by Public Works and Finance staff.
- The department assisted the Police Department in issuing a request for proposal for the CAD, MDS, and LERMS Software, Hardware, and Services Project. Proposals were received from vendors on April 30. Proposals are currently under review by PD and IT staff.
- The department assisted the Public Works Department in issuing an Invitation for Bid (IFB) for Pavement Marking Systems. Bids were received on April 9. The project has been awarded to Weatherman Collins Contracting, LLC.

- FY2027 budget work continued in April, with public hearings being held on April 9 and adoption by City Council on April 23.
- Assistant Director of Finance Cindy Fitzgerald attended Tyler Connect 2026 on behalf of the Finance Department.

### **Fire & Rescue**

- Staunton Fire and Rescue responded to 290 incidents in April, with an average response time of 4 minutes and 32 seconds. The average response time for the year is 4 minutes and 48 seconds.
- Staff received over 492 hours of training for the month.
- Staff conducted 62 business fire safety inspections and 26 re-inspections in April.
- Fire Station 2 celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary with an open house on April 11.
- Staff traveled to Wisconsin to conduct final inspections on the new pumpers expected to be delivered soon.
- B-Shift assisted with the Veterans Garden Raised Bed Build at the VFW.
- Shifts toured Stuart Hall School and the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank as part of better familiarizing themselves in the event of a fire.
- Organized a department social to show appreciation for staff and their continued contributions throughout the year. At the event, Captain Mike Lyle was named Officer of the Year, and Master Firefighter Stanley Barbour was named Firefighter of the Year. Both individuals were selected by their peers for their hard work and dedication.
- Staff conducted door-to-door visits on Gloria Place, with the area selected due to a recent fire. A total of 40 homes were contacted, with 16 smoke detectors installed and 24 batteries replaced.
- Assisted with Regional Firefighter testing at the Rockingham County Fairgrounds.
- The Fire Marshal's Office reviewed three rezoning requests, one fire alarm panel plan, one sprinkler plan, one site plan, and five sale of fireworks permits. Final acceptance tests were conducted on one sprinkler plan and one fire alarm plan.

## **Human Resources**

### ***Employee Actions***

The following employee actions were processed:

Terminated:

Full Time—2

Part Time/Seasonal—2

Hired:

Full Time—3

Part Time—11

Retired—1

### ***Activities***

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

#### ***Recruitment:***

Initiated recruitment for the following positions:

- Paralegal – Commonwealth Attorney’s Office
- Deputy Registrar, part-time – Registrar
- Maintenance Worker, Traffic Control – Public Works
- Operations Superintendent – Public Works
- Library Assistant II, Communications – Library
- Referees/Umpires – Parks & Recreation
- Public Safety Dispatcher – Police Department
- Recreational Program Assistant Supervisor – Parks & Recreation
  
- Continued recruitment for the following positions:
  - Utility Service Clerk/Accounts Payable – Public Works
  - Parking Enforcement Officer – Police Department
  - Susan Blackley Horticulture Internship, seasonal – Parks & Recreation
  - Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney I
  - Utility Service Worker/Utility Locate Technician – Public Works
  - Water Treatment Plant Operator – Public Works
  - Plumber – Public Works
  - Library Assistant I, Circulation Assistant – Library
  - Traffic Signal Technician – Public Works

### *Orientations:*

Conducted orientations for three new full-time employees.

### *Miscellaneous:*

- The April 16 service pin luncheon celebrated the people who keep the City of Staunton running smoothly. Joined by the City Manager and Deputy City Manager, staff had the honor of recognizing some major milestones and achievements this quarter. A huge congratulations to the four Employee of the Quarter winners! These individuals were nominated by their peers for going above and beyond to serve the community with excellence. The city celebrates service in five-year increments, and this quarter's numbers were impressive. The grand total of service, 230 years, was celebrated across the entire organization this quarter.

*(From Left to Right) Julie Hargrove, Leslie Beauregard, Officer Butch Shifflett, Carolina Leija, Debby Gregory, Amanda DiMeo, Jacob Schrauder, Michael Wilkerson, Rick Johnson, Officer Ray Murray, and John Keene.*



- The Captrust at Work representative was on site in April for employees to set up appointments to discuss their savings.
- Assisted with Regional Firefighter testing at the Rockingham County Fairgrounds.

### **Information Technology**

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

- Continued work on the Tyler EPL (electronic permitting) project for Planning & Inspections. This has been a significant project for configuration, integration, project management and testing. Go-live is scheduled for early May.
- Replaced all timeclocks in the City and Schools with a newer model.
- General IT support including system updates and patching and Windows Server upgrades on several systems.

- IT infrastructure work continued at the Gypsy Hill Park Pool House to accommodate additional cameras, network drops, timeclock, and phones.
- Meeting with vendors regarding network requirements for the new Blue Ridge Court Services site.
- Desktop Engineer Jacob Schrauder completed the CompTIA Network+ certification.
- Upgraded the core network switch for Gypsy Hill Park. The new switch provides 10x the bandwidth.
- The SAW Regional Radio project has started the Commissioning phase after identifying the source of external interference that had been impacting a key RF site. An updated project timeline has been proposed for go-live in late summer.

### **Library**

The steel support masts were installed for the forthcoming backyard terrace on April 9. The poles will support the fabric sail to provide shade for attendees at future library programs. Additional grading work and construction continues in early May.

The Friends of the Staunton Library held their first clean-up day as part of the city's Adopt-a-Spot program. Over a dozen volunteers came together Saturday, April 18 to pick up litter around the library and down Churchville Avenue. Another clean-up is scheduled for July.

The Library of Things collection expanded to include an additional two musical instruments, twelve art prints, two sets of hiking poles, a DVD player, and a CD player.

The library hosted display of paintings by Brigitte Huson and an Earth Day exhibit by Shenandoah Green. Children also submitted pieces for a World Art Day exhibit.



### Special programs included

- Bookbinding workshop in partnership with the Staunton Makerspace
- Paint & Sip art class partially funded by a grant from the Virginia Commission for the Arts
- Community Gear Library orientation sessions
- FAFSA assistance
- Homeschool Hour: Fantastic Flowers
- Word Play: Poetry Activities for Teens



### Outreach events included

- Pathways to Possibilities Inclusion & Transition Fair
- Brookdale Senior Living tech assistance and pop-up library
- Aviva Baldwin Park
- Senior Health Fair
- Ten childcare and early education organizations

### ***Library Statistical Report: April 2026***

<b>CIRCULATION</b>	<b>Month</b>	<b>YTD</b>	<b>PROGRAMS</b>	<b>Month</b>	<b>YTD</b>
Adult	16,025	166,002	Adult	19	142
Young Adult (YA)	13,107	25,573	Attendance	307	2,181
Juvenile	1,240	121,465	YA	5	50
Digital	6,364	63,596	Attendance	936	9,845
			Juvenile	43	350
Total Circulation	36,736	376,636	Attendance	1,778	16,623
Talking Book Center Circulation	1,221	14,055	General	1	5
			Attendance	20	406
Items Checked In	18,407	177,100			
			<b>PEOPLE</b>		
Outgoing to VLC Libraries	1,623	16,474	Library Visits	13,819	131,375
Incoming from VLC Libraries	1,350	13,817	Curbside Visits	31	127
Total Holds Filled	4,510	44,709	Computer Users	679	6,549
			Juvenile Computer Users	1,319	16,629
Added to Collection	1,040	12,689	Meetings Held	31	192
Withdrawn from Collection	151	7,347	Volunteer Hours	111.5	1,294
			New Card Registrations	199	1,636
Database Use/Sessions	7,440	39,799	Total Registered Cards		16,296

<b>SERVICES</b>	<b>Month</b>	<b>YTD</b>			
ILLs Borrowed	12	132			
Proctoring/Book-a-Librarians	5	45			

## **Parks & Recreation**

### ***Horticulture***

Horticulture completed the following tasks:

- In honor of Arbor Day on April 23, the horticulture team of Matt Sensabaugh and Leah Roadcap, along with Ashley Mock of the Virginia Department of Forestry visited with 40 children at the HEART after school program at Ware Elementary. During the visit they talked to the children about trees and their importance, planted an Arbor Day tree on the school grounds, and the children made kites to fly on the school grounds. Each child also received a Redbud seedling to plant at their home.
- On April 24 the nearly 70 children in Ware Elementary's fifth grade visited Gypsy Hill Park for a field trip. During their visit the children released trout fry with members of the Lewis Creek Watershed Advisory Committee. Additionally, Mr. Sensabaugh gave the children a tour and talked to them about trees, their importance to clean water, and the impact of stormwater runoff. The new stream restoration was a key topic as well as several tree identification exercises. The students also had time to enjoy the park and feed the ducks.
- Mr. Sensabaugh and Superintendent of Parks Chase Dudley met with Environmental Programs Administrator Willow Hughes, and the contractor for the stream restoration project on April 20. The team walked the area and identified what needed replacement plantings or seeding. The replacement/ touch up work will be done in May before the warrantee period runs out.
- About 350 tropical bulbs were potted in preparation for the summer annual displays including caladiums, dahlias, cannas, and elephant ears. The dry conditions brought on early watering of the flower beds.
- New shrubs and tree-form Hydrangeas were planted near Staunton Fire Station 1; five Arborvitae were planted near Frontier Dr. for Engineering. Twenty-five new or replacement trees were planted at the RMA Parking Lot, on Churchville Ave., in Gypsy Hill Park, and Montgomery Hall Park. Fifteen trees were removed from near the Staunton Armory, in Gypsy Hill Park, near the Wine football stadium or the Gypsy Hill Park Golf Course.

### ***Maintenance***

Park Maintenance completed the following duties:

- Removed pool covers from Montgomery Hall and Gypsy Hill Park Pools.
- Continue to water sod at the new pool facility located in Gypsy Hill Park.
- Provided field maintenance for all Staunton High School Athletic programs.
- Assisted with moving voting machines for the April election.
- Assisted with repairs to the gym ceiling at Booker T. Washington Community Center.

### ***Community Outreach***

Staff engaged in the following community outreach activities:

- Ana Hummel, Parks & Recreation's program coordinator, attended the annual Virginia Recreation and Parks Society's Leadership Training Institute
- Scheduled programs for the month:
  - Staunton Gold Cup indoor soccer tournament
  - Skills and Drills Pickleball Clinic
  - Japanese Swordsmanship
  - American Shakespeare Center (ASC) Drama Club
  - Flame Fitness
  - Family Canoeing
  - Beginner Chess
  - Senior Chess Club
  - Archery Club
  - First Time Homebuyers
  - Living off the Grid
  - Line Dancing
  - High Knob Tower Hike
  - Intermediate Rock Climbing
  - Senior Health Fair
  - Earth Day

### **Police**

- All sworn personnel completed semi-annual physical fitness testing and firearms training during the month.
- Chief Williams served on a panel at the Virginia Coalition for Open Government's annual conference on April 22 in Norfolk.

- The E-911 Center received 3,894 calls during the month, including 1,130 9-1-1 calls and 15 text-to 9-1-1.
- Police personnel responded to 2,607 incidents during the month, including 1,390 citizen calls for service, 646 officer-initiated activities, 169 administrative calls, and 402 directed patrols.
- The average response time for police emergency calls for service during the month was 3 minutes and 59 seconds; it was 4 minutes and 11 seconds for the year.

## Public Works

### ***Employee Spotlight – Ricky Botkin***



This month's spotlight features Ricky Botkin, Street Supervisor. Botkin has been with the city for nearly 26 years, beginning as an Equipment Operator in the Streets Division. In 2007, he was promoted to an Equipment Operator III crew leader and in 2023, he was promoted into his current role of Street Supervisor, guiding all the day-to-day activities of the street crews. But Botkin's work is not confined just to streets. Throughout his career, he has been involved in nearly every activity or service provided by Public Works, from fixing late night water main breaks to replacing traffic signs. His steadfast dedication to all things Public Works, coupled with his quality of work, dependability, and respect is what makes this civil servant one of the best.

### ***Administration Division***

The utility office established 35 new owner accounts, 26 new residential rental accounts, and 3 new commercial accounts. The office collected \$51,074 in payments. A total of 35 accounts were cut off for non-payment. Of those cut off, 29 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, and New Street Tunnel Repairs Project

All sewer piping and sewer bypass pumping for the Byers Street work area was completed in April. The concrete foundation for the south wall of the Byers Street tunnel wall was poured, with work continuing on south 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 contractor will shift over to the Johnson Street work area.

### Water Treatment Plant Fluoride Tank Replacement

The construction contract for Waco Inc. was executed, for the bid amount of \$439,073. A preconstruction conference was scheduled for May 13, with work anticipated to begin shortly thereafter. The project includes replacing the existing fluoride tank, concrete containment area, and chemical feed piping.

### Staunton Crossing Water and Sewer Project:

All sewer work is substantially complete, including the new 1.0 MGD (million gallons per day) wastewater pump station. The contractor for the pump station and linework is working to complete final punchlist items. Interior work on the elevated storage tank continues, with final completion scheduled for the summer.



### ***Operations Division***

Street crews completed two weeks of heavy trash collection in April. Additionally, they started collection for brush and should have that work completed by mid-May.

The city's mowing contractor began the first round of cutting and clearing of street rights-of-way (ROW) throughout the city. This seasonal work is expected to continue throughout the spring, summer, and fall with additional rounds of cutting and clearing.

The paving contractor began milling and paving many streets. This year's paving schedule encompasses everything from heavily travelled arterial roads to residential subdivisions. Paving is expected to wrap up in late May.

A pavement marking contract was awarded in April. Staff is currently prioritizing the list of streets that need marking. This work is expected to begin in May.

### ***Refuse and Facilities Division***

A contractor and the facilities maintenance crew completed the city's portion of the electrical power installation at the Farmers' Market at their new location at the parking lot of the J&DR courthouse on West Beverley Street. The Dominion Energy portion was completed in early May.

Staff held a pre-bid conference with contractors for the Health Department Roof Replacement project. Bids for the project were due May 12.

The contract for the Public Works Salt Storage Shed Roof Replacement project was executed. Work began the week of May 4.

The recycling center received a total of 3,616 visitors for April.

The Refuse and Facilities Division welcomed Preston Rohr as Sanitation Worker.

### ***Utilities Division***

Utility field crews repaired two water main breaks, four water meters, five water valves, two sewer laterals, five sewer mains and one sewer manhole. Crews responded to five sewer lateral blockages and installed one new sewer connection. Utilities staff responded to 584 VA811 locate tickets.

Water plant staff conducted routine sampling for compliance testing and continued preparations for specialized operations during the upcoming water plant projects.

Utility technical services staff with assistance from water plant operators installed an additional sodium hypochlorite pre-feed pump for use during upcoming bypass operations.

The Utilities Division welcomes two new employees: Daniel Hallman as Equipment Operator I on our utility crews and Brett Wallis as Utility Locate Technician.

## **Tourism**

### ***Activities:***

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

- Visit Staunton awarded Virginia Tourism DMO Marketing Grant

- Staunton blog promotions featured [A Book Lover’s Trail: Staunton & the Valley Crawl](#) (4/7), [Historic Garden Week](#) (4/9), and [The Staunton Summer Theater Playbook](#) (4/23)
- The U is Silent; We Aren’t podcast featured [It Takes a Valley: The Art of Ecosystem Building](#) and [Staunton Jams: Building a Music Community](#)
- Hosted Charlotte/Raleigh based content creator @jensensavannah – highlighting arts and cultural experiences in Staunton

**Public Relations**

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

Date	Headline	Source Name	Reach	AVE
April 10	<a href="#">9 Virginia Towns Full of Antique Shops and Hidden Treasures</a>	MSN.com	14,344,064	\$132,682.59
April 21	<a href="#">Virginia Launches Cross-state Bus Service</a>	Southern Living	53,486,771	\$494,752.63
April 20	<a href="#">6 Iconic American Restaurants Still Serving Up Nostalgia and Classic Flavors</a>	Yahoo! News	40,552,091	\$375,106.84
April 25	<a href="#">9 Virginia Towns Full of Antique Shops and Hidden Treasures</a>	Fox News Channel	30,808,828	\$284,981.66
April 21	<a href="#">Realtors Predict These 11 Cities Will Become Retirement Hot Spots In 2026</a>	AOL	30,808,828	\$284,981.66
April 11	<a href="#">I Spent 21 Hours Traveling by Train to Avoid Flights. Was It Worth It?</a>	AOL	23,746,971	\$219,659.48
April 19	<a href="#">Staunton Is Stanton in Virginia— Woodrow Wilson's Birthplace</a>	The Washington Post	13,954,343	\$129,077.67
April 16	<a href="#">Virginia Scenic Railway Announces 'Summer of Steam' Railroad Excursions</a>	NewsBreak	13,954,343	\$129,077.67
April 13	<a href="#">Summer Of Steam: Virginia Scenic Railway Offers Up Train Excursions in Staunton, Louisa</a>	NewsBreak	13,954,343	\$129,077.67
April 11	<a href="#">Famed Norfolk &amp; Western 611 Locomotive Returns for Summer of Steam</a>	NewsBreak	13,954,343	\$129,077.67
April 10	<a href="#">N&amp;W No. 611 Set for Excursions on Virginia Scenic Railway in June and July</a>	NewsBreak	13,954,343	\$129,077.67
April 10	<a href="#">Historic Garden Week</a>	NewsBreak	13,954,343	\$129,077.67
April 9	<a href="#">6 Spectacular Day Trips in Virginia You Can Only Experience by Train</a>	NewsBreak	13,954,343	\$129,077.67
April 2	<a href="#">Realtors Predict These 11 Cities Will Become Retirement Hot Spots In 2026</a>	NewsBreak	11,730,258	\$108,504.89

Date	Headline	Source Name	Reach	AVE
April 21	<a href="#">6 Spectacular Day Trips in Virginia You Can Only Experience by Train</a>	Family Destinations Guide	1,092,423	\$10,104.91
April 8	<a href="#">Famed Norfolk &amp; Western 611 Locomotive Returns for Summer of Steam</a>	WSET-TV	816,089	\$7,548.82
April 10	<a href="#">Virginia Scenic Railway Announces 'Summer of Steam' Railroad Excursions</a>	WVIR	501,076	\$4,634.95
April 13	<a href="#">611 Locomotive to Operate a Limited Series of Summer Excursions in June and July</a>	WSLS-TV	402,064	\$3,719.09
April 10	<a href="#">Virginia Scenic Railway Announces 'Summer of Steam' Railroad Excursions</a>	WHSV-TV	386,196	\$3,572.31
April 13	<a href="#">MADcon Debuts in Staunton Celebrating Music, Art, And Design</a>	WHSV-TV	386,196	\$3,572.31
April 11	<a href="#">Virginia Scenic Railway Announces 'Summer of Steam' Excursions</a>	Northern Virginia Magazine	350,921	\$3,246.02
April 20	<a href="#">10 Unique Virginia Museums That Aren't Just Art and History</a>	Family Travel Forum	197,297	\$1,825.00
April 4	<a href="#">10 Must-Visit Museums in Virginia for History and Culture Lovers</a>	Family Travel Forum	185,016	\$1,711.40
April 28	<a href="#">This Virginia Town Played a Key Role in Major Hollywood Films Including Evan Almighty and Gods and Generals</a>	Family Travel Forum	185,016	\$1,711.40
April 13	<a href="#">10 Charming Towns That Feel Like England, But Are Pure Virginia Magic</a>	Family Travel Forum	185,016	\$1,711.40
April 12	<a href="#">What To Do in Downtown Staunton, Virginia—one Of the South's Finest Small Towns</a>	Atlanta Magazine	160,940	\$1,488.69
April 16	<a href="#">Staunton Jams Festival Brings Music and Community Together</a>	News Leader	90,837	\$840.24
April 29	<a href="#">Visit A Re-creation of Shakespeare's Blackfriars Playhouse in Staunton</a>	News Leader	90,837	\$840.24
April 28	<a href="#">Staunton's Rich Architecture from the 19th Century Is a Must-see</a>	News Leader	90,837	\$840.24
April 27	<a href="#">CEO To Depart Woodrow Wilson Library to Direct Frontier Culture Museum</a>	News Leader	90,837	\$840.24
April 23	<a href="#">Staunton Books &amp; Tea to Host 'The Secret Lives of Bookshops' April 21</a>	News Leader	90,837	\$840.24
April 20	<a href="#">Virginia's Summer of Steam Returns June 12 with Legendary 611 Train</a>	News Leader	90,837	\$840.24
April 14	<a href="#">Shenandoah Valley Bookshop Crawl Offers Prizes</a>	News Leader	90,837	\$840.24
April 9	<a href="#">Discover Staunton's Historic Gardens and Elegant Homes This Spring</a>	News Leader	90,837	\$840.24

Date	Headline	Source Name	Reach	AVE
April 9	<a href="#">Chef Laura Fonner Brings 'Fresh Air' To Zynodoa Kitchen</a>	News Leader	88,227	\$816.10
April 1	<a href="#">Summer Of Steam: Virginia Scenic Railway Offers Up Train Excursions in Staunton, Louisa</a>	The Augusta Free Press	85,463	\$790.53
April 11	<a href="#">Iconic Virginia Steam Engine 611 Returns for Limited Rides</a>	WFXR-TV	70,132	\$648.72
April 10	<a href="#">Staunton's Rich Architecture from the 19th Century Is a Must-see</a>	The Progress-Index	56,309	\$520.86
April 27	<a href="#">Reunion Bakery Attracts Customers from Staunton and Beyond</a>	Daily News-Record	43,712	\$404.34
<b>TOTALS</b>			<b>309,077,001</b>	<b>\$2,858,962.21</b>

### Website Visitation

Website Traffic		
April 2025	April 2026	% Change
38,151 users	40,913 users	+7.24%
145 guide requests	99 visitor's guide requests	-31.7%

### Top 10 Origin Markets and Visitor Spending -March 2026-

Top Visitor Markets - Table ▾

Visitor Origin Market	% of Visitors ▾	Same time previous year
Washington DC-Hagerstown MD	19%	20%
Roanoke-Lynchburg VA	14%	24%
Richmond-Petersburg VA	10%	12%
Norfolk-Portsmouth-Newport News VA	8%	7%
New York NY	6%	4%
Philadelphia PA	2%	2%
Boston MA-Manchester NH	2%	0.5%
Knoxville TN	2%	1%
Tri-Cities TN-VA	1%	1%
Chicago IL	1%	1%

Top Spend Markets - Table ▾

Visitor Origin Market	% of Visitor Spend ▾	Same time previous year
Washington DC-Hagerstown MD	21%	13%
Richmond-Petersburg VA	13%	14%
Roanoke-Lynchburg VA	8%	11%
Norfolk-Portsmouth-Newport News VA	8%	8%
New York NY	4%	3%
Wilkes Barre-Scranton PA	2%	1%
Harrisburg-Lancaster-Lebanon-York PA	2%	2%
Philadelphia PA	2%	1%
Columbus OH	2%	2%
Tri-Cities TN-VA	2%	2%

### Key Insights

#### Out-of-State Visitation Is Growing

In March 2026, 51% of visitors to Staunton came from out of state, up from 44% during the same period in 2025. This growth in out-of-state visitation is an encouraging sign that

Staunton is drawing interest from a broader geographic pool of travelers, extending its reach well beyond the immediate regional audience.

### **Visitor Spending Is Contributing More to the Local Economy**

Visitors accounted for 13% of all spending in the destination in March 2026, compared to 11% in March 2025. Of that visitor spend, 26% went toward local businesses, up from 23% the prior year. Average daily visitor spend held steady at \$44, consistent with March 2025. Together, these trends reflect a growing economic contribution from visitors, with more of those dollars flowing directly to local businesses.

### **Origin Markets: Regional Drive Markets Remain the Backbone**

Washington DC-Hagerstown, MD continued to lead as Staunton's top visitor origin market, representing 19% of visitors in March 2026. Roanoke-Lynchburg, VA held the second largest market at 14% of visitors, though this is an area to continue monitoring as it was 24% in March 2025. Richmond-Petersburg, VA represented 10% of visitors, down slightly from 12%. Norfolk-Portsmouth-Newport News, VA came in at 8% of visitors, up slightly from 7% in March 2025, a positive trend worth watching as this market matures.

### **Top Spending Markets**

Washington DC-Hagerstown, MD also led in visitor spend at 21% in March 2026, up from 13% in 2025. This is the strongest year-over-year improvement among all markets. Richmond-Petersburg, VA contributed 13% of visitor spend, consistent with 14% the prior year. Roanoke-Lynchburg, VA and Norfolk-Portsmouth-Newport News, VA each represented 8% of visitor spend, with Roanoke-Lynchburg showing a decline from 11% that is worth investigating to understand whether it reflects a shift in spend behavior or trip type.

### **Accommodation Markets**

Washington DC-Hagerstown, MD led accommodation visitation at 9% of accommodation visitors in March 2026, compared to 10% in March 2025 — relatively stable. Norfolk-Portsmouth-Newport News, VA and Roanoke-Lynchburg, VA each represented 8% of accommodation visitors. Two newer markets in the accommodation data worth noting are Albany-Schenectady-Troy, NY at 6% and Knoxville, TN at 6%, both of which could represent emerging overnight visitor segments for Staunton.

### **Spending Categories: Food & Beverage Leads, Retail Grows**

Food & Beverage remained the top category for both visitor presence (36%) and visitor spend (50%), with spend share growing from 41% in March 2025. This reinforces Staunton's culinary and dining scene as a primary draw. Retail represented 26% of visitors, up from 21% in March 2025, while spend in Retail was 10%, a shift from 15% in March 2025 that is worth exploring further. Accommodations held relatively steady at 11% of visitors and 14% of spend. Outdoor Recreation showed a small but consistent presence at 13% of visitors, slightly up from March 2025.

### **What This Means**

The March 2026 data reflects a destination that is drawing more out-of-state visitors than a year ago and seeing those visitors contribute a growing share of local economic activity

— particularly at local businesses. The strength of the Washington DC-Hagerstown market, both in visitation and spend, signals that Staunton continues to resonate as a weekend and short-trip destination for this large and proximate audience. The emergence of Albany-Schenectady-Troy, NY and Knoxville, TN in overnight accommodation data is an early signal of geographic diversification worth watching.

The consistency in average daily spend at \$44 and the growth in the share directed to local businesses suggests that visitors are engaging meaningfully with the local economy and not just passing through. The Food & Beverage category's growing share of spend points to dining as a key motivator and an area where the destination has demonstrated real strength.

## **Office on Youth**

### ***Crime Control Programs***

- Six participants completed the Youth Empowerment Sessions (Y.E.S.) class April 21.
- Thirteen youth received detention alternative services.
- Sixteen youth completed *3rd Millennium Classroom* courses:
  - three participants *THC 101*
  - one participant *Wellbeing 101*
  - two participants *Conflict Wise*
  - three participants *Nicotine 101*
  - one participant *Respect & Resolve*
  - two participants *Under the Influence JV*
  - one participant *Other Drugs*
  - two participants *StopLifting*
  - one participant *Cannabis Wise SS*

### ***Family Services***

- Seven adults participated in *Parenting and Divorce* co-parenting program.
- Five adults participated *Loving Solutions*- Parent Project Jr.
- Twelve adults participated in *The Parent Project*.

### ***Substance Abuse Prevention***

- Coordinator participated in an environmental scan for substances in the local community, utilizing a counter tools survey with Prevention Specialist Casey Rolfe, with the Valley Community Services Board on April 13.
- Coordinator participated in *Approaches to Early Intervention in Cannabis-Induced Psychosis* webinar, hosted through Johnny's Ambassadors April 17.

- Coordinator tabled at the Staunton library alongside Central Shenandoah Health Department and VCSB for fentanyl awareness day April 29.

### ***Safe Routes to School (SRTS)***

- Coordinator conducted bike safety instruction for 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> grade students at McSwain Elementary School April 7- 20, and Bessie Weller Elementary School April 21 – 27.

### ***Truancy Prevention - Check and Connect***

- Participants include 77 students from 14 schools, including 12 Staunton High School and 13 Shelburne Middle School students.
- Truancy Board was held April 16 with two students and families from Staunton City Schools participating, and one no show.

### ***Community Outreach, Trainings, and Community Events***

- Two staff completed Adverse Childhood Experiences (Aces) training, hosted by Valley Community Services Board April 9.
- Director participated in the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth (VFHY) new grantee orientation on April 21.
- Four staff attended the Children's Services Act CSA Conference *Collaborate. Innovate. Transform. Together, We Make It Happen* in Harrisonburg April 23.
- Director Ginny Newman spoke at the Lions Club meeting April 28.

### **Staunton Downtown Development Association<sup>1</sup>**

- The SDDA welcomed Adam Greenbaum, former owner of the Visulite Cinema, as its new Executive Director. A big “thank you” to Vice-Mayor Brad Arrowood for ably steering the organization as Interim Executive Director. In April, Mr. Greenbaum and Marketing & Events Director Scotty Tiernan travelled to Tulsa, OK, to attend the National Main Street Conference.
- Also in April, MADcon 2026 (Music, Art and Design) activated downtown Staunton with a two-day lineup of panels, workshops, installations, and a sold-out sustainable fashion show, drawing strong attendance and engagement across multiple venues while driving measurable foot traffic and sales for participating businesses. With partnerships spanning local organizations, artists, and sponsors (including presenting Sponsor: CMA’s Valley Subaru) the event expanded SDDA’s reach, grew SDDA’s audience and email base, and established a scalable foundation for MADcon to

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

continue building Staunton's identity as a hub for creative industry, cultural tourism, and April as Staunton's Arts Month.

- Alongside MADcon, Staunton Music Festival recorded their highest attended Baroquefest on record, bringing world class classical music to Staunton's historical Downtown and celebrating 20+ years of Staunton Music Festival.
- Sadly, Staunton lost two beloved members of Staunton's downtown community last month: Harry Shiflett and Chris Pugh.
  - Harry Shiflett, longtime owner of The Dragon's Hoard, created more than a staple storefront of Downtown Staunton, he built a welcoming haven where the gaming community thrived. With his passion for playing and the "after-hours" late nights of campaigning, Harry became a mentor and father figure to generations of locals. His legacy lives on in the countless friendships, stories, and sense of belonging he fostered in downtown Staunton and beyond.
  - Chris Pugh, known to many as Sir Blackwolf or Father Christmas, brought history, imagination, and heart to downtown Staunton, embodying countless characters that turned everyday streets into places of wonder. Through his work with Medieval Fantasies Company and his lifelong passion for storytelling and education, his presence leaves a lasting imprint on the spirit, creativity, and sense of magic that defines our community.