

# PARTNERSHIP MARKETING INITIATIVES

**2022 - 2025**



VIRGINIA IS FOR LOVERS

**OUR CORE PHILOSOPHY  
WE MEASURE SUCCESS BY  
HOW HELPFUL WE ARE  
TO OUR PARTNERS**



# IMPORTANCE OF THE TRAVEL ECONOMY

**Simply put: People want their lives and communities to be enriched by travel.**

Residents want this. Visitors LOVE this. And Economic Developers are jumping on board in seeing tourism assets as a powerful lure to potential businesses as well as travelers.

As the roles of Destination Marketing Organizations continue to evolve, Partnership Marketing stays committed on building relationships with our communities on how they see their future.

**Through strategic community planning, focused tourism development and cooperative advertising grants, Partnership Marketing works with our industry partners to maximize Virginia's tourism potential.**

And while travelers spend a whopping \$69 Million per day in Virginia, tourism also contributes to a region's attractiveness for residents as well as new businesses. When communities plan for travelers, they also enhance the local flavor through exciting new developments for our residents. As companies and workers continue to re-evaluate their work culture, Tourism can be a strong economic development tool where workers want to live, play and raise a family.

Together we want to grow inclusive jobs; develop tourism assets that help communities thrive and attract guests who will be enriched with their experiences.

**We are Partnership Marketing.**

## WHO ARE WE?

The Partnership Marketing Team is comprised of tourism practitioners with incredible experience in destination marketing such as a former State Tourism Director, DMO CEOs and Executive Directors, City Council Members, Deputy Mayor, School Board Members, Marketing and Promotions Directors for Major Tourism Attractions, Vice President of PR Agencies, Ad Agencies and a whole slew of master's degrees in Marketing & Tourism Administration.

We bring this vast experience to every project we work on and most importantly, always ask the key question:

### How can we help you?

Here is our team ready to help.

» [VATC.org/partnershipmarketing](https://vatc.org/partnershipmarketing)



**Chris Canfield**

Vice President –Partnership Marketing  
ccanfield@virginia.org  
804-545-5562



**Laura Messer**

Destination Development Manager  
lmesser@virginia.org  
804-278-7651



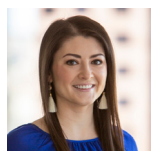
**Wirt Confroy**

Director –Business Development  
wconfroy@virginia.org  
804-545-5552



**Kelli Williams**

Destination Development Manager  
kwilliams@virginia.org  
540-679-6697



**Catilin Johnson**

Director –Operations & Industry Initiatives  
ccjohnson@virginia.org  
804-545-5529



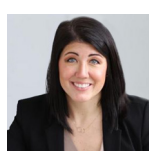
**Katie Conner**

Destination Development Manager  
kconnor@virginia.org  
540-676-4953



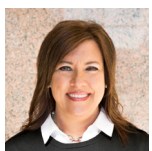
**Staci Martin**

Director –Grants  
smartin@virginia.org  
757-390-7330



**Kalen Hunter**

Sr. Destination Development Manager  
khunter@virginia.org  
276-213-0009



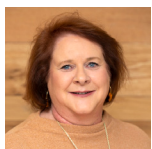
**Becky Nave**

Director –Destination Development  
bnave@virginia.org  
276-791-9172



**Noah Salaah ad-Deen**

Grants Coordinator  
nsaddeen@virginia.org  
804-545-5518



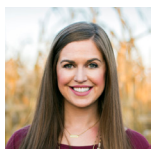
**Sandra Tanner**

Sr. Destination Development Manager  
stanner@virginia.org  
434-774-9008



**Jacob Bower**

Special Projects Manager  
jbower@virginia.org  
434-262-8463



**Michelle Workman**

Sr. Destination Development Manager  
mworkman@virginia.org  
276-722-0238

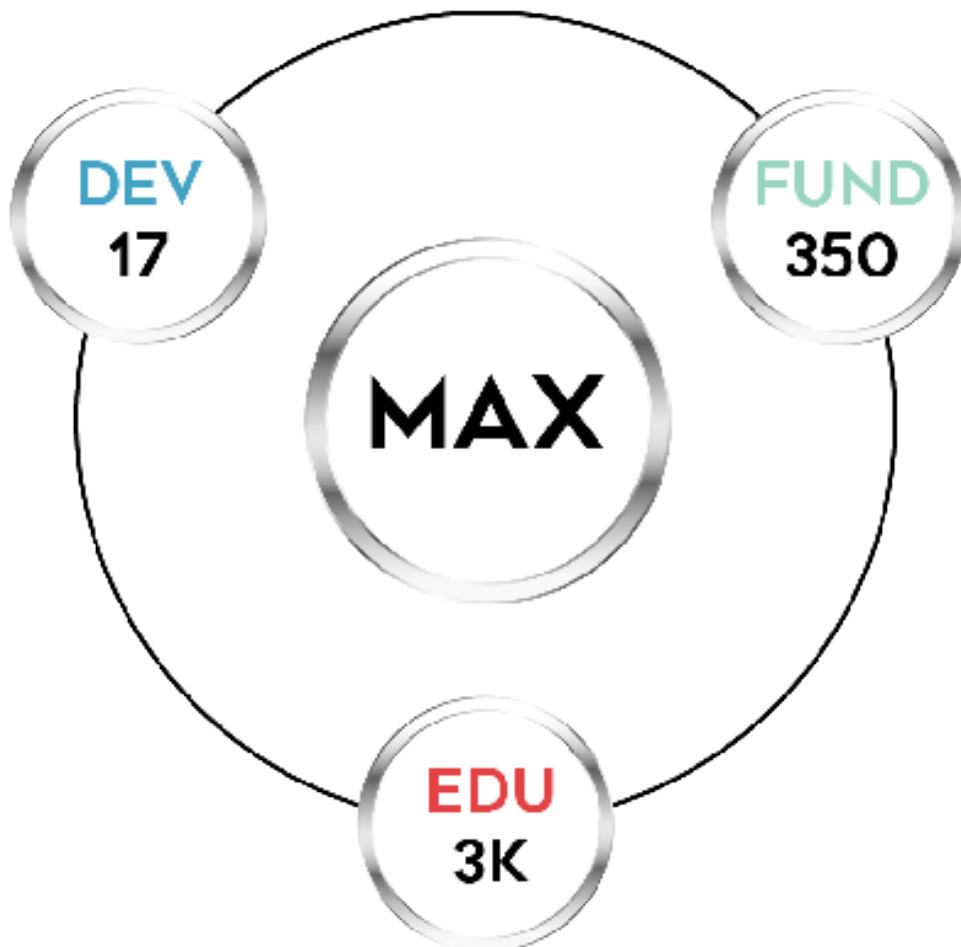
## OBJECTIVIES & KEY RESULTS — OKRS

“OKR” stands for “Objectives and Key Results.” OKRs are an effective goal-setting tool for communicating what you want to accomplish and what milestones you’ll need to meet to accomplish it. OKRs are used by some of the world’s leading organizations to set and enact their strategies.

OKRs provide many benefits, including clarity, enhanced communication and a coherent, transparent organization-wide strategy. \* see below *Measure What Matters* by John Doerr

### Partnership Marketing’s Objectives and Key Results — OKRs

Objective	Maximize Virginia’s Tourism Potential
Key Result #1	Development of 17 tourism plans, assets and trails annually
Key Result #2	Fund 350 grants averaging 4 partners per grant while leveraging private sector marketing investments to the ratio of 3:1 with grant funds
Key Result #3	Educate 3,000 stakeholders, entrepreneurs, travel hosts and tourism businesses as part of Virginia’s Visitor Economy



\* Measure What Matters: How Google, Bono, and the Gates Foundation Rock the World with OKRs by John Doerr (Penguin Publishing Group, 2018)

***STATEWIDE INITIATIVES  
TIES IN WITH OKRS***

## **PARTNERSHIP MARKETING'S *THREE* TENETS**

Three main tenets for the next two years will drive the PM corporate culture for looking inward:

**Knowledge** - know the industry, our partners, their needs, our visitors and their expectations

**Assertiveness** - move to action before even being asked to do so – go two steps forward always

**Best Use of Time** - activities that produce the best return on time invested Team Approach v. Individual Approach. An added focus will be placed on creating teams within PM as well as with other VTC departments for increased collaboration and integration

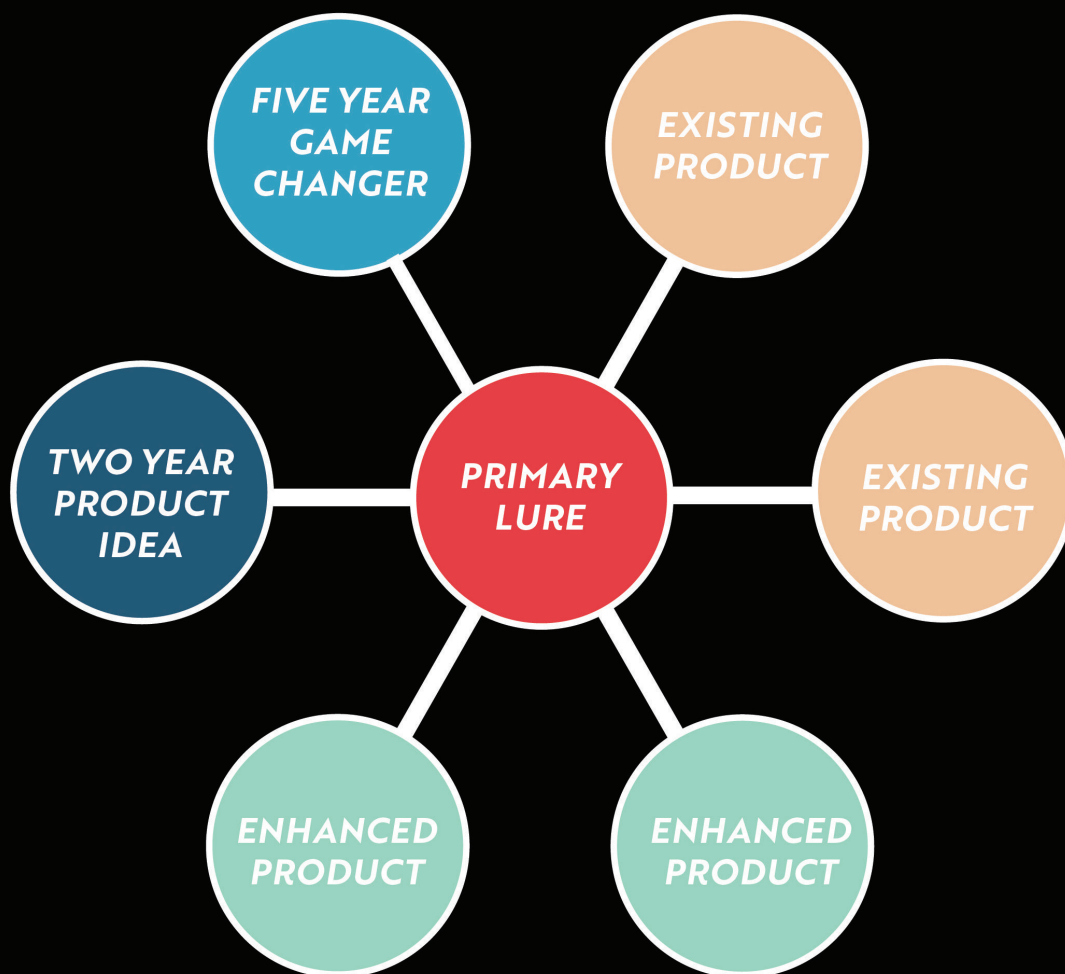
As for external tenets, the following comprise Partnership Marketing's dedication to our industry:

**Understanding** the industry's needs & expectations

**Growing Destinations** by highlighting the complimentary nature of products and services within a region and community

**Fostering Innovation** through people and business excellence





## **DRIVE OUTDOOR**

**DRIVE Outdoor** is the newest edition of the DRIVE program that builds on DRIVE 2.0, Virginia's 2020- 2025 Statewide Tourism Development Plan. Outdoor recreation is a key growth market for Virginia identified in DRIVE 2.0 research and the trends seen through the pandemic and continuing to the future. DRIVE Outdoor focuses on enhancing outdoor recreation development, tourism assets, and entrepreneurial opportunities.

Implementation includes **10 community workshops** focused on outdoor recreation product development during the first six-month round. The first round kicked off October 2022-March 2023. At the workshop, communities will use the hub and spoke model to identify what they are doing well, and what they need to build to be most competitive. Upon completion of the workshop, communities will have the foundation for a competitive outdoor product development plan. Community funds up to \$20,000 will be used towards outdoor recreation development of non-permanent structures, events, equipment for business expansion and research studies to grow the outdoor market.

### **Success is**

- 14 Plans annually resulting in 56 five-year DRIVE Outdoor plans by the end of 2025

## **TDFP | TOURISM DEVELOPMENT FINANCING PROGRAM**

Virginia's Tourism Development Financing Program (TDFP) identifies new product development as a key to staying competitive. The TDFP closes that gap by leveraging local, developer and state investments to complete these projects that, otherwise, cannot find 100 percent sufficient lending. With the TDFP, a municipality (the applicant) identifies and proves a local deficiency which cannot meet current, high visitor demand. A developer (with a project meeting that proven deficiency) secures all the financing and lending needed to complete the project. Similar to Tax Increment Financing (TIF), the municipality and state agree to contribute sales tax revenues from the new project towards the developer's debt with their lender.

### **Success is**

- Secure 2 new TDFP certified community projects
- Engage at least 25+ Virginia municipalities on potential TDFP projects (e.g., EDA, IDA, PDC)
- Educate at least 750+ industry partners via TDFP presentations at tourism meetings and symposiums





## **ZONING | TOURISM ZONES + TOURISM IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS (TID)**

Much like a traditional Business Enterprise Zone, **Tourism Zones** allow for businesses to take advantage of local tax incentives and deductions not available to businesses elsewhere. Any city, county, or town may establish by ordinance, multiple Tourism Zones, and define their own cadre of requirements, resulting in benefits for local existing and newly recruited tourism businesses.

**Tourism Improvement Districts** are a hospitality-specific model of the traditional Business Improvement District (BID). TIDs use special benefit assessments, rather than general taxes, to raise revenue to use for destination marketing and tourism promotion. Funds raised through these assessments cannot be diverted into other government programs and can only be spent on programs that benefit those who pay into the district, in most cases hotels.

### **Success is**

- Educate 750+ industry partners on the scope and benefits of these (2) different zoning opportunities
- Assist in the creation of 5 new zones, statewide

**DEI | DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION**

Travel is a powerful and transformative part of our lives and a most effective way to change how we understand the world around us by exposing us to different cultures, history, heritage, cuisine, art, and, most importantly, people. VTC has created new partnerships, itineraries and stories focused on Black travel, Accessible travel, LGBTQ+ travel, and now exploring LatinX & Hispanic, Asian American, Asian Pacific Islander Desi American (APIDA) and Indigenous Virginian travel.

**Success is**

- Reach 5% more visitors in DEI growth markets by identifying new and different people in Virginia's tourism industry, the businesses and experiences they create
- Share new stories and itineraries increasing visitor engagement and spending, statewide





## COOPERATIVE MARKETING PROGRAMS | MLP

One of the greatest challenges facing any tourism industry partner is having enough dollars for marketing. Add to this the fact that small businesses comprise 90 percent of the Virginia tourism industry, and the need for marketing funding is even more critical. One of the most effective ways tourism industry partners can amplify their marketing impact is through partnerships. The VTC Cooperative Marketing Program grants are designed to allow such partnerships to leverage partners' existing marketing budgets as a match to apply for VTC funding.

In 2022, thanks to additional funding through the Virginia General Assembly, VTC began offering grants for special events and festivals, destination marketing organizations, and for planning activities as well as the **VTC Marketing Leverage Program**. Through these programs, in 2022, VTC awarded \$3.1 Million that was matched by \$12.7 Million in partner dollars. These funds helped 1,176 Virginia travel partners. Moving forward, VTC will continue to adapt the VTC Marketing Leverage Program to address our industry needs.

### Success is

- Regularly revise the online application process and questions to best assist the Virginia travel industry
- Provide a minimum of four online "How to Apply" webinars
- Grow the available funding to \$5 million annually
- Leverage VTC dollars at a minimum of 3:1 through in-kind and cash matches
- Leverage VTC dollars with a minimum of \$12 million annually in partners' dollars through in-kind and cash matches
- Impact a minimum of 1400 Virginia travel industry partners annually
- Strive to increase the above metrics by 10% annually

# COOPERATIVE MARKETING PROGRAMS

VATC.org/**grants**

STATEWIDE INITIATIVES

Program Name:	VTC Marketing Leverage Program	Virginia DMO Marketing Grant	Virginia Special Events & Festival Program	VTC Microbusiness Marketing Leverage Program	VA250 Tourism Marketing Program
<b>Purpose</b>	To leverage Virginia travel industry partners existing marketing budgets and extend partner's marketing reach	To assist Virginia DMOs with marketing their destinations	To assist Virginia special event and festivals with marketing and certain production costs	To assist Virginia small business partners	To promote the America 250 <sup>th</sup> Commemoration
<b>Who can apply?</b>	Virginia small businesses if tourism-related <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hotels/Lodging including bed &amp; breakfasts</li> <li>Restaurants</li> <li>Breweries, Wineries, Distilleries</li> <li>Attractions</li> <li>Retail</li> <li>Non-profits with tourism focus</li> <li>DMOs</li> <li>Localities and NGOs</li> </ul>	Virginia official DMOs only	Virginia-based events who demonstrate a significant attraction of visitors from more than 50 miles from event destination. Must have been held at least two years. Applicants hosting eligible events may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Event organizations</li> <li>Small business if tourism-related</li> <li>Breweries, Wineries, Distilleries</li> <li>Non-profits with tourism focus</li> <li>Attractions</li> <li>Restaurants</li> <li>Hotels/Lodging including bed &amp; breakfasts</li> <li>DMOs</li> <li>Localities and NGOs</li> </ul>	Virginia small businesses with fewer than 20 FTE employees; DMO and other NGOs to promote shoulder season travel and/or small businesses	Local VA250th Committees
<b>Grant Amounts</b>	\$20,000 Max	\$20,000 Max	\$20,000 Max	\$5,000 Max	\$10,000 Max
<b>Key Requirements</b>	Research-based and measurable Marketing Program that demonstrates significant and positive tourism impact; match required	Research-based and measurable Marketing Program that demonstrates significant and positive tourism impact; match required	Research-based and measurable Marketing and Production Program that demonstrates significant and positive tourism impact; match required	Research-based and measurable Marketing Program that demonstrates significant and positive tourism impact; match required	Research-based and measurable Marketing Program that demonstrates significant and positive tourism impact; match required
<b>Applications Open</b>	Annual Fall Funding Cycle	Annual Winter Funding Cycle	Annual Winter Funding Cycle	Annual Fall Funding Cycle	Multiple Annual Funding Cycles
<b>Website</b>	VATC.org/grants	VATC.org/grants	VATC.org.vatc.org/grants	VATC.org/grants	VATC.org/grants
<b>Contact</b>	VTCMLPGrant@virginia.org	VTCDMOGrant@virginia.org	VTCSEFPProgram@virginia.org	VTCMLPGrant@virginia.org	VTCMLPGrant@virginia.org

### EDUCATION & OUTREACH

VTC's Partnership Marketing Division co-leads **Catalyst VA**, Virginia partner agencies for community and economic development. Catalyst VA focuses on small business growth, tourism development and downtown development projects.

VTC is also a founding partner in **Entrepreneur Express Workshops** with other local, state and federal agencies to connect new businesses, entrepreneurs and existing businesses with needed resources.

Three times a year, during **VTC's Orientation Program**, all of VTC's marketing and development divisions share resources and new opportunities to statewide DMOs, business owners, tourism marketers and representatives from Virginia attractions, restaurants, events, retail, and lodging establishments.

#### Success is

- Identify and engage in 10 collaborative projects with focus on technical assistance, funding assistance, job creation and workforce training
- Identify and engage in three collaborative projects with focus on outdoor recreation
- 2,100 entrepreneurs assisted through outreach
- Educate 500+ industry stakeholders with destination management, marketing and best practices to grow their business and communities





## **VA-1 | VIRGINIA'S TOURISM INDUSTRY SUMMIT**

As the largest gathering of Virginia's Tourism Industry, VA-1 is an annual event for education, collaboration and sharing of best practices with our industry. Partnership Marketing will continue to work with VRLTA and VADMO to generate relevant and engaging speakers for all sessions. The VA-1 Tourism Summit provides stakeholders with useful information that can be immediately implemented to grow their destinations for residents, visitors and stakeholders.

### **Success is**

- Helping 500+ Industry stakeholders with destination management, marketing and best practices to grow their business and communities

### VTC ROAD SHOW | HELP DESK + FAM TOUR

It is crucial for VTC to stay connected with Virginia's tourism businesses and DMOs to **Maximize Virginia's Tourism Potential**. There is no better way to accomplish this than for members of the VTC staff to visit a community together, and in person. The **VTC Road Show** includes a **Familiarization Tour** led by the local DMO, followed by a **Help Desk** where business owners can consult directly with VTC staff to share marketing and development strategies and resources.

#### Success is

- Meet with 300+ tourism businesses to share marketing, development and funding resources that increase their visitor engagement and spending
- Hold VTC Road Shows in a minimum of six communities





## **TOURISM LEADERSHIP SUMMIT**

If 2020 has taught us anything, it is how to shift our mindset in how we operate. Creating a space for sharing best practices and bold thinking has spurred the advent of the Virginia Tourism Leadership Summit. The summit will focus on a myriad of topics ranging from DRIVE program findings, as well as shared best practices from fellow tourism practitioners from Virginia as well as DMOs across the U.S.

### **Success is**

- 30 Destination Marketing Organizations sharing best practices
- Attract two-three national organizations to share latest trends and research to help grow our industry

## VADMO | VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION OF DESTINATION MARKETING ORGANIZATIONS

The Virginia Association of Destination Marketing Organizations (VADMO) is a membership-based association of independent destination management organizations, and supporting businesses. The primary mission of the organization is promoting and developing their areas as tourism destinations. VTC, as a standing board member, supports new and ongoing VADMO initiatives.

### Success is

- A more well-informed and connected group of member DMOs that support, participate in, and assist with VTC initiatives
- Attend quarterly and annual meetings and support ongoing efforts
- Assist in the development of the new initiatives, such as the VA-1 Tourism Summit **Student Session**





## CHAMPION THE VALUE OF TOURISM

The tourism industry was devastated in 2020 due to the pandemic. The healthcare and hospitality industries were pushed to the brink. Hotel rooms became offices, overflow hospital rooms and temporary lodging for our frontline healthcare workers. Restaurants rapidly adapted to meet constant and last-minute changes. Music festivals and venues were cancelled. Workers were out of jobs and localities out of much needed revenue.

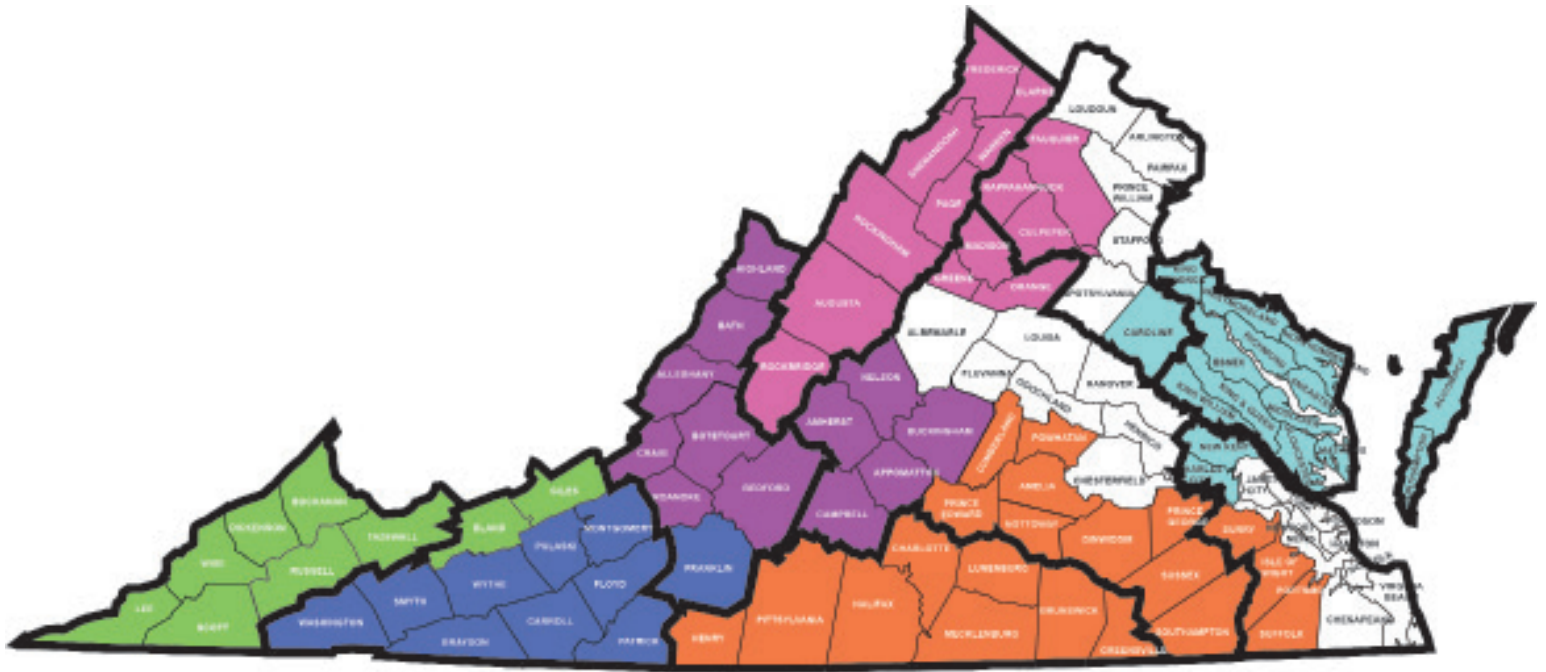
With the loss of critical traveler spending, one would think tourism has risen in value and appreciation. However, DMOs across the Commonwealth still have to champion the value of tourism and tourism marketing.

Whether it's educating the local chamber of commerce or demonstrating tourism as a solid investment to stakeholders, the role of tourism as a driver to improve the livelihood of our communities must be a top focus for destination marketing organizations to be sustainable and effective. That is why *Making a Case for Tourism* is one of the key guidebooks in DRIVE 2.0 and will serve as the format for education and advocacy over the next two years.

### Success is

- Align with 30 community strategic partnerships to leverage resources and build capacity
- Using the DRIVE 2.0 **How to Guide: Make the Case** guide, activate, engage and inspire new and existing advocates through compelling communication tools and messaging
- 90% of local travel and tourism investments remain stable in dedicated funding or grow by the end of the calendar year 2022
- 66 new tourism ambassadors identified





### DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT MANAGERS

<span style="display:inline-block; width:20px; height:10px; background-color: #76b82a; border: 1px solid black;"></span>	Michelle Workman	276-722-0238 <a href="mailto:mworkman@virginia.org">mworkman@virginia.org</a>
<span style="display:inline-block; width:20px; height:10px; background-color: #2952a3; border: 1px solid black;"></span>	Vacant	
<span style="display:inline-block; width:20px; height:10px; background-color: #8e44ad; border: 1px solid black;"></span>	Vacant	
<span style="display:inline-block; width:20px; height:10px; background-color: #e91e63; border: 1px solid black;"></span>	Kelli Williams	540-679-6697 <a href="mailto:kwilliams@virginia.org">kwilliams@virginia.org</a>
<span style="display:inline-block; width:20px; height:10px; background-color: #f39c12; border: 1px solid black;"></span>	Sandra Tanner	757-390-7330 <a href="mailto:stanner@virginia.org">stanner@virginia.org</a>
<span style="display:inline-block; width:20px; height:10px; background-color: #00bfc4; border: 1px solid black;"></span>	Laura Messer	276-722-0238 <a href="mailto:lmesser@virginia.org">lmesser@virginia.org</a>

Becky Nave - Director of Destination Development  
276-791-9172 | [bnave@virginia.org](mailto:bnave@virginia.org)

Contact VTC's Destination Development Managers in your area for strategic planning, marketing leveraging and other community development assistance and resources.

[VATC.org/partnershipmarketing/tdmanagers](https://vatc.org/partnershipmarketing/tdmanagers)

# **WHAT ARE WE DOING?**

## **REGIONAL INITIATIVES**

**BLUE RIDGE PLATEAU**

\* New initiative

\* No website at this time

**VTC PM Team Member**

- Becky Nave

**Region/Localities Impacted**

- **Southwest Virginia - Blue Ridge Highlands:** Patrick County, Floyd County, Carroll County, Grayson County, City of Galax
- **Virginia Mountains:** Franklin County

**Summary**

- The Blue Ridge Plateau is a collaborative marketing effort of the communities surrounding the Blue Ridge Parkway. Tapping into a unique geographic point of reference and marketing differentiation, the group was brought together to create regional themes to connect downtowns to the Blue Ridge Parkway visitors.

**Status**

- Planning process - Consultant selected
- Phase one - Preliminary plan assessment

**What's Next?**

- Begin theme development work
- Identify tourism ready assets and needs
- Set timeline for theme development
- Select imagery and photography

**VTC PM Involvement**

- Facilitated first meeting to bring the group together
- Ongoing technical assistance and guidance

**Assistance From VTC**

- Year-round marketing of the Blue Ridge Parkway communities
- Communications assistance through PR, Social and Digital Marketing
- Support community development in surrounding towns

**Success is**

- Five themed itineraries developed
- Marketing campaign designed and implemented
- Increased social media, and website visitation
- Tourism expenditure growth in the region

### HOMETOWNS OF MOUNT ROGERS

- \* New initiative
- \* No website at this time

#### VTC PM Team Member

- Becky Nave

#### Region/Localities Impacted

- **Southwest Virginia - Blue Ridge Highlands:** Damascus, Glade Spring, Saltville, Chilhowie, Marion Troutdale, Rural Retreat, and Independence

#### Summary

- Mount Rogers is the highest mountain peak in Virginia and provides unrivaled outdoor recreation opportunities for Southwest Virginia and beyond. The purpose of this initiative is to provide strategic framework for entrepreneurial and economic development growth for the eight gateway communities of Mount Rogers.

#### Status

- Planning process - Consultant selected
- Phase one - Preliminary plan assessment

#### What's Next?

- Identify priority targets specific to each gateway community's core theme
- Develop and adopt Mount Rogers brand
- Coordinate marketing identities for each gateway community
- Expand local small business incentives and business planning competitions

#### VTC PM Involvement

- Hometowns of Mount Rogers design team
- Tourism strategic planning for gateway communities
- Ongoing technical assistance and guidance

#### Assistance From VTC

- Assistance with identifying new outdoor focused products, opportunities and events to create new and additional demand
- Support for tourism infrastructure (lodging, dining) through Tourism Development Financing Program (TDFP)
- Communications assistance through PR, Social and Digital Marketing
- Provide assistance with community development in gateway communities

#### Success is

- Creation of experience-based itineraries
- Marketing campaign designed and implemented
- Established Certified Guide Program
- Strengthened knowledge between downtown business owners and regional offering

**SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA OUTDOORS** \* formerly Appalachian Spring

\* Ongoing project

\* [friendsofswva.org/development/anchor-areas](https://friendsofswva.org/development/anchor-areas)

**VTC PM Team Member**

- Becky Nave and Michelle Workman

**Region/Localities Impacted**

- Southwest Virginia - Blue Ridge Highlands
- Southwest Virginia - Heart of Appalachia

**Summary**

- Southwest Virginia Outdoors is a partnership of community and regional development, tourism, environmental stewardship, outdoor recreation, and entrepreneurial assistance stakeholders to develop and promote Southwest Virginia as a world class destination of natural and recreational assets for visitation and enjoyment.

**Status**

- Under the guidance of Friends of SWVA, the project will continue to evolve

**What's Next?**

- Continue to connect eight anchor recreation destinations to surrounding communities and develop an even larger outdoor recreation industry in Southwest Virginia
- Appalachian Trail; Blue Ridge Parkway; Breaks Interstate Park; Clinch River; Daniel Boone's Wilderness Trail; High Knob; Mount Rogers; New River

**VTC PM Involvement**

- Technical assistance for master planning processes
- Serve as Chair of wayfinding group for High Knob Regional Initiative
- Continued support for their marketing efforts
- Sponsor of SWVA Outdoor Expo

**Assistance From VTC**

- Continued development team involvement/assistance
- Market the eight anchor destinations and gateway communities.
- Include Southwest Virginia, Southwest Virginia Outdoors, #swva in our content
- Outdoor recreation is huge for Southwest Virginia

**Success is**

- Major Southwest Virginia outdoor assets are linked together in cohesive trail and package
- Regional outdoor marketing program is developed and implemented
- Outdoor assets are connected to nearby towns

### **TAZEWELL/BUCHANAN TRAILS INITIATIVE**

\* New initiative

\* No website at this time

#### **VTC PM Team Member**

- Michelle Workman

#### **Region/Localities Impacted**

- **Southwest Virginia - Heart of Appalachia:** Buchanan County, Tazewell County

#### **Summary**

- The counties of Buchanan and Tazewell are working along with the Thompson Charitable Foundation, Friends of Southwest Virginia, Virginia Tourism, and Breaks Interstate Park to develop sustainable outdoor recreation options.

#### **Status**

- Planning phase - consultant selected for (4) county outdoor recreation development plan

#### **What's Next?**

- Four-county outdoor recreation development plan RFP
- Development of outdoor recreation options, including hiking and biking trails, river access points, etc.

#### **VTC PM Involvement**

- Serve as member of the Trails committee
- Participated field trip to Knoxville to tour Urban Wilderness Trail System
- Provide ongoing technical assistance
- Assist with committee as liaison for VTC and other agencies
- Provided letter of support for grant application for four-county outdoor recreation assessment

#### **Assistance From VTC**

- Ongoing marketing of the counties, and ongoing marketing technical assistance

#### **Success is**

- Development of multiple hiking and biking trails in Tazewell and Buchanan
- Trail connecting Burkes Garden to Breaks Interstate Park.
- Primary tourism amenities available (lodging, restaurants, etc.)
- Annual tourism expenditure growth in counties

**CLINCH RIVER VALLEY INITIATIVE (CRVI)**

\* Ongoing project

\* [clinchriverva.com](http://clinchriverva.com)

**VTC PM Team Member**

- **Becky Nave** and **Michelle Workman**

**Region/Localities Impacted**

- **Southwest Virginia - Heart of Appalachia:** Scott County, Russell County, Wise County, Tazewell County

**Summary**

- The Clinch River Valley Initiative (CRVI) is a collaborative effort in Southwest Virginia, focusing on the Clinch River Valley—one of the most biodiverse river systems in North America. Working at a watershed scale with many local partners, this grassroots effort has developed significant momentum with applicability for communities in Appalachia and beyond. The effort builds upon the unique cultural and ecological assets of the Clinch River to create new possibilities in the communities along the Clinch, particularly around environmental education, economic development, and entrepreneurship.

**Status**

- The Initiative is currently transitioning to a 501c3
- The Clinch River State Park is in development with hiring a park manager

**What's Next?**

- Fundraising for 501c3, State Park Master Planning Process

**VTC PM Involvement**

- Serve on the steering committee, Downtown Revitalization Action Group
- Serves on the transition team and communications strategy team for the transition to 501c3

**Assistance From VTC**

- Work collaboratively with CRVI partners to assist with communication and marketing strategies for the park and the communities along the Clinch River to increase eco and heritage tourism
- **Public Relations** – assist with distribution of press release leading up to and as park opens
- **Social Media** - share post when the park opens through Instagram, Facebook and Twitter
- **Digital** - featured blog post

**Success is**

- Clinch River State Park is open
- Full-time Executive Director hired
- Financially stable

### **SPEARHEAD TRAILS**

- \* Ongoing project
- \* [spearheadtrails.com](http://spearheadtrails.com)

#### **VTC PM Team Member**

- **Becky Nave** and **Michelle Workman**

#### **Region/Localities Impacted**

- **Southwest Virginia - Heart of Appalachia:** St. Paul (Wise & Russell Counties), Grundy (Buchanan), Pennington Gap (Lee), Pocahontas, Richlands (Tazewell), Haysi, Breaks (Dickenson)

#### **Summary**

- Spearhead Trails is currently a system of five all-terrain/off-highway vehicle (ATV) trails, one four-wheeled drive vehicle and ATV trail, and one equestrian trail that wind through the mountains of Southwest Virginia.

#### **Status**

- The Spearhead Trail has opened several trails and is expanding new trails

#### **What's Next?**

- Scott County Horse Trail
- Clinch River Equestrian Trail
- Pound River Access Points
- Continued expansion of current trails

#### **VTC PM Involvement**

- Continued facilitation (VTC began the development of the initiative in 2006)
- Serve in a technical assistance capacity on the Board – along with other Board committees
- Provide letters of support for funding – both for Spearhead Trails and businesses connected to the initiative

#### **Assistance From VTC**

- Continued marketing through VTC channels
- New photography needed for new trails

#### **Success is**

- Backroads of the Cumberlands complete
- Trail expansion to connect with Hatfield McCoy Trails
- Opening of Sportsman Center
- Trail connections between communities

**SHENANDOAH SPIRITS TRAIL**

\* Ongoing project

\* [shenandoahspiritstrail.com](https://shenandoahspiritstrail.com)

**VTC PM Team Member**

- Kelli Williams

**Region/Localities Impacted**

- **Shenandoah Valley:** City of Harrisonburg, Rockingham County, Luray-Page County, Front Royal-Warren County, Clark County, City of Winchester/Frederick County

**Summary**

- The Shenandoah Spirits Trails connect wineries, craft breweries, cideries and distilleries across seven localities in the Northern Shenandoah Valley. In addition to libations, visitors are encouraged to experience farm-to-table dining, downtowns, and outdoor recreation.

**Status**

- The invested DMO partners are working to establish a long-term plan for funding and sustainability
- The trail is supported by the DMO's and various marketing and advertising grants, with no dues payable by the trail members
- The trail localities continue to assess past performance for both digital and print marketing efforts

**What's Next?**

- Establish partnerships with visitor transportation services and inbound leisure marketing agencies to increase visitation from northern drive markets
- Apply for marketing leverage grant

**VTC PM Involvement**

- PM destination development staff attends partner marketing meetings, serving in an advisory role, providing planning assistance and guidance on VTC programming, to include: grant funding, PR, brand, and digital media opportunities

**Assistance From VTC**

- Public Relations and media contacts
- Promotion and awareness by Communications and Sales teams

**Success is**

- New website launched, followed by execution of a robust marketing plan that increases visitor awareness and traffic
- Increased trail membership
- Sustainable funding

### VISIT LYNCHBURG – SPORTS TOURISM MARKETING INITIATIVE

- \* New initiative
- \* No sports-specific website at this time
- \* [lynchburgvirginia.org](http://lynchburgvirginia.org) - general website

#### VTC PM Team Member

- Currently Vacant

#### Region/Localities Impacted

- Central Virginia: City of Lynchburg

#### Summary

- Focus incorporates looking into recommendations for facility, event, and organizational development enhancements that will likely drive additional overnight stays and economic impact to the City of Lynchburg through the sports tourism market.

#### Status

- Strategic plan completed in May 2019 by the Huddle Up Group
- Working group began meeting in October 2019
- Planning and development phase – small group meeting to determine content for consumer brochure, and inquiring into budget needs to accommodate new website, marketing, etc.

#### What's Next?

- Advance action items that support the following primary recommendation areas:
- Event Solicitation/Creation Concepts, Success Measures/Benchmarks, Local Messaging and Marketing Platforms and External Partnerships
- Consideration of the secondary recommendation areas: Venue Enrichment/Development/Usage, Funding Mechanism and Investigate Organizational Structure

#### VTC PM Involvement

- PM destination development staff will be part of working group
- Provide guidance and feedback for applying for Marketing Leverage Program grant

#### Assistance From VTC

- Sports Virginia acknowledgment and partnership
- Leads through Sports Virginia

#### Success is

- Create new sports facility guide
- Increased marketing of Lynchburg Legacy events
- Increased sales tax collection for room nights and restaurants

## BIKE THE VALLEY - TOUR DE FARM PROGRAM

- \* Ongoing project
- \* No website at this time

### VTC PM Team Member

- Kelli Williams

### Region/Localities Impacted

- **Shenandoah Valley and Virginia Mountains:** The current footprint that makes up the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission include the counties of Rockbridge, Augusta, Rockingham, Highland and Bath, the cities of Buena Vista, Harrisonburg, Lexington, Staunton and Waynesboro, as well as 11 towns.

### Summary

- Highlight cycling trails that connect Fields of Gold stakeholders/sites with the cycling community through the Bike the Valley program. Fields of Gold is more than just a thematic motorized trail

### Status

- Planning phase – Fields of Gold is in a transitional phase, determining next steps for how the program can best be sustained, and continue to be successful
- Bike the Valley has identified Tour de Farm featured routes and is working with sites on best practices and ways to market the program

### What's Next?

- Build-out marketing plan for program and identify best practices for sustainability

### VTC PM Involvement

- Serve on steering committee and marketing committee for Fields of Gold and provides facilitative and technical assistance as needed
- Will assist with review of RFP's for website development and obtain research from VTC regarding applicable areas of interest for cycling, agritourism, etc.

### Assistance From VTC

- Fields of Gold program would like stronger presence on Virginia.org as it relates to Agritourism in Virginia
- Linking travel writers to the initiative for cycling magazines, bloggers, etc. is a priority

### Success is

- All bike routes developed/promoted (website, social media, etc.)
- One premier event each year
- Five new destination sites/businesses in three years
- Tourism expenditure growth in region

### **SHENANDOAH VALLEY TOURISM PARTNERSHIP**

- \* Ongoing initiative
- \* [viriniasshenandoahvalley.com](http://viriniasshenandoahvalley.com)

#### **VTC PM Team Member**

- Kelli Williams

#### **Region/Localities Impacted**

- **Shenandoah Valley DMO partners:** Lexington-Rockbridge Area Tourism, City of Waynesboro, City of Staunton, Augusta County, Rockingham County, City of Harrisonburg, Shenandoah County, Luray-Page County Chamber of Commerce, Page County, City of Winchester, Clark County, Front Royal-Warren County

#### **Summary**

- A collaboration of DMO partners who seek to increase awareness and advocate for the promotion of the Shenandoah Valley as a premier destination in Virginia to markets outside of the individual DMO reach

#### **Status**

- Contracted with CURE as *Agency of Record*
- Continue to work towards reaching markets outside of their individual reaches, included drive markets and Canada
- Hold monthly meetings and an annual meeting
- Annually host travel writers and media

#### **What's Next?**

- Build-out website to incorporate an itinerary builder for real-time trip planning
- Enhance content for website and printer collateral
- Identify legislative agenda items supported by the partnership in preparation of general assembly session in January

#### **VTC PM Involvement**

- Serve in an advisory role to partnership – give monthly VTC updates
- Coordinate applicable VTC marketing activities when needed
- Facilitate and develop two-year action plan

#### **Assistance From VTC**

- Public relations media contacts and staff FAM tour.
- Guidance with group tour market, international marketing opportunities

#### **Success is**

- Steady tourism expenditure growth in the trail region

## **VIRGINIA'S LEWIS & CLARK HERITAGE TRAIL IN VIRGINIA**

\* Ongoing project

\* [valewisandclarklegacytrail.org](http://valewisandclarklegacytrail.org)

### **VTC PM Team Member**

- Becky Nave

### **Region/Localities Impacted**

- **Statewide** through 10 localities, Albemarle County to Bristol

### **Summary**

- Extension of the Western Legacy Trail eastward to form the Eastern Legacy Trail portion of the Lewis and Clark Heritage Trail in Virginia

### **Status**

- Planning phase; applicable state legislation passed through House and Senate legislative session in 2015; no Federal or State funding at present
- Program leadership (volunteer) now includes chairpersons for each of the participating localities
- Lewis and Clark Heritage Trail Foundation Portrait Signage partnership established in 2019. Approved sites can make application to have signs on property

### **What's Next?**

- Two separate Resolutions of Support documents will be presented to the General Assembly
- Funds to support signage development and marketing efforts

### **VTC PM Involvement**

- Involved in a supporting/advisory role as needed and appropriate

### **Assistance From VTC**

- Continued support and facilitation as needed and appropriate
- Once established, a VTC staff familiarization tour will be organized of the locations to learn and promote the new trail
- Provide guidance on marketing and applicable opportunities once established

### **Success is**

- Trail acknowledged and accepted at the local level and completed
- Marketing plan developed/implemented
- Tourism expenditure growth in region

### **DANVILLE TOURISM INITIATIVES**

- \* New initiative
- \* [DiscoverDanville.com](https://discoverdanville.com)

#### **VTC PM Team Member**

- Sandra Tanner

#### **Region/Localities Impacted**

- **Southern Virginia:** Danville and Pittsylvania County

#### **Summary**

- Technical assistance as the Danville area rebuilds the tourism program and prepares for opening of Caesars Casino in 2024

#### **Status**

- Currently in the planning phase with goal of developing a cohesive brand and marketing program for Danville area

#### **What's Next?**

- Official launch of marketing campaign in early 2023
- Continued development of Casino site and marketing campaign
- Development and implementation of marketing plan

#### **VTC PM Involvement**

- Technical assistance and guidance for tour development and marketing
- Facilitation of meetings

#### **Assistance From VTC**

- Ongoing marketing of Danville and Pittsylvania County; ongoing assistance
- Assistance with tour development

#### **Success is**

- Marketing campaign designed and implemented
- Steady visitation growth to social media channels and website
- Five new/expanded businesses, including launch of Caesars Casino
- Tourism expenditure growth in region

**SOUTHERN VIRGINIA RACING PARTNERSHIP**

\* New initiative

\* No website at this time

**VTC PM Team Member**

- Sandra Tanner

**Region/Localities Impacted**

- **Southern Virginia:** South Boston, Martinsville, Danville
- **Central Virginia:** Dinwiddie County

**Summary**

- A collaboration of Southern Virginia Race Tracks with the main goal to get the tracks working together to create itineraries to attract race fans into the region and keep them staying longer in the area.

**Status**

- Planning phase with goal of developing a cohesive marketing and branding of the race tracks

**What's Next?**

- Development of relationships and marketing for Southern Virginia race tracks

**VTC PM Involvement**

- Facilitation of meetings
- Technical assistance for planning and marketing

**Assistance From VTC**

- Assistance for developers through the Tourism Development Financing Program if applicable
- Ongoing marketing of the town/region, and ongoing marketing technical assistance for racing in the region

**Success is**

- Race Tracks working together
- Development of marketing and Itineraries
- Increase in race fan visitation to tracks.

### TOWN OF SOUTH BOSTON DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT

\* New initiative

\* [southboston.com](http://southboston.com)

#### VTC PM Team Member

- Sandra Tanner

#### Region/Localities Impacted

- Southern Virginia: South Boston

#### Summary

- VTC continues to work with the town to assist with implementation of its master plan for downtown redevelopment/economic restructuring. The plans involve renovations of the John Randolph into a boutique hotel; trail development to connect the Tobacco Heritage Trail to the downtown area; and development of blue-way, greenspace and downtown businesses. Developing city/town centers to be competitive with the NC border communities is a component of the overall economic development strategy for the area.

#### Status

- Planning phase continues to progress, and resources are being identified to move forward

#### What's Next?

- Acquisition of property for greenspace and park
- Development of trails leading from the Tobacco Heritage Trail to the downtown area
- Provide assistance for business development, including workshops, business consults, etc.
- VTC will hold workshops to assist the entrepreneurs in the region

#### VTC PM Involvement

- Member of the downtown master plan committee
- Assistance with the downtown master plan
- Assist with developers as liaison for VTC services. Ongoing technical assistance and liaison to other resources
- VTC assisted as a judge in the Community Business Launch program. Businesses have opened in the downtown as a result and one business has already expanded into the Town of Halifax

#### Assistance From VTC

- Assistance for developers through the Tourism Development Financing Program if applicable
- Ongoing marketing of the town/region, and ongoing marketing technical assistance

#### Success is

- Connection to the Tobacco Heritage Trail completed
- Hotel/lodging project completed
- Primary tourism amenities available in town (brewery, lodging, coffee shop, etc.)
- Annual tourism expenditure growth in town

## SALTY SOUTHERN ROUTE

\* Ongoing project

\* [saltysouthernroute.com](http://saltysouthernroute.com)

### VTC PM Team Member

- Sandra Tanner

### Region/Localities Impacted

- **Coastal Virginia:** Southampton, Franklin, Suffolk, Surry, Smithfield, Isle of Wight
- **Central Virginia:** Sussex
- Opportunity to expand to other areas

### Summary

- A partnership among localities for the development of a marketing campaign promoting peanuts and pork, including restaurants that serve these items as signature dishes on the "trail". The ultimate objective is to develop a trail connecting farms, restaurants and other attractions centered around peanuts and pork. Connecting these assets was a goal of the DRIVE Tourism 1.0 Statewide Tourism Plan.

### Status

- The route was launched in Spring 2019 and is being marketed by the regional partners
- Trail expansion and recruitment of new sites ongoing
- Successful award of a VTC Marketing Leverage Program Grant

### What's Next?

- Continued development of the trail, adding new sites
- Continued marketing as directed in the marketing plan

### VTC PM Involvement

- Facilitation of meetings
- Technical assistance

### Assistance From VTC

- Hold workshops in the region for social media, writing a press release, etc.
- Assistance with marketing, website splash page, assistance with public relations, etc.

### Success is

- Trail is fully developed and implemented
- Marketing campaign designed and implemented
- Steady visitation growth to social media channels and website
- Five new/expanded businesses triggered by the trail
- Tourism expenditure growth in region

### **SOUTHERN VIRGINIA WILD BLUEWAY**

\* Ongoing project

\* [sovawildblueway.com](http://sovawildblueway.com)

#### **VTC PM Team Member**

- Sandra Tanner

#### **Region/Localities Impacted**

- **Southern Virginia:** Halifax County and Mecklenburg County
- Expansion possible to other areas in region

#### **Summary**

- VTC continues to work with the Southern Virginia Wild Blueway committee to expand its footprint and add rivers/lakes in surrounding areas to enhance the paddling experiences for visitors.

#### **Status**

- The Southern Virginia Wild Blueway marketing campaign continues. The committee sees the need to add launch sites to the existing trail and to increase their footprint by expanding the marketing effort to other localities in the Southern VA region
- Further development of outdoor activities and connectivity to the assets in the town and area are part of the Southern Virginia strategy

#### **What's Next?**

- The committee will add other launch sites to the existing trail, and highlight the businesses (lodging, restaurants, etc.)
- The committee is also in the exploratory phase of adding to their footprint by looking at other communities in Southern VA along the water ways. Once they have explored and have other localities on board, they will expand the marketing effort to include other localities
- Plans are to apply for grants and seek funding assistance with launch site development for this regional initiative

#### **VTC PM Involvement**

- Member of the steering committee
- Ongoing technical assistance and facilitation

#### **Assistance From VTC**

- VTC continues to promote the Southern Virginia Wild Blueway
- Social media push will be important

#### **Success is**

- Funding for and completion of all targeted launch sites
- Expanded marketing efforts to include new towns/launch sites
- Increased outfitter/guide activity on the river
- Tourism expenditure growth in region

## TOBACCO HERITAGE TRAIL

\* Ongoing project

\* [tobaccoheritagetrail.org](http://tobaccoheritagetrail.org)

### VTC PM Team Member

- Sandra Tanner

### Region/Localities Impacted

- **Southern Virginia:** Halifax County - South Boston; Mecklenburg County - Boynton; Clarksville, South Hill, La Crosse, Chase City; Brunswick County - Brodnax, Lawrenceville, Alberta

### Summary

- The Tobacco Heritage Trail focuses on the development of a 140-mile multi-use, non-motorized linear park/trail, including some on-road segments for connectivity. The trail construction is being done in phases around the towns so these towns can benefit from the economic impact of trail users. Several sections of the trail are now open. The final phase of the trail will be developed and connected as funds are available.

### Status

- This is an ongoing multifaceted project
- The project is in the construction phase of some portions, the marketing/ business development phase in other open sections, and in the land acquisition phase of segments for connectivity in other areas

### What's Next?

- Completion of acquisition of property in Halifax County providing connection to town of Halifax

### VTC PM Involvement

- Active involvement in the Roanoke River Rails to Trails
- Primary facilitator of all phases of the trail
- Marketing Leverage Program funding invested
- Supporting negotiations of contracts with Norfolk Southern

### Assistance From VTC

- Continue marketing the trail, especially the portions where towns are ready for visitors

### Success is

- Downtowns revitalized in all trailhead/access areas
- Increase outfitter/guide activity on the trail system
- Continued tourism expenditure growth in region

### TOWN OF FARMVILLE | DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT

\* Ongoing project

\* [visitfarmville.com](http://visitfarmville.com)

#### VTC PM Team Member

- Sandra Tanner

#### Region/Localities Impacted

- Central Virginia: Farmville

#### Summary

- VTC is working with the town/county Leadership and Downtown Farmville Inc. to continue development of the town into a premier destination for the Central Virginia Region. This includes development of South Main Street, an otherwise overlooked section of Downtown. Focus strategies on creating alternative modes of transportation throughout downtown and Main Street, i.e. better walkability and creating bicycle lanes.

#### Status

- Planning phase

#### What's Next?

- Assisting town and Downtown Farmville Inc. with development of strategic plans
- Act as liaison with developers and potential funding sources
- Facilitate planning sessions and workshops
- Working to get Community Business Launch (CBL) program into Downtown Farmville

#### VTC PM Involvement

- Ongoing assistance with technical assistance (planning, facilitation, resources, etc.)
- Seek funding sources for Downtown Development initiatives
- Supporting development of trails connecting to downtown and spur trails off of High Bridge Trail system

#### Assistance From VTC

- Continued support from Business Development team with Tourism Development Financing Program
- Support of Farmville and Downtown Farmville marketing initiatives
- Assistance with exposure to larger markets (Washington D.C., Charlotte, Raleigh/Durham)

#### Success is

- Occupation of South Main Street buildings with viable, fun, and attractive businesses to visitors
- Support of Downtown initiatives throughout Town and County
- Alternative funding sources to help with project completion

**TOWN OF FARMVILLE | RIVERWALK PROJECT**

- \* New initiative
- \* [visitfarmville.com](http://visitfarmville.com)

**VTC PM Team Member**

- Sandra Tanner

**Region/Localities Impacted**

- Central Virginia: Farmville

**Summary**

- VTC is working with the Town/County Leadership, Downtown Farmville Inc., Department of Conservation and Recreation, and local businesses to develop a riverwalk system that will highlight the natural features of the Appomattox River and create alternative walkability throughout Downtown Farmville.

**Status**

- Early planning phase

**What's Next?**

- Move idea into further consideration with town officials.
- Work with local business owners, river advocacy groups (Friends of the Appomattox River) to develop strategic plan
- Assist with facilitating public input and planning sessions for riverwalk idea
- Gain support from outdoor recreational community

**VTC PM Involvement**

- Act as liaison between Farmville and communities and organizations with experience in development of riverwalks (City of Hopewell, Prince George County, and the Friends of the Lower Appomattox River (FOLAR))
- Ongoing assistance with technical assistance (planning, facilitation, development and research resources, etc.)
- Seek funding sources for Downtown Riverwalk system
- Work with Town Parks and Recreation committee to add riverwalk to future development project list

**Assistance From VTC**

- Marketing of Central/Southern Virginia river activities
- Research assistance with a specific focus on waterfront communities

**Success is**

- Development of Riverwalk plan

### APPOMATTOX RIVER REGION ACCESS PROJECT

- \* New initiative
- \* No website at this time

#### VTC PM Team Member

- Sandra Tanner

#### Region/Localities Impacted

- Southern Virginia
- Central Virginia

#### Summary

- Creating a focus on the Appomattox River as a premier natural tourism asset within the Central/Southern Virginia regions. Helping to develop more public access points and working with communities along river to highlight the river as a draw to the region through new marketing initiatives.

#### Status

- Planning phase

#### What's Next?

- Gaining consensus among counties/communities of the importance of the Appomattox River as a tourism draw
- Work with local/county/state agencies, developers, and private citizens currently operating in Appomattox River region to create public access points

#### VTC PM Involvement

- Act as liaison between communities and organizations within Appomattox River region
- Employ assistance from Department of Conservation and Recreation
- Work with communities in Appomattox River region to develop marketing strategy for current and/or planned opportunities for visitors in the region
- Ongoing assistance with technical assistance (planning, facilitation, development and research resources, etc.)

#### Assistance From VTC

- Opportunities for development funds for outdoor recreational focused projects
- Continued support of outdoor recreation projects through DRIVE program
- Research assistance with a specific focus on waterfront communities

#### Success is

- Development of more public access points along Appomattox River
- Designation of the Appomattox River as Scenic River
- Marketing plan for Appomattox River region to include outdoor recreational opportunities

**COASTAL VIRGINIA ECOTOURISM ALLIANCE (CVEA)**

- \* Ongoing project
- \* [viriniawatertrails.com](http://viriniawatertrails.com)

**VTC PM Team Member**

- Laura Messer

**Region/Localities Impacted**

- Coastal Eastern Shore
- Chesapeake Bay, Coastal Virginia
- The Virginia Water Trails program impacts Virginia's Eastern Shore, Middle Peninsula, Northern Neck and Lower Chickahominy River region

**Summary**

- CVEA's two-fold purpose: promote ecotourism and paddling as low environmental impact/high economic impact driver in the rural coastal region and to promote stewardship ethics among the visiting public through eco-tour guide certification programs, interpretive programming, visitor marketing, and interpretive materials

**Status**

- The CVEA program is funded in part by Virginia Department of Environmental Quality/NOAA Coastal Zone Management program
- The Eco-Tour Guide certification course was revitalized with a grant from VTC in 2016. Virginia Water Trails received a VTC Marketing Leverage grant in 2020

**What's Next?**

- The Richmond Regional PDC has expressed interest in joining the initiative as an outcome of a grant that reviewed the economic impact of conserved lands on the Lower Chickahominy
- Partners will work with Charles City County, New Kent County, and James City County to bring them into the initiative and identify existing and new water trail potential in those regions

**VTC PM Involvement**

- Assisting through the Virginia Water Trails eco-tourism steering committee
- Ongoing technical assistance and facilitation as requested and needed
- Support community development in trail towns

**Assistance From VTC**

- Assist with promotion of the [viriniawatertrails.com](http://viriniawatertrails.com) website
- Promote the opportunity through our industry outreach
- Possible co-branding (with Virginia is for Outdoor Lovers) of T-shirts, glassware, etc.
- LOVEWorks with paddling themes along the water trails
- Marketing Leverage Program application

**Success is**

- Trail fully designed/implemented. Water trail rating with difficulty for beginning paddlers.
- Marketing plan/campaign implemented
- New outfitters and tour guide certified through the EcoTour Guide course
- Three new outfitters by end of 2022

### VIRGINIA'S SPACE LOOP | VIRGINIA IS FOR SPACE LOVERS

\* New initiative

\* [virginia.org/space](https://virginia.org/space)

#### VTC PM Team Member

- Laura Messer

#### Region/Localities Impacted

- Statewide with focus on **Coastal Virginia**
- **Coastal Eastern Shore** and **Northern Virginia** rural and urban areas along I-95, I-64, I-66, US 17 and US 13

#### Summary

- *The Virginia is for Space Lovers* initiative includes the Virginia's Space loop concept. The Space Loop will be a designated route creating a driving loop around the "East of 95" coastal region

#### Status

- *Virginia is for Space Lovers* logo was approved in 2017 and unveiled at the Governor's Aerospace Advisory Council as the 1st phase in development space-related tourism product.
- A landing page [virginia.org/space](https://virginia.org/space) was completed as part of the Apollo Moon Mission 50th commemoration in 2019.
- In 2021 Virginia Space Loop partnership meetings met to lay out a plan for a comprehensive regional approach to promoting and growing space tourism in the region.
- Virginia is for Launch Lovers approved and adopted for last 2022 launch of Rocket Lab Hawkeye 360 LC-2 Launch

#### What's Next?

- Quarterly Virginia's Space Loop partner meetings
- 2023 update of [virginia.org/space](https://virginia.org/space) with new events and attractions
- Creation of new Space Lovers sizzle reel

#### VTC PM Involvement

- Actively involved in keeping Governor's Aerospace Advisory Council and its members aware of the initiative and its potential impacts beyond tourism
- Education of communities and businesses about the Space Loop as a tourism driver for tourism development and visitation

#### Assistance From VTC

- Promote use of the Virginia is for Space Lovers logo for merchandise sales with partners in museum gift shops and at attractions
- A special [virginia.org/space](https://virginia.org/space) digital page will be continually updated each year
- Ongoing promotion of the Virginia Space Loop partner sites and events

#### Success is

- Technical support for creation of organizational structure for partners to take the Space Loop to the next step (marketing grant, website, rack cards)
- Growth in ecotourism as it relates to night sky/full moon tours/trips

## COASTAL VIRGINIA DOWNTOWNS | MAIN STREET INITIATIVE

\* New initiative

\* No website at this time

### VTC PM Team Member

- Laura Messer

### Region/Localities Impacted

- **Chesapeake Bay:** Callao (Northumberland County—Northern Neck), Town of Tappahannock (Essex County—Middle Peninsula)
- **Coastal Eastern Shore:** Onancock (Accomack County—Eastern Shore)

### Summary

- In 2020 three coastal towns became designated Virginia Downtowns through the DHCD Main Street Program. All three towns have selected tourism as one of their community development focus areas. VTC continues to work with DHCD staff to help these towns create organizational structure and plans to achieve designation and grow economic impacts. Four new towns are interested in pursuing designation.

### Status

- Towns are undergoing revitalization in terms of events and product development
- Partners are collaborating on product development in key downtowns and surrounding areas

### What's Next?

- Creation of managements teams, community-led committees, and organizational structure through facilitated sessions to narrow roles and responsibilities of tourism support organizations and individual town members is anticipated
- Creation of annual marketing and event plan that will allow the towns to participate in VTC incentives (TDFP) and VTC marketing grants (MLP) are planned for 2022-2023

### VTC PM Involvement

- Facilitation of tourism development plans/tourism marketing plans when requested.
- Sharing of regional success and strategies
- Coordinate applicable VTC marketing activities when needed
- Coordinate potential partnerships between regions and towns where applicable

### Assistance From VTC

- Marketing of the towns through VTC channels

### Success is

- Sustainable program/organization to ensure ongoing promotions, programing, product development etc.
- Consistent event listings and marketing of events to drive visitation
- New tourism related business and organizations added in the region
- Steady tourism expenditure growth in the localities and adjacent regions

### VIRGINIA OYSTER TRAIL REVITALIZATION

\* Ongoing project

\* [virginiaoystertrail.com](http://virginiaoystertrail.com)

#### VTC PM Team Member

- Laura Messer

#### Region/Localities Impacted

- **Coastal Eastern Shore;** Chesapeake Bay (Middle Peninsula & Northern Neck); Coastal-Hampton Roads Summary

#### Summary

- Virginia Oyster Trail was spun off from Artisan's Center of Virginia into an independent 501c in 2020. Transition and revitalization are ongoing in partnership with Coastal Virginia Ecotourism Alliance program and Virginia Beach Restaurant Association assisting with support.

#### Status

- An advisory board has been formed. VTC is not on the board but participates in technical support issues and monthly calls with members
- VOT has some funding contracts through the ANPDC Coastal Zone Water Trails program grant to integrate VOT information into the Water Trails website
- As part of Water Trails program, the partnership is looking to SeaGrant institutions for continued support and revitalization funding through the SeaGrant program

#### What's Next?

- Ongoing support including meeting facilitation and technical assistance
- Marketing the town/region in the coastal area, marketing of oysters and oyster related events

#### VTC PM Involvement

- Ongoing support, including technical assistance and meeting facilitation
- Serve as a liaison to potential funding sources such as DHCD, SBDC, SBDS, and Rappahannock Community College

#### Assistance From VTC

- Continue ongoing facilitation and development support for tourism development and tourism marketing

#### Success is

- Revitalization of the VOT structure, board, and partnerships as a stand-alone entity
- Funding secured for ongoing operations
- Implementation, business and marketing plans completed

## CHINCOTEAGUE HISTORIC FIREHOUSE REVITALIZATION

\* New initiative

\* [delmarvanow.com/story/news/2019/10/08/chincoteague-officials-vote-buy-old-firehouse/3906002002](https://delmarvanow.com/story/news/2019/10/08/chincoteague-officials-vote-buy-old-firehouse/3906002002)

### VTC PM Team Member

- Laura Messer

### Region/Localities Impacted

- Coastal Eastern Shore: Chincoteague (Accomack County)

### Summary

- Chincoteague's Historic Firehouse located downtown on Main Street was recently acquired by the Town of Chincoteague for redevelopment. At 30,000 sq. feet with dorms, commercial kitchen, three vehicle bays, parking and adequate wastewater capacity, the site is prime to jumpstart redevelopment of Main Street in Chincoteague.

### Status

- An informal advisory group was form in mid-2019 to pursue grant funding for revitalization
- Industrial Revitalization Funds, Virginia Housing Development Association funds, and historic tax credits are all being explored to convert the site into mixed use workforce housing, retail, restaurant, and parking
- Plan include historic interpretation of VFD history and Chincoteague Pony Swim

### What's Next?

- Develop fundraising plan, renovation plan, business plan, etc.
- Site visits with funding partners, community input meetings, and entrepreneurs

### VTC PM Involvement

- Ongoing support, including technical assistance and facilitation

### Assistance From VTC

- Ongoing marketing of Chincoteague

### Success is

- Feasibility and revenue plans completed
- Funding secured for renovation
- Implementation, business and marketing plans completed
- Application for Marketing Leverage Program to market the facility
- Renovation and opening
- Visitation projections met

### **EASTERN SHORE RAILS TO TRAILS**

\* New initiative

\* [delmarvanow.com/story/news/2019/07/02/va-shore-looks-rails-trails-railroad-seeks-abandon-tracks/1616241001](https://delmarvanow.com/story/news/2019/07/02/va-shore-looks-rails-trails-railroad-seeks-abandon-tracks/1616241001)

#### **VTC PM Team Member**

- Laura Messer

#### **Region/Localities Impacted**

- **Coastal Eastern Shore:** Accomack County, Northampton County

#### **Summary**

- Railroad is currently owned by Canonie Atlantic Company and is working with the Federal Railroad Commission on rail operation abandonment and transition to a rails to trails program with easements for improved utilities including wastewater and broadband.

#### **Status**

- The Rails to Trails initiative is in its initial phase of seeking appropriate permits and operators through the specified Railroad Commission requirements
- Meetings with the Virginia Bicycling Federation were held in October 2019 to discuss potential vision for 55 miles of track
- VDOT completing local visitor center surveys on use and impacts in 2021

#### **What's Next?**

- Public information coming through county, planning district commission, and Eastern Shore Tourism Commission
- Creation of subcommittee should occur in mid to late 2020

#### **VTC PM Involvement**

- Actively involved in the Eastern Shore Tourism Commission and with the Planning District Commission as it relates to this project.
- Connections with other state and federal partners to access Rails to Trails funding, Recreational Trails Program funding, and Federal Transportation Enhancement Authority funding.

#### **Assistance From VTC**

- Continued promotion of current bicycling events and bicycle routes on the Eastern Shore.

#### **Success is**

- Permanent/capable organization overseeing trail program
- Full tourism related economic development plan designating needed bicycle tour operators, outfitters, repair shops, and other tourist related amenities including restaurants, lodging.
- Consistent growth in Virginia's bicycling industry in the coastal region; differentiation from mountain biking

## ONANCOCK SCHOOL REVITALIZATION

- \* Ongoing project
- \* [onancockschool.org](http://onancockschool.org)

### VTC PM Team Member

- Laura Messer

### Region/Localities Impacted

- **Coastal Eastern Shore:** Accomack County

### Summary

- The concept for the repurposing of the school includes space for artists, incubator space for entrepreneurial initiatives, office space for government and NGO's (Co-op Extension; SNAP/WIC), tourism marketplace, farmers market, community commercial kitchen and summer camp programs. It has potential to be a regional tourism driver.

### Status

- An advisory board has been formed, in which VTC is involved and assists as needed
- Engineering and environmental studies are completed
- Possible industrial revitalization fund site if locality match can be allocated
- Potential project is addition of a community kitchen in the former home economics building.
- Conversations with VDACS on possible funding for this aspect will continue in 2022
- VTC LOVEwork placed in 2020

### What's Next?

- Develop fundraising plan, renovation plan, business plan, etc.

### VTC PM Involvement

- Ongoing support including meeting facilitation and technical assistance.

### Assistance From VTC

- Marketing of the town/region, and ongoing marketing technical assistance.

### Success is

- Feasibility and revenue plans completed
- Funding secured for renovation
- Implementation, business and marketing plans completed
- Application for Marketing Leverage Program to market the facility
- Renovation and opening
- Visitation projections met

## Marketing & Consumer Services

### 1 Digital Marketing

- List your lodging, dining, retail, attractions, deals, packages, events, tours & itineraries on the [User Extranet](#)
- Sign up for the [Travel Post](#) for important industry updates
- Share your blogs and content through [Matcha Media](#)

Tom Kirk [tkirk@virginia.org](mailto:tkirk@virginia.org) | 804-545-5578

\*For listings contact:

Robin Mamunes [mamunes@virginia.org](mailto:mamunes@virginia.org) | 804-545-5543

### 2 Communications & Social Media

- Share your stories & new destination experiences
- Reach in-state & national media + travelers on social media
- Be included in our Virginia is for Lovers [Travel Blog](#)

Andrew Cothem [acothem@virginia.org](mailto:acothem@virginia.org) | 804-545-5570

\* DEI > Black Travel + LGBTQ+ Travel

Jane Lammy [jlammy@virginia.org](mailto:jlammy@virginia.org) | 804-545-5552

Wirt Conroy [wconroy@virginia.org](mailto:wconroy@virginia.org) | 804-545-5552

### 3 Brand

- Leverage your dollars with [Advertising Co-op Plan](#)
- Participate in the [LOVEworks Program](#)
- Share images and photography from your destination

Lindsay Normant [lnormant@virginia.org](mailto:lnormant@virginia.org) | 804-545-5567

### 4 Groups & Sports

- Increase your group tour & sports business + visitor spending
- Partner with VTC at conferences and client events
- [Market your business](#) on (3) trade websites

Joni Johnson [jjohnson@virginia.org](mailto:jjohnson@virginia.org) | 804-545-5544

### 5 International Marketing

- Reach VA's largest international market [Canada](#)
- Engage in marketing & media relations in UK, France, Germany, China, Japan, India & Australia
- Participate in Capital Region USA (CRUSA) Co-Op pgm.
- Connect directly with travelers on social media

Heidi Johannesen [hjohannesen@virginia.org](mailto:hjohannesen@virginia.org) | 703-217-2263

### 6 Local Visitor Centers + Statewide Welcome Centers

- [Showcase your product](#) in a VA Welcome Center BLITZ
- [Co-brand your merchandise](#) with Virginia is for Lovers
- [Advertise statewide](#) in Welcome Centers & Safety Rest Areas

Val Guffy [vguffy@virginia.org](mailto:vguffy@virginia.org) | 804-545-5558

Gary Jeffrey [gjeffrey@virginia.org](mailto:gjeffrey@virginia.org) | 276-730-4580

## Research, Education & Development

### 7 Research

- Receive [Economic Impact](#) of Tourism in your area
- Review [Visitor travel behavior & characteristics](#)
- Access new and powerful [Visitor Travel Trends](#)

Pratiksha Bhattarai [pbhattarai@virginia.org](mailto:pbhattarai@virginia.org) | 804-545-5548

### 8 VTC Orientation

- Learn first-hand VTC's resources, marketing and development efforts + partnership opportunities
- Most beneficial for local tourism directors and managers/owners of Virginia tourism businesses
- [Review calendar & sign up](#) for Orientation, held quarterly

Judy Watkins [jwatkins@virginia.org](mailto:jwatkins@virginia.org) | 804-545-5563

### 9 Grant and Funding Sources

- Utilize VTC's [Marketing Leverage Program](#) and/or [Virginia Regional Tourism Marketing Funds](#)
- 3 financial partners min. + performance measures

Staci Martin [smartin@virginia.org](mailto:smartin@virginia.org) | 757-390-7330

### 10 Community & Business Assistance

- Find business development workshops & assistance
- Request product development facilitation
- Request community planning & program assistance

Steve Galyean [sgalyean@virginia.org](mailto:sgalyean@virginia.org) | 804-545-5517

### 11 State Tourism Plan: DRIVE 2.0 + DRIVE Outdoors

- Strategic blueprint for tourism development
- Grow Virginia's outdoor economy
- Spur job creation and private investment

Caitlin Johnson [cjohnson@virginia.org](mailto:cjohnson@virginia.org) | 804-545-5529

### 12 Tourism Development Financing Program + Tourism Zones and Improvement Districts

- Explore tourism deficiencies for development [Gap Financing](#)
- Utilize the funding benefits of [Tourism Zones](#) and [Tourism Development Districts \(TDD\)](#)

Wirt Conroy [wconroy@virginia.org](mailto:wconroy@virginia.org) | 804-545-5552

### 13 Virginia Film Office

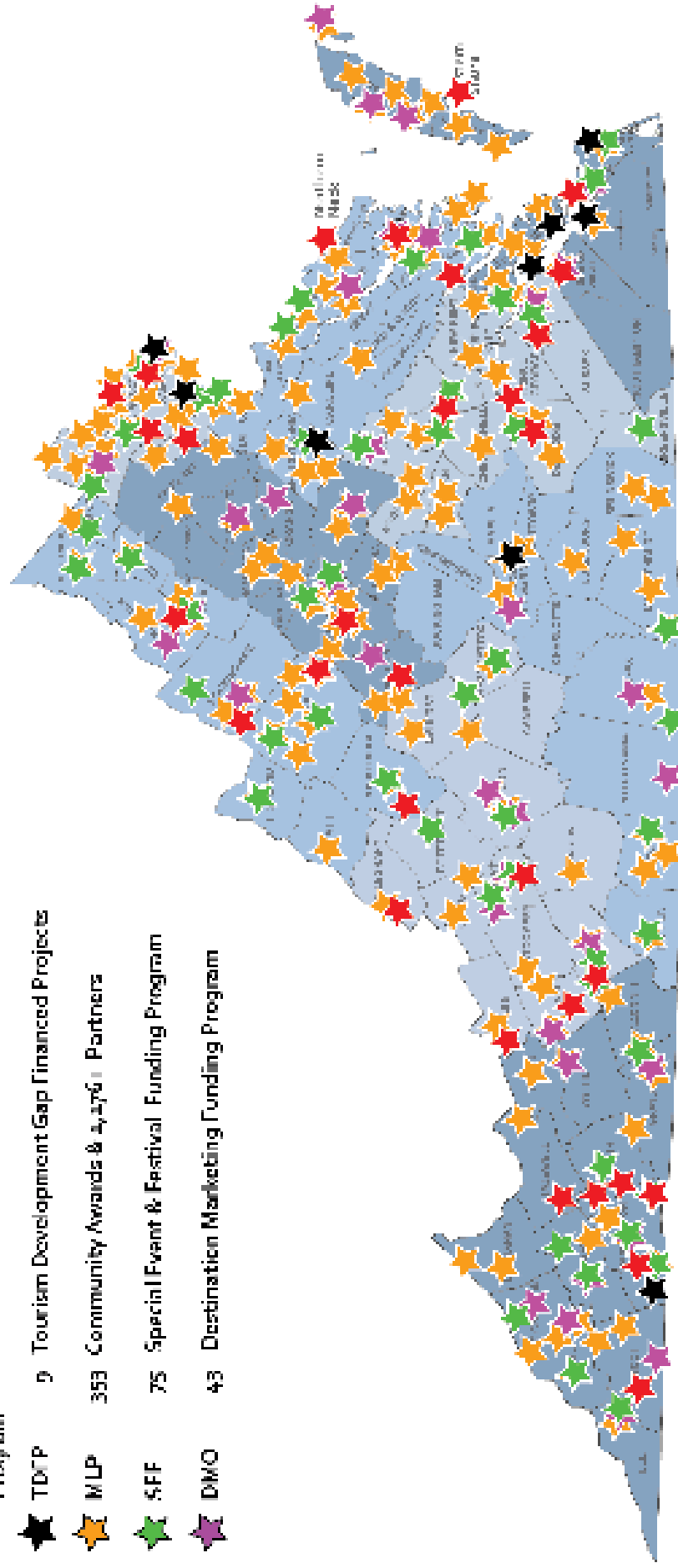
- Learn about filming in Virginia [FilmVirginia.org](#)
- Submit film location photography for your community
- Contact the Film Office to learn how to get connected

Margaret Finucane [mfinucane@virginia.org](mailto:mfinucane@virginia.org) | 804-545-5530

## VTC | Partnership Marketing Efforts ★ as of 12/30/22

VIRGINIA IS FOR LOVERS™

- ★ DRIVE+ Program 29 Community Tourism Development Plans
- ★ TD+P 9 Tourism Development Gap Financed Projects
- ★ MLP 353 Community Awards & 1,176 Partners
- ★ SFF 75 Special Event & Festival Funding Program
- ★ DMO 43 Destination Marketing Funding Program



We measure success by how helpful we are to our partners.

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IS FOR  
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