

Tourism Master Plan

Danville & Pittsylvania County

Published May, 2023



Tourism Master Plan

Danville & Pittsylvania County – 2023

THE CITY OF Danville and Pittsylvania County Virginia are currently experiencing unprecedented growth and investment - and much of the momentum aligns to the hospitality and tourism sector.

While recent announcements have placed significant attention on the industry's planned growth, especially inside the City of Danville, it is important to recognize that the region already has an established tourism sector and is not, as some have said, starting from scratch.

Existing regional assets drive steady visitation to our diverse museums, restaurants, music and event facilities, hiking and biking trails, waterways, higher education institutions, and boarding schools. In fact, in 2021, as the industry fought back the worst effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the local tourism industry still accounted for 1,328 local jobs and more than \$6.6 million in local tax receipts.

Over the next few years, significant new development is expected to drive a dramatic increase in area visitation, asset development, and business expansion that when fully leveraged has the capacity to positively impact every citizen, business, and visitor to our community. The largest project, Caesars Virginia, is a transformational and high-profile \$650M investment that is expected to bring more than 2M new visitors to the region each year. The resort will offer entertainment and event facilities on a scale never before seen in this part of the state. It will also offer several new food and beverage establishments, approximately 500 hotel rooms, and a world-class casino all under one roof.

Additional anchor projects such as the Schoolfield redevelopment project, the White Mill redevelopment effort (recently rebranded Dan River Falls, Mill #8), and the addition of several more local hotels are also on the region's near-term horizon.

It can be reasonably expected that over the next few years new restaurants, lodging, arts, entertainment, and recreational assets will also continue to open across the region, all supporting increased visitation to our area.

There has never been a better time for the region to assess the hospitality and tourism assets that we have, the new assets that we want, and the strategy we will use to present our region and our communities to those who may wish to visit, explore, and invest.

Over the past ten months, the Danville Office of Economic Development and Tourism has worked closely with our partners at Eddy Alexander, a nationally celebrated marketing and growth strategy consulting firm, and engaged more than 2,000 citizens and business owners from across Danville and Pittsylvania County to develop a tourism master plan and a new brand identity system that will guide our collective promotion and planning efforts for years to come.

This report lays out the business case for strategic investment in the tourism industry and provides an important roadmap that will help our community prioritize the anchor initiatives necessary to achieve the desired results we seek. The plan has been designed to carefully balance the economic benefits of tourism with the strategic vision and opportunity cost required to leverage this transformational moment to advance local placemaking efforts.

As the region's tourism lead, I look forward to continuing to partner with each of you as we work together to bring this shared vision to life. Thank you for your support, advocacy, and insights as we journey forward together.

Sincerely,



Lisa Meriwether
Tourism Manager

*Danville Office of Economic
Development and Tourism*

Tourism Master Plan

Danville & Pittsylvania County – 2023





**“IF YOU BUILD A
PLACE PEOPLE WANT
TO VISIT,
YOU BUILD A PLACE
WHERE PEOPLE
WANT TO LIVE.**

If you build a place where people want to live, you’ll build a place where people want to work.

If you build a place where people want to work, you’ll build a place where business needs to be.

And if you build a place where business has to be, you’ll build a place where people have to visit.”

- MAURA GAST

Past Chairman of the Board of Destination Marketing Association International

| Table of Contents

Preface

Welcome Letter	i
Table Of Contents	v
Purpose & Intent of the Tourism Master Plan	vii

Part 1: Market Analysis

Industry Background	1
Global Perspective	
Domestic Lens	
The Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic	2
Post-Pandemic Recovery	3
Industry Priorities - A National View	5
Destination Development	
Sustainable Tourism	
Accounting for Resident Needs	
The Virginia View	6
Performance By Major Industry Sector	7
Food & Beverage	
Transportation	
Lodging	
Recreation	
Retail	
Traveler's Motivations	8
Casinos in Virginia	10
Southern Virginia	12
Danville & Pittsylvania County	13
A Citizen-Led, Data-Informed Process	14
Citizen Feedback & Engagement	16
Current Visitor Profiles	20
Behavioral Trends	21
Observations	26
Looking Ahead - 2023 and Beyond	28
Regional Tourism SWOT Analysis	30

Part 2: Tourism Program Goals & Objectives

Strategic Goals - Taking a Regional Tourism Program to the Next Level	37
Destination Development	38
Highway Access	
Bus Service Access	
Intercity	
Passenger Rail Access	
Air Travel Access	
Telecommunications	
Placemaking & Beautification	
Industry Balance & Diversification	42
Moonshots & Big Ideas	45
Wayfinding & Gateway Signage	47

Part 2: Tourism Program Goals & Objectives (Cont.)	
Marketing & Promotion	50
Marketing Activities & Promotion Planning	51
Branding	
Positioning	
Naming	
Visual Identity System	
Usage	
Advertising Templates	
Advertising	53
Locals First Campaign	
Drive Market Visitor Attraction Campaign	
Advertising Channel Allocations	
Experiential Design	56
Events & Conference Participation	56
Group Travel, Meeting, Incentive, Conference, and Event Sales Recruitment	
Public Relations & Earned Media Associations	
History & Heritage Marketing	
Professional Standards, Training, Advocacy, Recognition and Collaboration	
Sports & Adventure Recreation	
Family Friendly Travel	
Hospitality Training & Ambassador Program	60
Welcome Center Management	61
Digital & Content Marketing	62
Visitors Guide	
Regional Map	
Website	
Content Marketing	
Social Media	
Operational Governance	64
Staffing	
Stakeholder Engagement	
Operational Maturity	66
Budget Recommendations	68
Performance Measurement	71
Reinvestment in Infrastructure, Programming, and Product	72
Destination Stewardship	73
Conclusion - Making the Most of the Moment.	74
Acknowledgements	77
Addenda	
Recommended DMO Activities and Program Priorities	80
Grant Opportunity Landscape	90
Sources & Additional Resources.	98
Glossary	100

| Purpose & Intent

TOURISM IS SAID to be the front door to economic development. No business will move their company, or launch a new satellite location, without first sending executives to visit and assess whether the destination is one that their people will want to visit, work, and eventually live. The Tourism and Hospitality industry provides the first impression of each community to its visitors. The industry is joyful but it is not superficial — its impact is quantifiably and qualitatively measurable, and its contributions to quality of life are additive over time.

When a region proactively attracts and manages responsible short-term visitation by investing responsibly in tourism, its leaders lay the groundwork to build a financial pipeline that continuously allows new money to flow into the local economy for generations to come. This process and flow provides significant lift for local businesses, and to local residents, helping to define the uniqueness and value of each individual neighborhood and community.

Tourism also provides measurable state and local tax base enhancements that can be leveraged to fund more and better community services. The entertainment offerings, placemaking, and beautification efforts supported by an effective and proactive tourism program provide valuable community assets that locals will enjoy long after today's short-term visitors head home.

Further, incremental tax revenue generated by visitors helps to reduce each local household's

individual tax burden. These additional tax revenues improve local infrastructure and can be deployed in a variety of important ways. Some examples include:

- Supporting the recruitment of new doctors, nurses, firefighters, and public safety officers
- Funding the development of new parks, roads, and bridges
- Providing supplemental funding for schools, after-school programs, and childcare options
- Allowing for more opportunities to invest in arts programming and community festivities which all directly support the local community's quality of life

Job creation is another major benefit of increased tourism. The tourism sector drives sustainable community growth as entrepreneurs, encouraged by increasing area visitation, establish, mature, and reinvest in additional products and service offerings over time.

These investments tend to increase local food and beverage offerings, arts and culture outlets, historical tours, cultural documentation, and area wayfinding — adding richness, diversity, and abundance to the region and contributing to a more distinctive sense of place for all to enjoy.

Tourism can be a powerful force for smart and responsible growth but it is, by nature, a highly fragmented industry as well. The tourism industry consists of multiple diverse business segments, including hotels, restaurants, transportation, retail stores, entertainment and



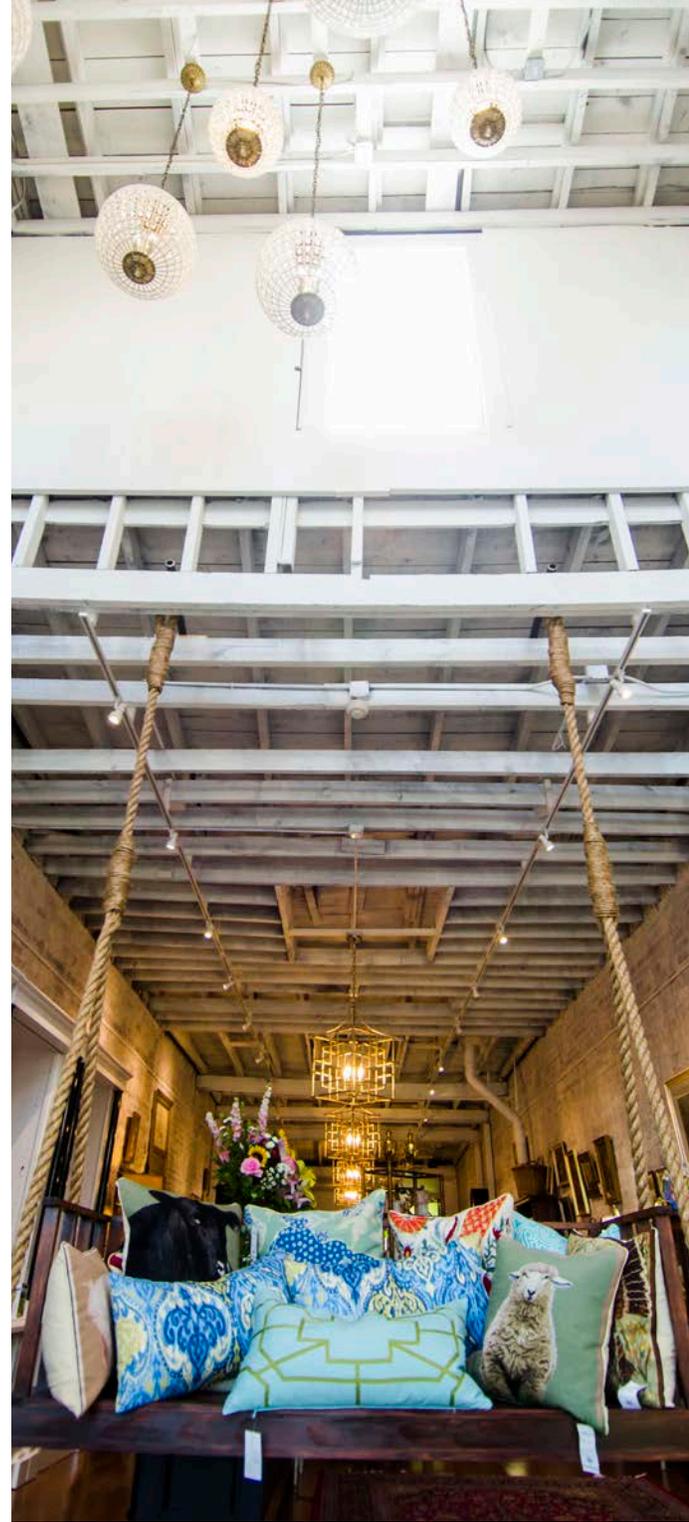
activity offerings, recreational assets, arts and cultural institutions, and more.

In many regions, businesses are small and independent with limited resources available to ensure industry-wide collaboration. This is why communities across the country have found tremendous value and return on their investment by funding a destination marketing and management organization (DMO/DMMO) who can proactively support and drive the industry's maturation, value, connection, and impact in alignment with a larger economic development strategy.

A Tourism Master Plan is typically developed to help guide the work of these organizations, to define the role, purpose, and priorities of the organization, and to ensure that public resources are effectively put to work to support a shared vision of success.

This will be Danville and Pittsylvania County Virginia's first Tourism Master Plan under their newly designated destination marketing and management program (aligned to the Danville Office of Economic Development and Tourism). This document will provide the initial vision, operating framework, and program priorities and an in-depth analysis of community assets, needs, and opportunities.

When implemented according to the recommended strategies and funded appropriately, this Tourism Master Plan will help enhance quality of life, job opportunities, and critical services for citizens across the community. At the same time, the Tourism Master Plan will help ensure the community delivers a well-optimized, welcoming, and enjoyable visitor experience - one that encourages visitors to stay longer, to spend more, and to treat the people and places they encounter with respect.



**“THE INDUSTRY IS JOYFUL BUT
IT IS NOT SUPERFICIAL.”**

Part 1: Market Analysis

2023 Tourism Master Plan
Danville & Pittsylvania County





INDUSTRY BACKGROUND

Tourism is a large and complex industry and, like much of the global economy, the tourism and hospitality sector has just come through a remarkably turbulent and disruptive period. To fully understand the current state of the industry, it is important to consider global, regional, and local contexts as well as the impact of the recent COVID-19 pandemic - and its ongoing recovery.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

From 2010 to 2019, the growth of the global travel and tourism segment outpaced the average growth of the entire global economy for nine consecutive years. This is true when you measure by employment as well as when you measure by Tourism Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

In 2019, one out of every 10 jobs, 333 million jobs globally, were tied to the travel and tourism industry. And, from 2014 to 2019, one quarter (25%) of all new jobs, globally, were created by the travel and tourism industry.

DOMESTIC LENS

From a domestic perspective, in 2019, direct travel spending in the United States hit a record \$1.2T with an economic output of \$2.6T. Additionally, the industry supported 9M direct jobs and 16.7M indirect American jobs.

Covid-19 Pandemic

Impact on the Industry

UNFORTUNATELY, SOON AFTER experiencing this tremendous record-setting performance boom, the travel and tourism industry was hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent health and travel restrictions that followed.

From 2019 to 2020, travel exports decreased nearly 65% in the United States and 3 million jobs were almost immediately lost.

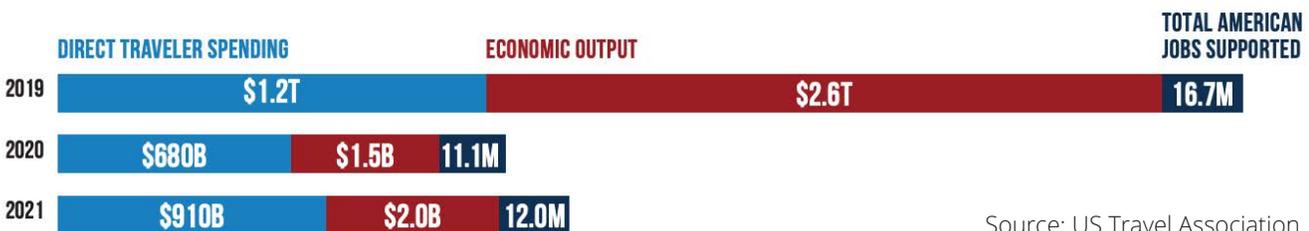
A Stark Contrast:

In 2019, 1 out of 10 jobs (10%) were dependent on travel and tourism and the industry was among the top 10 industries in 49 states and the District of Columbia. By 2021, that ratio had dropped to 1 out of every 20 jobs (5%), and travel and tourism was among the top 10 industries in only 25 states.

Resiliency:

While there is no question that the tourism industry's dramatic and consistent growth was deeply paralyzed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the industry continues to be one of the strongest and most resilient globally, across the United States, and here in Virginia.

Despite the significant challenges that the industry has recently encountered, travel and tourism has already begun to rebound. Perhaps this is not surprising. Tourism has a long track record of resilience - often bouncing back stronger than before significant downturns or market disruptions.



Source: US Travel Association

“THE INDUSTRY CONTINUES TO BE ONE OF THE STRONGEST AND MOST RESILIENT GLOBALLY, ACROSS THE UNITED STATES, AND HERE IN VIRGINIA.”

POST-PANDEMIC RECOVERY

The USA was not alone in suffering from the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, nor the global rise in inflation that followed. But, both the U.S. Federal government and the Commonwealth of Virginia have been aggressive in their support of the industry’s recovery.

By 2021, the wide rollout of COVID-19 vaccines and the lifting of international and domestic restrictions allowed the industry to start to recover.

International arrivals to the United States grew to 22.1 million in 2021, up from 19.2 million in 2020 but have not yet reached pre-pandemic rates.

Spending by international visitors has also grown over the last few years reaching \$81.0 billion, or 34% of 2019’s total by the end of 2021.

While short-term rentals were clear economic outliers that gained traction during the pandemic, hotels had a harder time. Occupancy, Average Daily Rate, and Revenue per Available Room are the three metrics by which the lodging industry typically analyzes and assesses their success. Each of these metrics has remained down over the last few years. However, the American Hotel & Lodging Association’s 2023 State of the Hotel Industry Report recently revealed:

U.S. Hotel Occupancy, 2018-2022



Source: 2022 State of the Hotel Industry Report, American Hotel & Lodging Association

- 2023 nominal room revenue is projected to exceed 2019 benchmarks this year (\$197.48 billion vs. \$170.35 billion in 2019). While these numbers are not adjusted for inflation, and real revenue recovery will likely take several more years, the trendlines are positive.
- 2023 room-night demand is projected to surpass pre-pandemic levels (1.3 billion occupied room nights vs. 1.29 billion in 2019).

Continued on Page 4

- Hotels are expected to generate \$46.71 billion in state and local tax revenue in 2023, up from \$41.11 billion in 2019.
- Average hotel occupancy is expected to reach 63.8% nationally in 2023 – just shy of 2019’s 65.9%.
- Group business has a bright future: 70% of planners surveyed were either booking or actively sourcing new events, and 61% expected to have larger budgets in 2023.

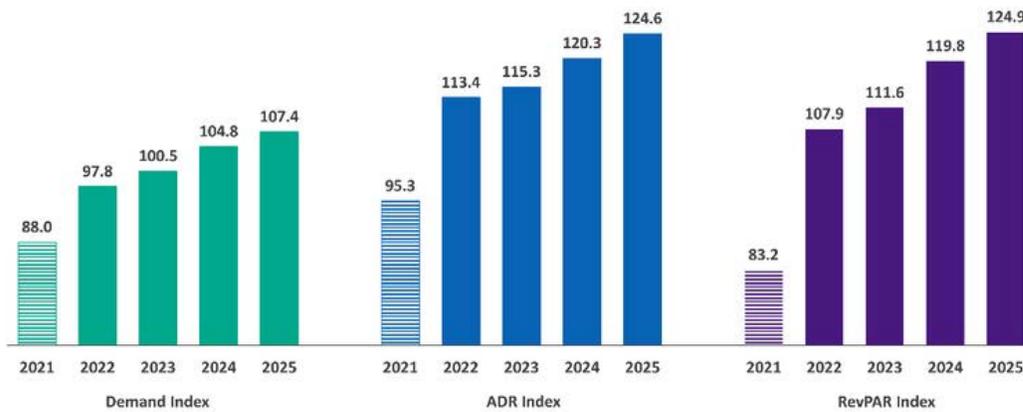
That said, national challenges around labor continue and both economic stability and inflation remain significant global concerns.

Hospitality unemployment levels remain high and greater spending on contract labor has pushed up operating costs on a per-available-room basis. These operating costs now sit well above 2019 levels.

Performance expected to strengthen in 2023, but at a slower pace



U.S. KPIs, indexed to 2019



U.S. RevPAR to surpass 2019 levels in 2022 (on a nominal basis)



U.S. KPIs, indexed to 2019

Metric	2022 Forecast	2023 Forecast	2024 Forecast	2025 Forecast
Occupancy	62.7%	63.8%	65.6%	66.1%
ADR	\$148	\$151	\$157	\$163
RevPAR	\$93	\$96	\$103	\$108
RevPAR compared to 2019	+7.9%	+11.6%	+19.8%	+24.9%

Industry Priorities

A National View

DURING THIS POST-PANDEMIC period, destination marketing and management organizations across the country have been expanding their roles. Having had several years to reflect on their mission, purpose, and impact, there is clear national and international movement to better align DMO efforts with other government and community organizations.

Accordingly, more Destination Marketing Organizations are taking interest in initiatives designed to improve social issues and local quality of life. This is helping to attract outside investment and high-value talent, and elevating the overall destination brand beyond a tourism lens.

In addition to focusing on economic recovery, the industry has aligned around several important priorities:

Destination Development

DMOs and DMMOs are working to develop their destinations, aligning the public, private, and civic sectors to collectively drive destination performance. They are helping to vision, plan, and shepherd new asset development, itinerary-based promotions, and programmatic coordination of region-wide activities and offerings to build product inventory, enrich known visitor itineraries, and incentivize increased average lengths of stay.

Sustainable Tourism

DMOs are also working to address destination and product development with a proactive eye toward the intersection of the needs of people, planet, profit, and policy across each community.

While sustainability remains more pervasive as a guiding principle in other parts of the world, the U.S. travel industry has taken notice of traveler interest and rising expectations around this topic and is responding by increasing attention on the environmental impact of the industry.

Accounting for Resident Needs

Recognizing that residents are the primary customer in any publicly funded tourism marketing program, destination marketing organizations are now openly recognizing that they must collaborate closely with diverse stakeholders across their communities to achieve success.

This means tourism representatives now have a greater role in the collaborative, cross-disciplinary efforts once led squarely by others (including economic development, parks and recreation, downtown development organizations, community safety agencies, chambers of commerce, and organizations with environmental sustainability, accessibility, and DEI missions).



The Virginia View

THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA has long prioritized the tourism economy and, as a result, has been fortunate to recover relatively quickly from the pandemic. However, recovery has been uneven across Virginia's various industry sectors and geographies.

While the initial onset of the pandemic had a devastating impact on the state's travel industry in 2020, domestic leisure travel in Virginia saw a robust return in 2021 as car travelers from across the Mid-Atlantic sought outdoor and rural experiences within drivable distances of their homes.

Virginia is uniquely positioned within a day's drive of nearly 1/2 of the U.S. country's population and offers multiple high-profile state and national parks, and uncrowded communities. During the pandemic, these destinations delivered appealing respite to nervous travelers just beginning to venture out again after pandemic lockdowns.

As road trips boomed, in 2021, many Virginia regions were able to reap the benefits of increased domestic travel. In fact, in October of 2022, the Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC) announced that travelers to Virginia spent \$69 million a day

in 2021, up from \$48 million per day in 2020 - a nearly 45% increase in just one year.

Virginia's tourism revenues also reached \$25.2 billion in 2021, 87% of 2019's pre-pandemic spending levels. This rebound supported 185,000 jobs, \$7.1 billion in salaries and wages, and \$1.8 billion in state and local taxes.

It is generally anticipated that when all 2022 data is released in the fall of 2023, that the Commonwealth will have effectively achieved full recovery, meeting or exceeding 2019 performance levels for all major KPIs.

Now, the Commonwealth of Virginia, which has one of the most recognizable and mature tourism marketing programs in the country, is working hard to build upon this momentum by ensuring that American Rescue Plan Act funding allocated to Virginia supports every registered tourism district across the Commonwealth.

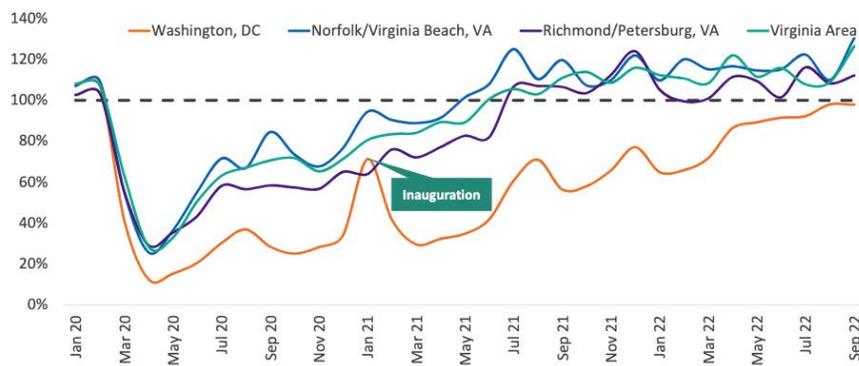
This funding has been allocated for use in 2023 and 2024 based on plans submitted and approved by Dec. 31, 2022. All local funds have been earmarked and now must be spent by June 2024. Any remaining funds not leveraged by the end of this period will be forfeited to a statewide program

and reallocated to be used for a state-wide promotional effort ensuring that all resources are effectively leveraged to drive visitation to Virginia communities.

The effective application of this one-time federal funding distributed through the state should drive even greater industry recovery and advancement through the next 12-18 months.

Most of VA exceeded 2019 RevPAR starting summer 2021

Virginia markets, RevPAR indexed to same month in 2019



Source: STR. © 2022 CoStar Group

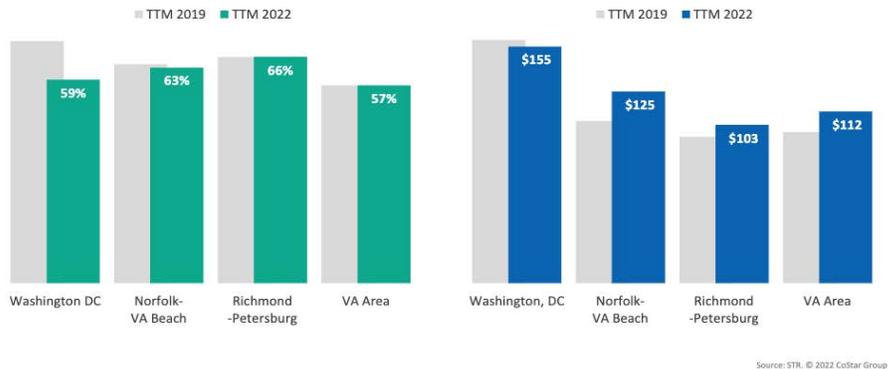
Occupancy (nearly) recovered across Virginia, except DC

TTM September 2019 and 2022, Occupancy and ADR



Performance by Major Industry Sector

Virginia's tourism and travel industry comprises a variety of sectors that contribute to its economic vitality, employment, and tax revenue. The most significant component industries include Food and Beverage, Transportation, Lodging, Recreation, and Retail.



Food & Beverage

Virginia's food and beverage industry accounts for the largest share of tourism dollars, representing \$7.2 billion and 29% of total visitor spending. In 2021, food and beverage spending recovered to 92% of 2019 levels.

Transportation

Virginia's transportation sector comes in just behind food and beverage spending, representing 28% of total state-wide visitor spending each year. Although transportation spending increased by 52% in 2021, with the slow return of air travel, transportation had only recovered to 78% of 2019 levels by the end of 2021.

Lodging

Virginia's lodging sector accounts for 19% of visitor spending annually but grew by 48% in 2021, reaching 87% of 2019 levels.

Recreation

Virginia's recreation economy represented 13% of visitor spending in 2021, growing by 46% year over year and returning to 94% of 2019 levels making it the industry sector reaching the closest to full recovery.

Retail

Virginia's retail market comprised 12% of visitor spending in 2021 and reached 90% of 2019 levels.

WHO IS VTC?

The Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC) is a state organization, led by a governor appointee, that oversees the effective promotion of the Commonwealth's \$25B+ tourism industry. The VTC develops and implements strategies and tactics that allow the commonwealth to market its tourism assets widely and effectively to travelers from across the United States and around the world.

For communities in economically distressed areas, VTC is often the only resource for marketing of local tourism products on a national and international scale. VTC offers tremendous research and advisory services as well as grant funding opportunities to local governments, regional destination marketing organizations, and industry assets and attractions.

* 2022 industry performance reports are currently being tabulated and are expected to be released by the Virginia Tourism Corporation in the fall of 2023.

| Traveler's Motivations

THE INTERESTS OF travelers to Virginia most frequently fall into one of three categories: Arts and Culture, History, or Sports and Outdoor Recreation. Noting that Virginia ranks high in multiple traveler ranking categories but number one less frequently in any one area, several years ago, Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC) made a strategic decision to market to the kinds of travelers who look for abundance and diversity of activities in their travels. Now, the state strategically seeks to show off its abundance of diverse activities to prospective visitors from across the country and around the world.

Across its top three traveler profiles, VTC has noted that October leisure travel consistently dominates, and “Visiting Friends and Relatives” is a top driver of activities and itinerary planning across their top

traveler profiles. While trip activities are similarly aligned across varying top travel types, we can deduce a small differential that may help influence local priorities as the Danville Office of Economic Development and Tourism works with investors to plan new regional assets.

Arts and Culture Travelers are slightly more likely to stay in hotels or short-term rentals (62%) - not with family or friends - than History Travelers (63%) or Sports Recreation Travelers (64%).

This is consistent with national research that has for years shown cultural travelers, those with a demonstrated interest in art and culture assets local to a region, tend to stay in communities longer, spend more, and leave less negative impact than those that travel for other reasons.



VTC KNOWN TRAVELER PROFILES

Arts & Culture	
Main Purpose of Trip:	<i>Visiting Friends/Relatives – 38%</i>
Trip Segment:	<i>Leisure – 92%</i>
Highest Month of Travel:	<i>October</i>
State of Origin:	<i>VA, PA, FL, NC, TX, NY, MD</i>
Top DMA:	<i>Washington DC, Norfolk/Tidewater Area, New York NY, Dallas/Fort Worth, Salt Lake City, Baltimore, Raleigh-Durham</i>
Combined Activities:	<i>Nightclub/Bar, Shopping, Swimming, Museum, Art Gallery, Beach/Waterfront, Biking, Boating/Sailing, Brewery</i>
Special Interest Activities:	<i>Historic Places, Cultural Activities, Exceptional Culinary Experiences, Brewery Tours, Winery Tours, Eco-tourism, Medical Tourism</i>
History	
Main Purpose of Trip:	<i>Visiting Friends/Relatives – 39%</i>
Trip Segment:	<i>Leisure – 93%</i>
Highest Month of Travel:	<i>October</i>
State of Origin:	<i>VA, PA, FL, NC, TX, NY, MD</i>
Top DMA:	<i>Washington DC, Norfolk/Tidewater area, New York NY, Philadelphia PA, Salt Lake City, Richmond/Charlottesville, Roanoke/Lynchburg</i>
Combined Activities:	<i>Nightclub/Bar, Shopping, Swimming, Museum, Art Gallery, Beach/Waterfront, Biking, Boating/Sailing, Brewery</i>
Special Interest Activities:	<i>Historic Places, Cultural Activities, Exceptional Culinary Experiences, Brewery Tours, Winery Tours, Eco-tourism, Medical Tourism</i>
Sports & Outdoor Recreation	
Main Purpose of Trip:	<i>Visiting Friends/Relatives – 40%</i>
Trip Segment:	<i>Leisure – 93%</i>
Highest Month of Travel:	<i>October</i>
State of Origin:	<i>VA, NC, NY, PA, FL MD, TX, OH, CA</i>
Top DMA:	<i>Washington DC, Norfolk/Tidewater area, New York NY, Philadelphia PA, Salt Lake City, Richmond/Charlottesville, Roanoke/Lynchburg</i>
Combined Activities:	<i>Nightclub/Bar, Shopping, Swimming, Museum, Art Gallery, Beach/Waterfront, Biking, Boating/Sailing, Brewery</i>
Special Interest Activities:	<i>Historic Places, Cultural Activities, Exceptional Culinary Experiences, Brewery Tours, Winery Tours, Eco-tourism, Medical Tourism</i>

Casinos In Virginia

A Swiftly Changing Landscape

IN NOVEMBER 2020, voters approved four land-based Virginia casinos in four communities (Bristol, Danville, Norfolk, and Portsmouth, Virginia). Richmond, Virginia also put the issue to a vote, but the referendum failed to pass on its first attempt.

Bristol's Hard Rock Casino was the first to market when it partially opened in July of 2022. They immediately exceeded expectations registering record-setting revenues for their community. In March of 2023, they continued that trend into the second half of their year, reporting \$13.8M in monthly receipts. The 30,000-square-foot temporary Bristol Casino is slated to give way to a 100,000-square-foot gaming space when the full Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Bristol opens in mid-2024.

In Coastal Virginia, Headwaters Resort and Casino is planning to become a staple for the Virginia Beach market and is currently under construction along the Elizabeth River. Similarly, The Rivers Casino is planned for Portsmouth, Virginia, and will be situated in the heart of Virginia's most populated and touristy areas. In addition to the brick-and-mortar property, this brand is also likely to provide gamers in Virginia access to the BetRivers Sportsbook, one of the most popular sports betting brands in several states.

In Danville, voters approved the development of Caesars Virginia, a full-service resort. The property is being developed in the Schoolfield district and is preserving the iconic three sisters' smokestack from the old Schoolfield Mill site

as a part of its buildout. Caesars, owners of multiple hospitality brands including Harrah's, Four Seasons, Horseshoe Casinos, Circus Circus, Eldorado, Flamingo, Rio, Tropicana, and more, broke ground on their new flagship Virginia resort in the summer of 2022.

The \$650 Million dollar project includes plans for:

- a 500-room hotel tower
- a world-class casino gaming floor featuring 1,300+ slots
- 85 live table games
- 24 electronic table games
- a WSOP poker room
- a Caesars Sportsbook
- a full-service spa
- a pool
- multiple high-quality bars and restaurants
- a 2,500-seat state-of-the-art live entertainment theater
- 40,000 square feet of meeting and convention space

The new regional attraction is expected to bring an additional 2M visitors to the City of Danville annually after it opens. While construction delays have pushed back the full opening, Caesars has announced plans to open a temporary facility to lessen the wait and has begun hiring to fill the 400 jobs required to run the temporary gaming location.





CAESARS PALACE

THE CROWWELL

SILVER LEGACY

ELDORADO GAMING SCOTSDOWNS

CAESARS

THE LINQ

GRAND VICTORIA CASINO

CAESARS REPUBLIC

ELDORADO

Paris

FOUR SEASONS HOTEL

WSOP

Harrah's

planet hollywood

NOBU HOTEL

CAESARS SPORTS

HORSESHOE

rio

isle capri

TROPICANA

HARVEYS

Lady Luck

Flamingo

CIRCUS CIRCUS RENO

isle CASINO



Southern Virginia

One of 10 State-Designated Tourism Districts

THE SOUTHERN VIRGINIA travel and tourism district consists of the municipalities of Danville, Martinsville, South Boston, Emporia, South Hill, Lawrenceville, Halifax, Kenbridge, Victoria, and Clarksville as well as the counties of Pittsylvania, Henry, Halifax, Mecklenburg, Brunswick, Greensville, Charlotte, and Lunenburg.

The combined area has a population of 271,271 people. Pittsylvania County is the largest county in the state by land area and the City of Danville is the largest locality in the region with a population of 40,693 residents (according to the most recent census).

The Southern Virginia region accounted for \$551 million in travel and tourism expenditures in 2018. From 2018 to 2019, year over year, the region experienced a 5% increase in expenditures (just ahead of the overall Virginia state expenditure

growth of 4.4%). The district is the 7th largest out of the state's 10 districts in 2018 and accounted for 2% of the Commonwealth's total visitor spending.

Access:

Interstates: I-85, I-95 and Highways US 360, US 58, US 220, US 29/designated I-785 connect visitors to the region. With an average trip length of 3.2 nights, according to a TravelTrakAmerica survey, nearly two-thirds of Southern Virginia travelers (59%) originate from Virginia, North Carolina, and Washington D.C.

Feeder Markets:

This concentrated primary feeder market area gives all Southern Virginia's destinations and industry leaders an opportunity to work closely together in promotional planning to effectively target prospective visitors.



EVEN CLOSER TO HOME: DANVILLE & PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY

LIKE OTHER COMMUNITIES across the Commonwealth, Danville and Pittsylvania County, have abundant tourism offerings that are especially appealing to outdoor recreation and cultural heritage travelers.

Existing local assets are well-aligned with the known desires of visitors to the state and include art, culture, history, and sports and adventure recreation (outdoor recreation, agritourism, auto racing, and more) opportunities, however, the number of available assets in the region, their accessibility to the visiting traveler, the limited inventory of hotel beds and short term rentals, and the current disconnected nature of industry stakeholders puts the region at a significant disadvantage. This is especially true when compared to surrounding competitor markets and metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs), which have more robust tourism marketing and destination development programs and greater destination brand recognition (Richmond and Lynchburg to the North, Coastal Virginia to the East, Greensboro, Raleigh, and Winston Salem to the South, and the Roanoke and New River Valleys to the West).

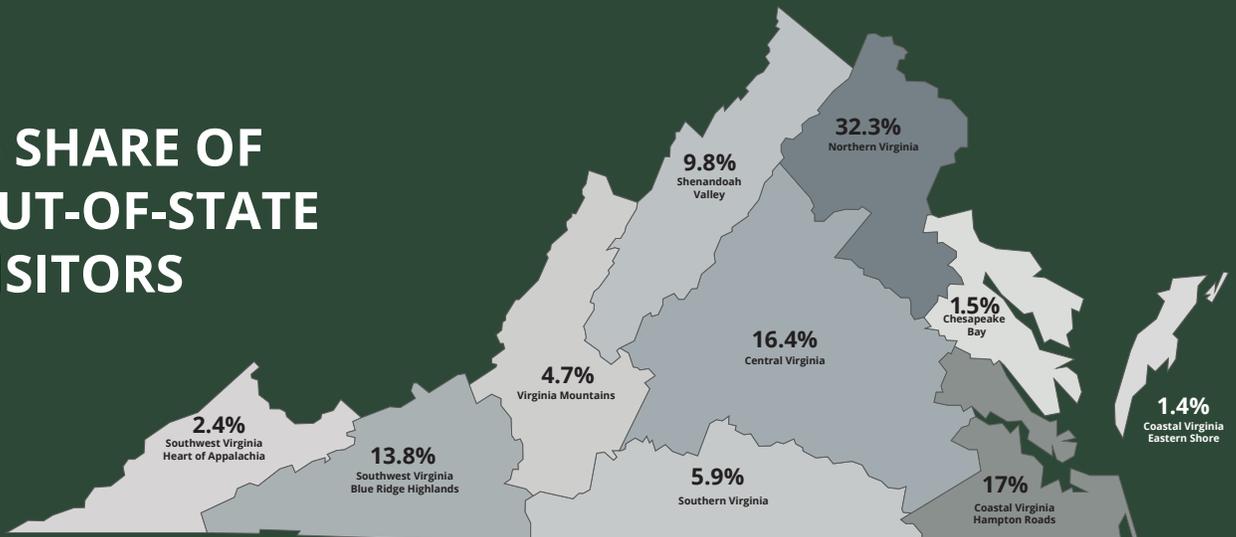
Times are rapidly changing, however, and recent political support, closer alignment with a larger

regional economic development vision, and significant investments in new asset development across the region are redirecting attention to tourism in an exciting new way. Momentum is converging around the industry and helping local stakeholders reimagine their offerings and position their destination more effectively for growth and expansion.

In the fall of 2021, the Board of Supervisors of Pittsylvania County and the City Council of Danville voted to make the Danville Office of Economic Development and Tourism, led by Corrie Bobe, the official Destination Marketing Organization for the region. Soon thereafter, Lisa Meriwether, a veteran tourism leader with experience in tourism sales and marketing across the Commonwealth, was hired to help guide the community's tourism industry growth, positioning, and industry advancement.

Now, as the region prepares to encourage tourism as a part of its strategic growth plan and future vision, there is a significant opportunity to grow regional visitation as well as out-of-state visitor market share (currently just 5.9% of the state total).

% SHARE OF OUT-OF-STATE VISITORS



A Citizen-Led, Data-Informed Process

OVER THE LAST twelve months, the Danville Office of Economic Development and Tourism has undertaken a large-scale planning effort, preparing to launch a new tourism program for the region.

In June of 2022, the office completed their national search for a proven marketing advisory firm to help develop a new tourism brand and master plan for the region. They hired Eddy Alexander, a Roanoke VA based firm with extensive experience and expertise in tourism and economic development marketing, community promotion, and destination development.

In the summer of 2022, the team kicked off the planning process by conducting a comprehensive survey that included both local citizens and business operators across the region. The survey included approximately 50 questions and collected information and sentiment around local assets, values, community perceptions, and industry goals for regional tourism, storytelling, and promotion. The data collected helped the team identify the region's differentiators and refine the recommended go-to-market strategy.

The survey was heavily promoted via traditional and social media, via local shops and library branches, through existing partner networks and community email lists, and via direct mail postcards mailed to every home and business across both the city and the county. The link to the survey was also made available on both the city and county websites for the duration of the approximately 5-week study period.

At the time of the survey closing, the study had collected more than 2,000 completed surveys from across the region.

In the fall of 2022, Eddy Alexander then held two public validation session meetings, one at the Science Center in Danville and one at the Old Dominion Agricultural Complex in Chatham. In both sessions, the public was invited in for a 90-minute presentation where all of the data from the surveys was reviewed, and findings were discussed.

Lead researcher, Jennifer Eddy, shared her interpretation of the findings in each session, seeking feedback from the attendees to ensure that the data collected was properly interpreted and that the directional beacons provided through the research were in fact a reliable source for guiding the development of the region's larger tourism marketing plan.

Change is Coming
Help Shape it. Take the Survey.

Danville & Pittsylvania County Tourism has partnered with Eddy Alexander, a marketing and growth strategy consulting firm, to develop a strategic community brand and tourism marketing program. Your input will help us ensure the community's shared vision and values are represented in this process.

Don't delay: Survey closes July 15, 2022

ONLINE
EddyAlexander.com/DP Tourism

* If you do not have access to the internet we encourage you to visit your local library to use one of their computers.

TAKE THE TOURISM SURVEY!

DANVILLE CITY PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY VIRGINIA



In aggregate, citizens from across Danville and Pittsylvania County described the community as friendly, laid back, and welcoming and indicated they wanted the new tourism brand to reflect these same qualities.

When probed further, the community reported that they saw the region as:

- More approachable than luxurious
- More safe and secure than adventurous
- More classic than modern
- More laid back than formal
- More playful than serious
- More natural than urban
- More bold than understated
- More simple than complex
- More handmade than digital

Simultaneous to the survey effort, the Eddy Alexander team held one-on-one and small-group interviews with industry stakeholders from across the community. These sessions were held by both referrals, and by special invitation, and included business owners related to the tourism industry,

economic development leaders, public officials, citizen group representatives, higher education leaders, and more.

Special care was taken to ensure that both city and county representatives had equal involvement in these additive information-gathering exercises and that diverse voices respective to age, demographic, and socio-economic income levels were represented and actively involved.

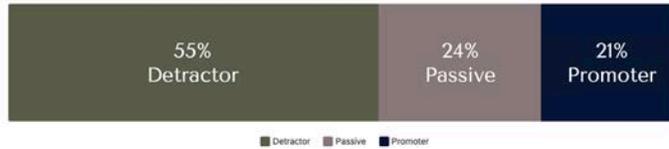
Topics of discussion centered around the state of the current tourism industry, current assets, goals for future development, and overarching community strengths, opportunities, weaknesses, and threats as they related to the community tourism industry and destination development goals.

Across each of these outreach channels, the research team found that the community described itself as safe, family-friendly, welcoming, inclusive, growing, fun, diverse, and full of history and natural beauty.

Citizens expressed that they were looking forward to the promised investments in additional tourism assets (new and upgraded facilities, entertainment options, and food and beverage offerings), and the promise of improved public safety, beautification, and placemaking (including enhanced wayfinding and better cross-promotion of local events and attractions).

Continued on Page 18

On a scale of 1-10, how likely are you to recommend a visit to...
the City of Danville to a friend or colleague?



© 2022 Eddy Alexander. All Rights Reserved. This work is the property of Eddy Alexander and cannot be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any information storage or retrieval system, without the written permission of the copyright holder, except where permitted by law.

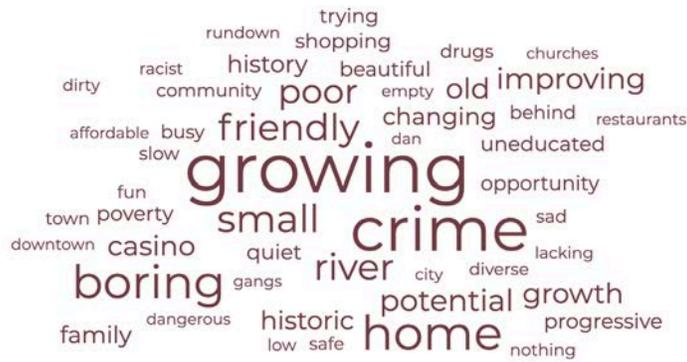


Pittsylvania County to a friend or colleague?



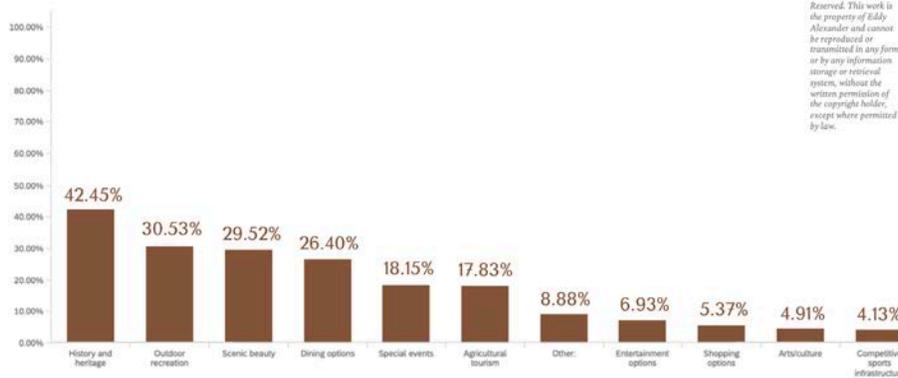
Promoters responded with a score of 9 or 10 and are typically loyal and enthusiastic community advocates. **Passives** respond with a score of 7 or 8. They are generally satisfied with services but not happy enough to be considered promoters having a more neutral effect on the economic potential of visitation. **Detractors** respond with a score of 0 to 6. These are less satisfied citizens or consumers who may discourage others from visiting the region. These survey results will serve as a benchmark that can be leveraged to measure program impact on regional quality of life over time.

Today, when I think of Danville, VA these three words come to mind:
(Combined)



© 2022 Eddy Alexander. All Rights Reserved. This work is the property of Eddy Alexander and cannot be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any information storage or retrieval system, without the written permission of the copyright holder, except where permitted by law.

Right now, I believe Danville and Pittsylvania County tourism's greatest appeal to tourists is: (Please select up to three.)



© 2022 Eddy Alexander. All Rights Reserved. This work is the property of Eddy Alexander and cannot be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any information storage or retrieval system, without the written permission of the copyright holder, except where permitted by law.

Continued from Page 15

Participants also reported that they thought the community could and should be doing a better job of telling its story and cross-promoting existing assets. While it was noted that there had been several attempts at tourism marketing in the past, participants indicated that they hoped that this effort would “stick” and would be “armed with the necessary funding and resources to succeed.”

Participants also consistently brought up their desire that the region work hard to “ensure we are known for more than just the Casino,” (referring to the Caesars Virginia Resort currently under construction). Participants also noted that they hoped the “community can find ways to offer things to do for visitors, and locals, of all ages and interests.”

More broadly, the interviews, surveys, and public validation sessions revealed a positive and hopeful sentiment related to the anticipated growth of the tourism sector but participants held a consistently pragmatic attitude and generally understood that “the hard work to turn Danville and Pittsylvania County into a tourism destination is just beginning.”

To this end, several interviewees and focus group participants talked extensively about negative perceptions that they felt had historically surrounded this part of the state. They often highlighted the reputational and economic damage that the closing of the Dan River Mills had on the local economy more than 20 years ago.

Following the discovery efforts that took place in the fall, in partnership with Eddy Alexander, the Danville Office of Economic Development and Tourism team then began their synthesis work, inventorying regional assets, analyzing aggregate and segmented historical visitor data, and building plans to effectively market and position Danville and Pittsylvania County as a unified tourism destination.





Current Visitor Profiles

Based on aggregate visitor cell phone data collected between Sept 1, 2021, and August 31, 2022, much was learned about the typical visitor to Danville and Pittsylvania County, VA today.

By analyzing the unique demographic and behavioral features of visitors to the region who stayed in the area for more than four hours (to be sure they are doing more than passing just through on a local highway) and by clearing away any visitors who do not live or work within 50 miles of the regional boundary (to remove quasi-local visitors), we now understand that over the past year:

- Current out-of-area visitors to the region are most likely to be under 18 years old (21%). Adult visitors are then spread somewhat evenly with 10-16% of visitors falling in each ~10-year range from 18-65+.
- 18% of visitors hold a four-year college degree and 11% have an advanced degree.
- Current visitors have an average household income of \$57,636 and an average home value of \$188,318.
- 70% of the visitors that came to the region in 2022 were white and 18% were black. 7% were Hispanic, 3% Asian, and 3% were categorized as non-white or of mixed backgrounds.

When this same demographic data is broken down and analyzed by locality, we recognize that the trends are quite similar, but not exactly the same.

Inside the City of Danville:

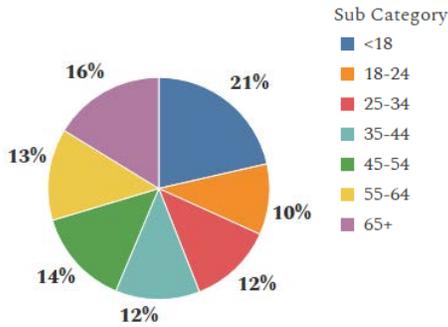
- Visitors are slightly more likely to be under 18 years old (22%). Adult visitors are then still spread somewhat evenly with 10-16% of visitors falling in each ~10-year range from 18 to 65+.
- 18% of visitors hold a four-year college degree and 11% have an advanced degree.
- Current visitors have a very slightly lower average household income of \$57,370 and an average home value of \$186,195.
- 68% of the visitors that came to the region in 2022 were white and 19% were black. 7% were Hispanic, 3% Asian, and 3% were categorized as non-white or of mixed backgrounds.

Inside Pittsylvania County:

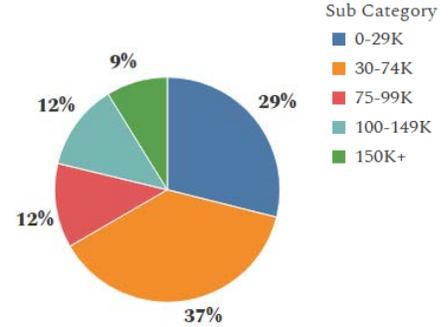
- Visitors are still likely to be under 18 years old (21%). Adult visitors are then still spread somewhat evenly with 10-16% of visitors falling in each 10-year range.
- 17% of visitors hold a four-year college degree, slightly less than the regional average, and 11% have an advanced degree.
- Current visitors have an average household income of \$57,774 and an average home value of \$188,672 (less than a 2k average difference between county and city visitors).
- 71% of the visitors that came to the region in 2022 were white and 17% were black. 6% were Hispanic, 3% Asian, and 2% were categorized as non-white or of mixed backgrounds.

Behavioral Trends

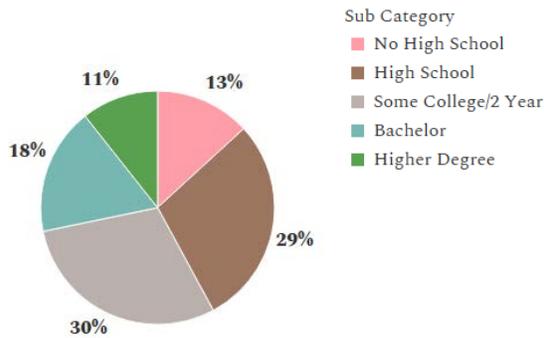
Age Pie Chart



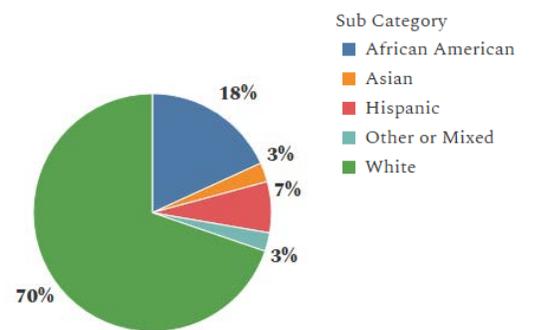
Income Bracket Pie Chart



Education Pie Chart



Race Pie Chart



Behavioral Trends

INSIDE THE DANVILLE and Pittsylvania County regions, the team was able to observe the visitation patterns of 74,257 unique visitors to the region. A unique visitor was counted if they stayed in the region more than four hours and did not regularly reside (live or work) within 50 miles of the region's boundaries.

This aggregate data exclusion method allowed researchers to exclude visitors who may have lived or worked outside the county but who may routinely come into the region frequently for employment, shopping, dining, or entertainment.

Of the 74k+ unique visitors to the region that qualified for the study, approximately 45% were day trippers and approximately 55% were overnight visitors during the 12-month study period. 62% of visitors to the region came for just one trip. 38%

of visitors came back for more than one trip during the twelve-month study period from Sept of 2022 through August 2023.

The average day trip duration for visitors to the region was 7.36 hours and the median day trip duration was 6.39 hours. The average overnight trip duration was 3.26 days, and the median overnight trip length was 1.43 days. It is worth noting that the average length of stay for the region appears to be bolstered by multiple visitor stays of 25 days or more.

These visitation sprint averages are longer than was originally expected for a region with this profile, but multiple extra-long stays (20+ days) appeared in the data consistently throughout the year-long study. This indicates a subsidiary market of long-term visitors in the region, perhaps coming from long-term corporate, military, or healthcare travel employment contracts or similar.

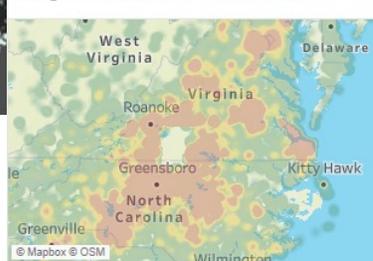
US Heat Map of Feeder Markets



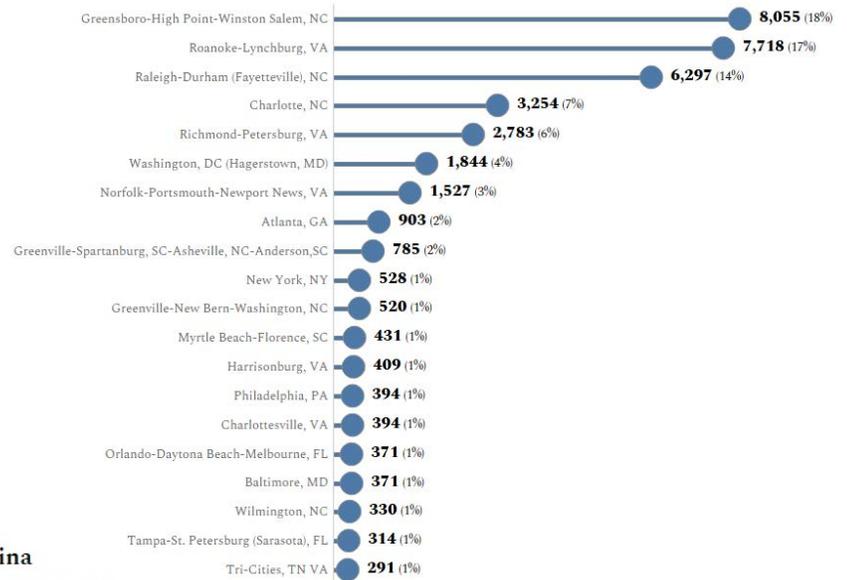
Heat Map of East Coast Feeder Markets



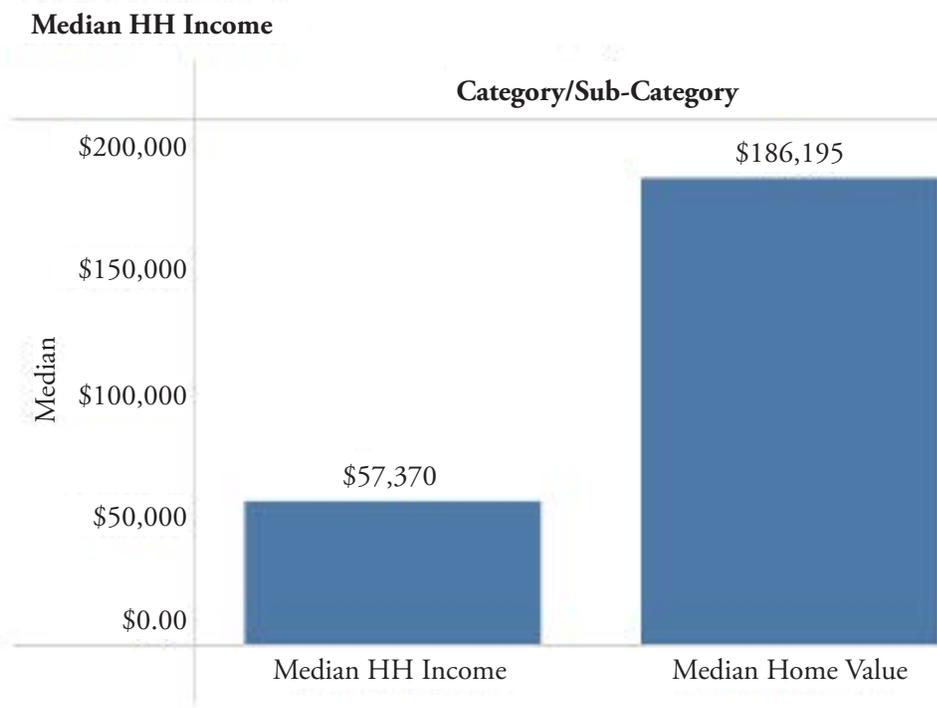
Virginia & North Carolina



Top Feeder Markets



... is of unique devices and includes overnight and day trips.



Median HH Income & Median Home Value Summary

Category	Sub-Category	Value
Economic	Median HH Income	\$57,370
	Median Home Value	\$186,195

Similar data trends are sometimes seen when an area experiences significant inbound relocation near the end of a study period as well. However, because we saw these extra-long stays register throughout the 12-month study period, this does not appear to be the root cause for Danville and Pittsylvania County’s report.

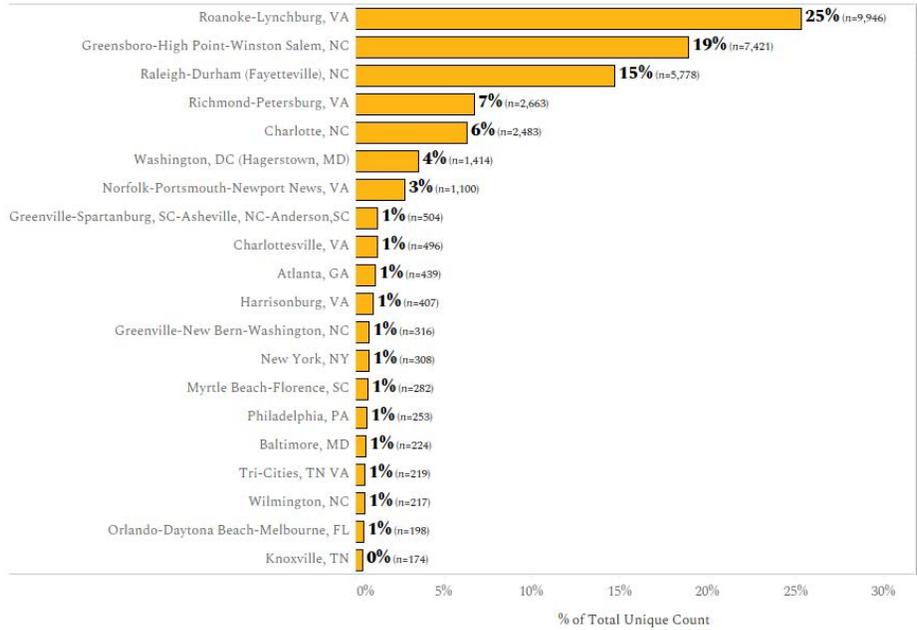
Over the 12-month study, 38% of 2022’s visitors came from Virginia, 33% from North Carolina, 4% from South Carolina, 3% from Georgia, and 3% from Florida, but visitors also registered from 15 other states as well.

Top feeder markets for all 2022 local visitation, included:

- Roanoke Lynchburg, VA (20%)
- Greensboro/Winston Salem, NC (15%)
- Raleigh Durham, NC (12%)
- Richmond/Petersburg, VA (7%)
- Charlotte NC (6%)
- Washington D.C. (5%)
- Norfolk, Portsmouth, Newport News (3%)

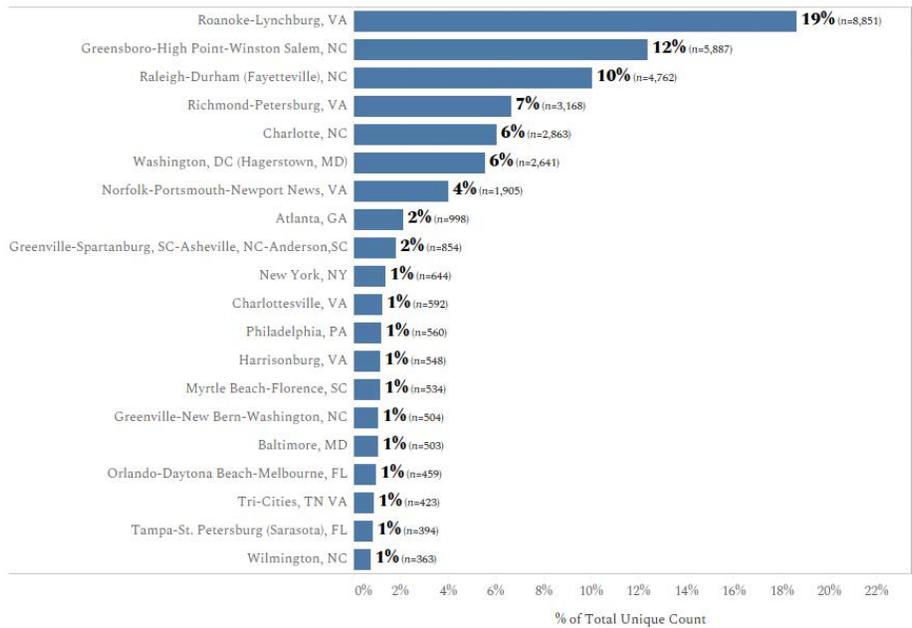
Behavioral Trends

Top Feeder Markets for Daytrip Visitors



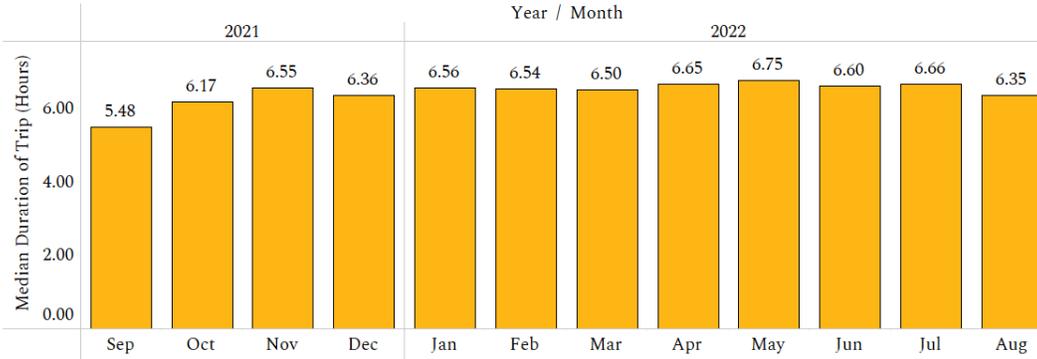
Note. Percent is of total unique device count.

Top Feeder Markets for Overnight Visitors



Note. Percent is of total unique device count.

Daytrip - Duration (Hours) Bar Chart



Daytrip - Duration Statistics (Hours)

	2021				Year / Month 2022								Grand Total
	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	
Unique Count	6,595	5,823	4,496	4,505	3,264	4,417	4,587	4,610	3,320	3,329	3,601	4,607	39,293
Avg. Duration of Trip (Hours)	6.59	7.08	7.49	7.36	7.63	7.30	7.48	7.62	7.75	7.64	7.64	7.45	7.36
Median Duration of Trip (Hours)	5.48	6.17	6.55	6.36	6.56	6.54	6.50	6.65	6.75	6.60	6.66	6.35	6.39
Min. Duration of Trip (Hours)	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
Max. Duration of Trip (Hours)	23.84	22.91	23.82	23.57	23.72	23.76	23.59	23.52	23.97	23.61	23.68	23.63	23.97
Variance of Duration of Trip (Hours)	9.31	9.75	10.33	10.29	12.02	8.75	10.92	10.97	12.29	11.22	11.44	11.09	10.65

Overnight - Duration (Days) Bar Chart



Overnight - Duration Statistics (Days)

	2021				Year / Month 2022								Grand Total
	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	
Unique Count	8,752	6,125	6,442	6,216	5,529	6,388	7,907	7,714	8,143	7,212	6,292	7,739	47,508
Avg. Duration of Trip (Days)	2.66	2.96	3.15	3.21	3.87	3.98	3.70	4.12	2.70	3.10	3.01	2.94	3.26
Median Duration of Trip (Days)	1.53	1.29	1.30	1.28	1.39	1.80	1.48	1.58	2.00	1.16	1.37	1.41	1.43
Min. Duration of Trip (Days)	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17
Max. Duration of Trip (Days)	30.00	31.00	30.04	31.00	31.00	28.00	30.96	30.00	30.99	29.99	30.99	30.99	31.00
Variance of Duration of Trip (Days)	12.52	22.18	27.32	29.91	39.51	36.81	36.05	44.95	10.21	26.45	14.67	20.41	26.54

Observations

Focus on Cultural Travelers

WHILE THE REGION IS RAPIDLY gaining statewide media attention for its planned tourism industry expansion, there is already a healthy base of visitors. Even without the planned additional area tourism industry investment, there is a significant opportunity for tourism-related businesses locally to work together to grow the existing share of the state visitor market and local visitor spending. The data collected indicates that the current visitor audience is not, as some had suggested, just local, homogeneous, or “just passing through.”

Travel trends show that many visitors to the region come from an approximate 3.5 – 4-hour drive radius and that, as such, Danville and Pittsylvania County compete with several well-funded tourism destinations that also offer arts, culture, history, and outdoor recreation assets, including:

In Virginia:

- Richmond/ Petersburg
- Coastal Virginia
- Lynchburg
- Martinsville
- The Roanoke and New River Valleys
- Southwest Virginia
- Charlottesville
- Northern Virginia

In North Carolina:

- Greensboro
- Winston Salem
- Raleigh
- Asheville

The community is well poised to increase the economic lift provided by the tourism industry, by leaning into its welcoming nature, investing in new attractions and destination assets that appeal to “cultural travelers” and looking for approachable, diverse, and culturally rich experiences.

This is a tremendous opportunity. Cultural travelers are known to stay longer and spend more on average than other types of travelers so the community will benefit by focusing on their abundance, approachability, and accessibility close to many other population centers.

By developing more arts and culture offerings, productizing the rich history of the region, and featuring the outdoor beauty and entertainment options that are so abundant across the community in more accessible ways, the region can work to make all these assets more valuable to visitors and, along the way, increase economic benefit across the region.



“THE VISITOR-FOCUSED ADVERTISING OF DMO’S HAS A PRONOUNCED IMPACT

on measures that many community leaders have long
said are more important than “tourism.”

- BILL GEIST
Chief Investigator, DMOproz



Looking Ahead

2023 and Beyond

WITH SIGNIFICANT ONE-TIME recovery incentive funding specifically earmarked for tourism distributed through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA funds), Virginia and its localities are poised to recognize additional growth in visitor spending in 2023.

For example, when the Virginia Tourism Corporation, the official Destination Marketing Organization for the Commonwealth of Virginia, utilized recovery grant funds to advertise in new markets, they successfully reached nearly 15 million more households in 2022 than they did in 2021.

By reaching more travelers with Virginia tourism advertising, the Commonwealth continues to raise awareness and consideration as a premier travel destination, increasing bookings and arrivals, which then translates to increased visitor spending across the state.

Danville and Pittsylvania County are similarly

well-positioned. The region already benefits from two established higher education institutions, two well-respected boarding schools, a state-funded science museum, a one-of-a-kind special interest Tank Museum, an art and history museum, a funeral home museum, several notable breweries and vineyards, Smith Mountain Lake, the Dan River, an award-winning river district, multiple farmers markets, several smaller rivers and tributaries, the Old Dominion Agricultural Center which holds nationally celebrated events all year long, 15 public parks, and multiple walkable main streets, neighborhood hubs, and historic districts.

The region also benefits from significant spillover visitation from the VIRginia International Raceway which sits on the County's western border and Lynchburg and Liberty University which sits just beyond the County's northern border.

Caesars Virginia, the new \$650M multi-purpose resort inside the City of Danville, is under



construction and is scheduled to open their first temporary site in the region on May 15, 2023.

When the permanent location in the Schoolfield district is finished, the new development is expected to attract significant attention and new visitation to the region. Property values around the site have already begun to increase in anticipation of future growth.

Plans for the old “White Mill” (recently rebranded as Dan River Falls Mill #8) are equally as impressive.

Approximately \$85M in investment and multiple Commonwealth of Virginia tax credits will come together to help transform the 100-year-old, roughly 550,000-square-foot former mill building into 147,000 square feet of commercial space, with more than 150 residential apartments. The sheer scale and investment level of this project make it one of the largest tax-credit projects that’s currently underway in Virginia. Then, the area that surrounds the

White Mill is also being transformed into a beautiful 4.5-acre public waterfront park with playgrounds, a lawn area for events and concerts, a pier that overlooks and extends onto the river, and a splash pad amphitheater.

Likewise, multiple new hotels, restaurants, and entertainment venues have selected Danville and/or Pittsylvania County for near-term investment. Averett University has announced the start of a new hospitality management program, and the Old Dominion Agricultural Complex continues to hold year-round events that drive attendees to Chatham from across the country.

To make the most of all this opportunity, the region has officially formed a new Destination Marketing Organization, hired a well-respected industry leader to champion its direction, and has begun investing in market research and strategic planning efforts that have led to the development of this master plan.



SWOT Analysis

Regional Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

A SWOT Analysis is a strategic planning tool that collects the most significant Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats to an organization. It is used to analyze the current business landscape, and, in this case, help plan for the development of an effective tourism marketing program.

STRENGTHS:

Cultural Attractions:

Danville and Pittsylvania County have multiple unique and appealing historical and cultural attractions including the Danville Science Center, The Olde Dominion Agricultural Complex (ODAC), the Danville Museum of Fine Arts & History, the Simpson Funeral Museum, the Tank Museum, the Danville Otterbots baseball team, as well as multiple art galleries, theaters, farmers markets, and historic sites that all attract tourists interested in learning more about the area's history and arts and culture.

Natural Beauty & Southern Charm:

The region is well known and respected for its scenic beauty and friendly community, which people travel from miles around to enjoy. Popular local

outdoor recreation assets and attractions include Smith Mountain Lake, The Dan River, Dan Daniels Memorial Park, Wayside Park, Anglers Ridge Mountain Bike Trail System, The Danville RiverWalk Trail, and the Ballou Park Disc Golf Course.

Outdoor Recreation:

The region offers a variety of outdoor activities including fishing, hunting, boating, hiking, bike riding, skateboarding, camping, ATV riding, equestrian sports, team sports, and world-class auto racing.

Local Festivals & Events:

Danville and Pittsylvania County host several local festivals and events throughout the year. These include the Chatham Garden Week, The Danville Pittsylvania County Fair, River City Music Festival, The Blue Ridge Rock Festival, The Danville Harvest Jubilee, a rotating line-up of performances and activities at the Carrington Pavilion, the Old Dominion Agricultural Complex, VIRginia International Raceway, and more.

Momentum & Media Attention:

Danville and Pittsylvania County have attracted several exciting new economic development projects, that have been recognized with multiple high-profile awards and recognitions, and several notably significant investment projects are currently underway.

It is a new day for the community and state and local media have taken notice and are eager to share the good news about what is happening in the region. This provides the region with a tremendous





opportunity to rebrand as a destination and more thoughtfully relay an authentic and meaningful region narrative.

Novelty and an Appetite for Growth:

The community is welcoming, friendly, and excited about adding tourism to the region's future. This translates into positive experiences for visitors who then bring these experiences home with them and share enthusiasm about the region with their networks - driving more high-value visitation to the region.

History, Architecture and Heritage:

The Danville and Pittsylvania County region has incredible history, architecture, and heritage and offers visitors a front row seat to interesting but previously untold stories about the tobacco and textile industries, agricultural development, the final days of the civil war, civil rights, the integration of competitive sports, the highest levels of professional art, and even the history of rap music.

Agritourism:

In addition to farms, breweries, and vineyards, the region has picturesque tobacco farms, grist mills, and a nationally recognized agricultural complex that offers exciting competitive events and festivals all year round.

Boarding Schools:

In addition to Averett University and Danville Community College, the region is home to the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research, Hargrave Military Academy, and Chatham Hall Boarding School. Each of these institutions is a major driver of overnight and repeat visitation to the region.







WEAKNESSES:

Limited Marketing Efforts to Date:

Danville and Pittsylvania County have not historically benefitted from a comprehensive marketing strategy, or any continuous strategic advertising or public relations effort designed to attract tourists and drive them to regional attractions.

When compared to surrounding areas in both Virginia and North Carolina, the programming and promotion of this area has been historically sporadic, fractured, and severely underfunded.

Disillusioned Stakeholders:

Multiple industry stakeholders noted that they harbor open and significant skepticism about the new tourism program, noting multiple previous false starts, a history of underfunding, and a lack of prioritization across the region. While none of the interviewed stakeholders appeared obstructionist, the pattern they reported witnessing resulted in outspoken concern. That said, each of these stakeholders still chose to participate and provide feedback in the process so it seems any concern can be quickly overcome with clear and consistent stakeholder outreach, transparent communication, and demonstrated progress toward stated goals.

Limited Lodging & Accommodations:

Historically, the area has suffered from limited lodging options which has restricted visitation and entertainment asset investment. Thankfully, however, this is rapidly changing with multiple new hotels planned and under development as well as a growing number of short-term rental facilities.

Siloed Operations:

The tourism industry in Danville and Pittsylvania County is fractured and dispersed. To date, there has been limited cross-industry collaboration which has likely limited efficacy of any one entity's marketing investment. No evidence of a formal lodging or restaurant alliance was found and existing tourism websites are incomplete and out of date.

OPPORTUNITIES:

Destination Development

The new Caesars Virginia Resort is expected to bring 2M new visitors and their discretionary spending to the region each year starting in 2024. This dramatic increase in area visitation is attracting other investors eager to cater to this new regional traffic.

Community leaders have secured developers for several important new anchor projects and the community has participated in strategic planning to help shape the region's future.

Positioning as a Leading Regional Destination

As the heart of Southern Virginia, Danville and Pittsylvania County are well positioned to serve as the travel hub for Southern Virginia. By serving as the centralized activity hub on the south side of the state, the new DMO/DMMO can promote local assets first and still benefit from the established notability of attractions such as the Martinsville Speedway, VIRginia International Raceway, Smith Mountain Lake, and other border area attractions that offer visitors additional rich experiences that strengthen the region's story and asset portfolio.

Product Development

The region has tremendous, high-quality existing assets but has historically done little to package or cross-promote its offerings. By building itineraries and product trails, amplifying opportunities through advertising and public relations outreach, and generally making experiences more easily accessible to travelers, these assets, attractions, and entertainment venues will grow in popularity.

Increasing Marketing Efforts

The region can increase its marketing efforts by promoting its unique attractions and experiences to a broader audience, including through social media and targeted advertising. By leveraging recently conducted market research and taking advantage of one-time ARPA funding, the community can kickstart its program and start realizing immediate economic benefit.

Novelty and Affordability

Since Danville and Pittsylvania County are relatively new on the destination marketing scene, many potential visitors will be curious about all that is happening here. Assets and attractions are affordable which will lower the initial travel barriers and help encourage more visitation in the year ahead.



THREATS:

Competition From Nearby Regions

Danville and Pittsylvania County attract visitors from a three to four-hour drive market radius but these same visitors are also visiting surrounding regions which have historically done a much better job packaging and promoting their offerings.

They will continue to face stiff competition in the years ahead and will have to act strategically and spend competitively to build a program that can outcompete its neighbors.

Economic Downturns

The last few years have been challenging for the tourism economy and the threat of another economic downturn lingers. Historically visitors to the region have not had extraordinarily large disposable incomes. These travelers will be disproportionately affected by any kind of economic recession. New development will help to attract visitors with greater financial stability but these assets and their placement in the region will need to be heavily promoted to build awareness, consideration, and preference with new market segments.

Well-Publicized Economic Struggles

The last twenty years have been challenging for the region and the resulting issues, including crime, economic depression, and financial instability have been well-publicized. It will take intentional effort and investment to rewrite a negative narrative.

Lower than Average Desire for Industry Collaboration

Limited staffing and financial resources, and a demonstrated reticence to lean into collaborating means a greater level of effort will be required from the new DMO staff members to get important new initiatives off the ground. More promotional work will need to be executed locally before the community can expect to reap the full benefits of external promotion.

Workforce Housing

Demand for tourism and hospitality workers is growing exponentially. There is a known housing shortage in the area and these new positions will create even more demand. This need must be addressed to enable the anticipated growth so many are betting on.



Part 2: Tourism Program Goals & Objectives

2023 Tourism Master Plan
Danville & Pittsylvania County



Strategic Goals

Taking a Regional Tourism Program to The Next Level

THE DANVILLE AND PITTSYLVANIA

County region has a relatively siloed but strong existing tourism industry. It also has the commitment of multiple significant investors who are standing ready to help take the region's tourism industry to new heights. All of this will create sustainable new jobs, establish new entertainment sectors, and attract exponentially more visitors to the region each year.

Now, to effectively leverage, cultivate, and harness this growth for the benefit of local citizens, the region recognizes that it must develop a comprehensive tourism program that effectively addresses:

Destination Development -

Planning for adequate infrastructure to accommodate the region's anticipated increase in visitation

Industry Balance & Diversification -

Thoughtful consideration and actionable planning around new product development to meet the needs of diverse traveler profiles and their desire for activities, itineraries, and offerings across all aspects of tourism and the hospitality spectrum

Regional Promotion -

Leverage advertising, public relations, content marketing, and other tools to effectively drive awareness, consideration, preference, selection, and ultimately visitor advocacy

Stakeholder Engagement -

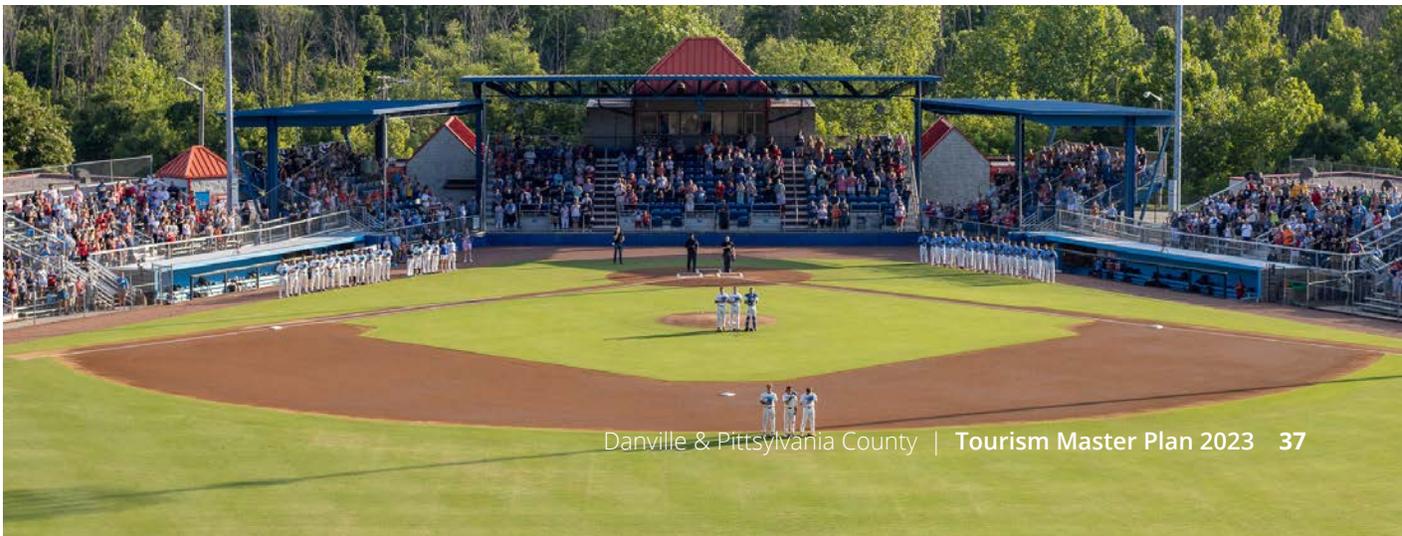
Providing ongoing community, visitor, and industry feedback channels and developing mechanisms for citizen voices to be heard, accounted for, and prioritized in the development process

Operational Maturity -

Transitioning the tourism program from an early-stage Destination Marketing Organization to a mature Destination Marketing and Management Organization (DMMO) to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of this important public service function

Diversity & Sustainably -

Ensuring long-term, predictable regional destination success through forward-leaning strategies that welcome out-of-area visitation, recognizing its economic benefits while sustainably protecting local resources, people, and quality of life



Destination Development

Ensuring Adequate Growth, Infrastructure with Investment Planning, and Experience Design

When it comes to transportation, the region has some notable advantages. Because the City of Danville once had a larger population than it does now, city officials report that its road infrastructure can already accommodate the 2M additional visitors expected annually after Caesars Virginia opens.

Highway Access

Located in the central Piedmont area along the North Carolina border, the City of Danville is a small metropolitan area that sits within the boundaries of Pittsylvania County Virginia. The region is connected by US-58 as its major east-west route and US 29/designated I-785, and VA 86 as the major north-south routes. US 29/designated I-785 has an expressway bypass around the City of Danville on the east that is interstate grade condition and there is a US 58 expressway bypass already planned for the south side of the city as well.

Bus Service Access

Local - Danville Transit operates a local bus system with 11 routes to serve the Danville community. The Mass Transit System offers flexible, convenient,

and economical service options including Fixed Route service that operates from 6 A.M. to 6 P.M., Monday through Saturday.

Danville Transit's Transfer Center is located at 515 Spring Street and the mass transit administrative maintenance facility is in the Public Works complex, which is located at 1002 South Boston Road, Danville, VA 24540.

Danville Transit's Reserve A Ride Service provides weekday and Saturday service to any location within the City limits of Danville and Cane Creek Centre Industrial Park. A transfer may be necessary, depending upon demand, time of day, and trip location. Trolley buses are used in Reserve A Ride service for large passenger groups of ten or more.

Bus Service to and from Washington DC

Amtrak's Virginia Breeze bus service offers the Capital Connector and Piedmont Express daily northbound and southbound with a stop in Danville.

Passenger Rail Access

Amtrak provides limited passenger service to Danville using the Norfolk-Southern commercial lines. Fiscal Year 2022 marked a period of rebound for the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation after challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ridership in Virginia declined 61% between FY20 and FY21 and while ridership has not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels, it





has rebounded — a 56% increase in FY22 compared to the prior fiscal year.

Danville’s Fiscal Year 2022 Annual Ticket Revenue was \$546,335 and station ridership exceeded 5k (5,765). Ridership was quantified by people who got on or off the train in Danville.

The Crescent line transports approximately 200-300k people per year, many of whom just pass through Danville. These quasi-visitors could present an opportunity for out-of-home advertising visible via train.

Danville is bisected by one of Norfolk Southern’s major north-south rail lines and several spurs extend to industries in Danville off the main line.

Air Travel Access

The Danville Regional Airport (KDAN) is the largest public general aviation airport in south central Virginia. Located on the east side of Danville, the airport features a primary 5900-foot Precision ILS runway and a 510x425-foot south ramp that can accommodate regional jet series aircraft up to 70 passengers. These terminal building recently underwent a complete interior renovation, and is specifically designed as a welcoming, business-friendly environment.

The Danville Pittsylvania county region is also within a short drive of several regional commercial airports including Greensboro’s Piedmont Triad International Airport (PTI ~45 miles away), Lynchburg Regional Airport (LYH ~52 miles), Raleigh-Durham International Airport (RDU ~60 miles), and Roanoke-Blacksburg Regional Airport

(ROA ~60 miles). Charlotte International Airport is just under two and a half hours away (CLT ~143 miles). The closest active international Airport is RDU and the largest international airport in the vicinity is CLT.

In 2012, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) provided \$10 million for a runway upgrade that included resurfacing the airport’s primary runway and improved visibility for takeoffs and landings.

Averett University uses the Danville Regional Airport facility to operate a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)-approved Part 141 flight school and offers classes for private pilot, commercial pilot, flight instructors, and instrument rating. Their accredited aeronautics program offers a Bachelor of Science in Aerospace Management with specializations in Aviation Business and Flight Operations as well as multiple aeronautics related professional certificate programs.

Mass Transit Planning

The City of Danville’s Mass Transit Department recently released a new transportation strategic plan, a 10-year vision and guidance document designed to help prioritize the maintenance and improvement of public transportation services in the region

The Danville Office of Economic Development and Tourism should continue to work with key partners including Pittsylvania County officials, VDOT (Virginia Department of Transportation) and NCDOT (North Carolina Department of Transportation) to communicate needs and support emerging transportation solutions that effectively

Continued on Page 40

address all visitor and local access, accessibility, wayfinding, and traffic concerns.

Telecommunications

Many of today's travelers depend on virtual access to stay connected to their homes and workplaces. They often use virtual tools for navigation and routinely promote their travels via social media. Because of these expectations, strong telecommunication networks and generally accessible connectivity is important to many visitors.

While the more populated sections of the region generally have strong internet and wireless service availability the entire region is not fully and adequately connected. Local leaders should continue to push for enhanced telecommunications services and public access points to help close this digital divide.

Placemaking & Beautification

Placemaking is a creative and inclusive process that brings people together to develop an area's social, economic, and cultural identity. Placemaking creates focal points within neighborhoods, towns, communities, and areas with projects that present opportunities to highlight unique aspects of a region's history and draw attention to areas that need improvement. These projects encourage people to feel established in the places they live, provide a window to which a visitor can better experience the culture of a community they visit, encourage greater civic participation, and drive wealth in communities by encouraging visitors to stay longer and visit more locations. Positive visual impact stimulates private investment and complements other community development efforts.

The River District Façade Improvement Grant Program, sponsored by Solex Architecture and the Danville Office of Economic Development and Tourism, was designed to assist property and business owners in rehabilitating facades for commercial buildings and businesses in the Danville River District for the purpose of creating a positive visual impact, stimulating private investment, and complementing other community development efforts. Matching 50/50 grants are available in amounts up to \$5,000 per recipient and the program

has distributed more than \$100k to date to help bring important beautification initiatives to the Danville River District boundary. A similar grant option on fronting North Main Street, between Riverside Dr. and Thomas St. Projects must be smaller than \$75k total to be eligible for this program.

The Danville Neighborhood Development Corporation (DNCD) has spent many years working to engage residents, neighborhood associations, and other community stakeholders in three Danville neighborhoods including White Rock, Westmoreland, and the community surrounding Danville Community College and Cardinal Village, in assessing the condition of properties, community planning, and completing placemaking projects. With the help of partners, including the City of Danville, the Community Foundation of the Dan River Region, and the Danville Regional Foundation, the DNDC launched the Danville Home Repair Blitz program in 2018 and the Danville Neighborhood Leadership Conference in 2019.

In 2022, the DNDC began to pilot a new initiative called Mission 180: Repair – Rebuild – Revitalize on the 100 and 200 blocks of Kemper Road. Mission 180 focuses on improving housing conditions and property values on targeted street blocks via a combination of home/capital improvements and resident leadership capacity building. Their goal was to make a positive, measurable impact on market conditions to the extent that substantial rehab and new infill housing will become more economically feasible.

In the summer of 2022, the Danville Parks and Recreation Department also began planning a public art trail with community input.

The Danville Office of Economic Development and Tourism should actively continue to support each of these existing efforts, facilitate additional new placemaking programs focused on encouraging tourism and improving quality of life county-wide, and encourage all parties to find ways to tie these projects to the new regional tourism brand to create more experiential marketing opportunities that unify the region, welcome visitors, create new tourism product throughout the community.

**“EVERY INDUSTRY
PLAYER NEEDS TO BE
THINKING ABOUT HOW
TO PUT THE LOCAL
COMMUNITY FIRST.**

If we do that, we’re going to see some progress toward long-term sustainability.”

- PETER DEBRINE
*UNESCO Powering Travel
Expedia Group Podcast, 2022*



Industry Balance & Diversification

Building Sustainability with Tourism, Business Attraction, Recruitment, and Cross Promotion

THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA works hard to attract “abundance travelers,” visitors that appreciate all that the state has to offer across many different interest categories. This is for good reason. Travelers who are interested in abundance tend to stay longer and spend more. Similarly, diversification is key to a healthy local tourism economy. While Danville and Pittsylvania County are undoubtedly poised to benefit from some larger-than-average new assets

coming into the community, leaders should be wary of overreliance on any one business or segment of the industry.

Consistently, across all local market research gathered to date, citizens shared that they wanted the region to be known as a friendly, welcoming community, open to all. Accordingly, care will need to be taken to ensure all visitors, regardless of age or primary interests, are met with an easy-to-identify selection of activities that will help them enjoy their stay in the area.



“FURTHER DEVELOPMENT PLANNING EFFORTS SHOULD BE PURSUED TO ENSURE THAT VISITORS CAN FIND OFFERINGS THAT BOTH APPEAL TO, AND ARE ACCESSIBLE TO, ALL AGES AND FAMILY STAGES.”

Currently, assets for older and very young visitors are more abundant than for some of the visitors that often fall in age ranges in between. For instance, gaming and antiquing tend to appeal disproportionately to retired segments of the population, while certain food and beverage scenes may skew toward young professionals. Danville and Pittsylvania County currently have established offerings open to all ages, but further development planning efforts should be pursued to ensure that visitors can find offerings that both appeal to and are accessible to all ages and family stages.

To make the most of all investments in tourism, hospitality, and economic development, community leaders should continue to invest in creating distinct in-market destinations, places, and spaces, within the larger regional destination footprint. They should also look for creative ways to strategically invest in the shared resources required to effectively cross-promote each of these subsidiary areas. This coordination and visitor journey mapping will provide a real economic lift to each area, but it will also benefit the entire region by encouraging each visitor to stay longer to see more during their visit.

These efforts can and should include:

- A regional tourism website with itinerary-building capabilities
- A robust events calendar that serves as a hub of regional information and an invitation to outsiders to participate in all that the community offers
- Physical maps, advertising, and anchor asset brochures to help publicize the area's offerings

- Placemaking - special art, design, lighting, or other space enhancements designed to create a “cause for pause” and/or “moments of pleasure” for visitors
- Instagram-able moments - photo-ready spots that intentionally invite visitors to capture their experience and share it with the world via social media
- Wayfinding - physical and virtual signage throughout the region to help visitors know where they are and where they could be headed

Accordingly, the region should work together to create distinct places for visitors to feel welcome in each of the anchor areas that help define the region (Chatham, Gretna, Hurt, The River District, Schoolfield, North Danville, and similar).

Each of these investments will benefit participating localities individually but they will also collectively work together to encourage visitors to stay longer, spend more, and share in promoting the destination with their larger peer set and social networks paying dividends for years to come.

While the region has adequate assets to support its existing visitation patterns, the anticipated increase in visitation pending will mean that more hotel beds, restaurants, and entertainment venues will be required to adequately leverage the opportunity ahead. Local leaders should continue to work to attract a diverse array of new businesses that can serve a wide variety of visitor interests across a wide selection of interest areas.

Continued on Page 44

Special care should be taken to support destination development efforts and private investment that will further enhance the region's offerings as they relate to:

- Arts & Culture Cultivation and Placemaking
- History and Architecture Preservation and Storytelling
- Adventure Recreation and Accessibility
- Family-Friendly Itinerary Development
- Food and Beverage
- Hotels and Meeting Space
- Local Festivals and Events
- Affordable Workforce Housing

In interviews and focus groups, multiple citizens and stakeholders expressed a desire to see the region continue to develop family-friendly attractions. While assets such as the Danville Science Center and The Tank Museum were listed as appropriate and highly valued for younger children and the new splash pad at the Riverfront Park was also cited, community representatives called out a need for entertainment options appropriate for older children and teenagers.

Trampoline parks, indoor skydiving, mini-golf, go-karts, arcades, batting cages, sports centers, hobby

shops, river beaches, or water park attractions might help fill this void.

Another area of concern for stakeholders was whether the region had enough activities, restaurants, and bars to keep young adults and the hospitality workforce entertained but many noted that this was an area where the City of Danville, in particular, had made significant progress in recent years. Participants noted that they expected this development to continue and that they hoped that all the recent development in both the River District and the Schoolfield areas would lead to more local businesses staying open later as well.

Recruiting these kinds of businesses is possible but much can also be done by letting the local business community know the demand is there and that local and regional officials are supportive. The Danville Office of Economic Development and Tourism should partner with the local Chamber of Commerce, the Launch Place, the local colleges, the Small Business Development Center (SBDC), and local media to get the word out that the city is reviewing policies to ensure they are friendly to these types of enterprises.

Additionally, the region might consider if there are opportunities to develop out the following three big ideas:



Moonshots

Great Programs Start with Bold Audaciously Big Ideas

1. **Leveraging a large old building to build a sound stage.**

By partnering with the state film commission there is an opportunity for Danville and Pittsylvania County to capture a share of the east coast movie and television show production business. Both Virginia and North Carolina are competitive in this space and Virginia, in particular, is a favorite for period pieces, historical documentaries, and productions focused on political, government, or action narratives.

However, the state currently lacks a large-scale sound stage but has a well-used production farm with a wide variety of film-ready sets just north of the region. Sound stages are soundproof buildings that allow for controlled filming conditions. Danville's large mill buildings have large windowless areas with thick walls that could serve as a strong backbone on which to develop a cost-effective offering. Working with the state, the region could develop an offering that would attract significant area tax revenue, that could complement the state's strategy, and bring additional creative and technical jobs to the area and this workforce could be a natural extension of the types of talent needed to manage the new high-end entertainment venues coming to the area as a part of the Caesars Virginia project.

Further, the region's central border region could help attract post-production work from a variety of surrounding states making Virginia more competitive with North Carolina and Georgia which have both been aggressively growing market share over the past few years. Should there be interest, a conversation with the state film office about needs, benefits, plans, and possible locations would be an appropriate next step to further vet this idea.



2. **Build a high-end public bike park with rentals and training classes.**

Danville and Pittsylvania County could capitalize on their established reputation as a premier biking region, by proactively advertising the quality of local trails and could attract more regional visitation and earned media attention by building a high-end public bike park. The region should look to Boise, Idaho's Military Reserve Bike Park as a model. Military Reserve Bike Park is a 20-acre public park that features a variety of bike trails, jumps, and obstacles suitable for riders of all skill levels. Located inside the city of Boise, it was built in partnership with the Southwest Idaho Mountain Bike Association and opened to the public in 2014. The park features a pump track, a dirt jump zone, a slopestyle course, and a flow trail. The pump track is a circular track with small rollers and banked turns that riders can navigate without pedaling. The dirt jump zone has a series of jumps and berms for riders to practice their jumping skills. The slopestyle course is designed for more advanced riders and features larger jumps and obstacles. The flow trail is a one-way downhill trail with berms and jumps that rider can navigate at high speeds. The park is open to the public free of charge and is a popular destination for local and visiting riders. It is maintained by the city of Boise and volunteers from the Southwest Idaho Mountain Bike Association. The park has helped to establish Boise as a top destination and has contributed to the city's reputation as an outdoor recreation hub. Visitors and locals alike flock to the park to build and test their skills but also to watch riders challenge themselves in a unique outdoor setting.

Continued on Page 46

3 **Develop Iconic Regional Transportation.**

The City of Danville and Pittsylvania County should work together to build high-profile visitor transportation designed to encourage visitors to explore the region. Venice has gondolas, San Francisco has street cars, Disney has a Monorail, India has Tuk Tuks, and many cities now have scooters. If local officials can create a distinctive mode of transportation that can be unique to this region, it will in and of itself become an attraction and one that will help drive group visitation and ensure leisure travelers plan enough time in their stay to use it. In the process, they'll find it will take them to more places to explore. Special e-bike stations with their own trails or electric mini-car or driverless vehicle roads that connect Schoolfield, the River District, and North Danville could be a starting point for further discussion, brainstorming, and local creativity. Regardless of the final direction, these kinds of transportation fleets also offer a captive audience. Consider using audio to enhance the visitor experience by layering on cultural heritage tours, historical facts, and cross-promotional advertisements that help inform and delight local visitors.

**“TRAVELERS
WILL VOTE
WITH THEIR
VALUES:**

**Travelers weigh
many variables
when they
are booking
elements of
a trip: price,
convenience,
safety,
flexibility, and
more.”**

**- EXPEDIA 2023 TRAVEL
INDEX REPORT**

Wayfinding & Gateway Signage

Helping Visitors Explore

WAYFINDING IS THE process of planning ways for locals and visitors to orient themselves in a physical space. Directional signage, kiosks, maps, virtual applications, murals, and more can all be used to help people more easily navigate from place to place. Wayfinding can be designed for both pedestrian and car-based traffic and is critically important to effective tourism programs because visitors are more likely to be unfamiliar with their surroundings and if they feel lost or disoriented in an unfamiliar setting, they are more likely to leave early. Good wayfinding helps enhance experiences and provides an excellent opportunity to reinforce a brand promise and tie the visitor's new memories to the place, creating positive experiences that build affinity and increase the likelihood of a return trip.

Danville and Pittsylvania County should work together with Parks and Recreation, Public Works, and state and local transportation organizations to develop and implement:

1. **A consistently themed, branded, clear, and concise signage system for the region:** Signage should be designed both for vehicular and pedestrian traffic and be easily readable and understandable, with clear directional signs, maps, and symbols that intuitively guide visitors to top districts, destinations, and attractions. The Danville Office of Economic Development and Tourism should advocate for consistent signage throughout the region, keeping colors, fonts, and symbols consistent with the new regional brand, and reinforce the regional investment in tourism marketing to help avoid visitor confusion, and enhance recognition and affinity through repeat exposure.

2. **Tourist Maps & Interactive Digital Tools:** Both print and digital maps and interactive tools such as mobile apps and digital kiosks can be used to enhance the visitor experience and help travelers navigate around a destination more easily. These same tools can be used as resources to help cross-promote attractions and be leveraged to drive up the average length of stay for visitors in the Danville Pittsylvania County region. When developing these tools carefully consider the variety in visitor journey types - keep in mind travelers who visit by car, who come in on bus, train, or airplane, and consider what locations will be most important to them accordingly, ie. transport hubs, public restrooms, public internet access, lodging, emergency room access, accommodations, and attractions.

Continued on Page 48



3. **Identify landmark navigation points:** The DMO should take time to define local landmarks that can be used as consistent reference points inside and across the community. Find ways to highlight these locations with extra or unique lighting, murals, signage, and other highlighting techniques to add to their visual prominence, and then consistently use these locations as reference points to help visitors find their way. Encourage ambassadors, industry frontline workers, and local citizens to share directions in a similar manner.
4. **Incorporate wayfinding into the destination design:** Wayfinding should be integrated into the overall design of the destination, and each embedded attraction. Consider wayfinding as a part of your road and trail planning, park design, and more.
5. **Test and evaluate wayfinding:** Before implementation, it is a best practice to test and evaluate the effectiveness of wayfinding with temporary signage and placements to ensure that the planned communications channels meet the needs of visitors and enhance their overall experience before installing expensive final signage.
6. **Consider pathways, lighting, color coding, symbols, and audio cues:**
 - a. **Pathways and lighting:** The design of pathways and lighting can also be used to guide visitors. For example, lighting can be used to highlight pathways and landmarks, making them easier to follow.
 - b. **Color-coded systems:** Color-coded systems can be used to guide visitors, with different colors representing different areas or types of attractions. This type of wayfinding is particularly effective in large and complex destinations but should be built out in alignment with the new brand identity package so as not to cause confusion or fracture a visitor's understanding of the brand and all that it communicates.
 - c. **Icons and symbols:** Icons and symbols can be used to reach a wider audience, making signage more intuitive, and help international travelers understand and orient even when they don't speak the local language.
 - d. **Audio cues:** Audio cues such as announcements, music, or audio guides can also be used to provide visitors guidance, information, and added context, value, or cultural understanding.
7. **Gateway signage:** Gateway signage marks the primary entrances to a region and defines the boundaries of an experience. It helps reinforce a brand promise, sets apart a special place, and builds anticipation for visitors. Once the new brand is established, Danville and Pittsylvania County should consider developing gateway signage to mark entrances to the region on all major highways, along passenger trail routes, and on rooftops under prominent flight paths.



Nana Karen's ON MAIN



Marketing & Promotion

Lead Generation, Management, and Leverage



VISION

Danville and Pittsylvania County will soon be the leading family-friendly visitor destination in Southern Virginia. Both the City and the County will soon be filled with memorable and enjoyable things to see and do that capitalize on the region's abundant activities, offerings, and delights.

OBJECTIVES

- Leverage the economic lift provided by a thriving tourism industry to drive and support sustainable high quality of life for locals.
- Support local business success by attracting visitors to the region, lengthening average visitation timelines and economic impact, and encouraging repeat visits from target audiences with discretionary income, enthusiasm for the destination, and respect for the local cultural landscape including the area's people, places, history, and future goals.
- Encourage and support positive media and influencer attention - highlight abundant things to see and do, appeal to multiple age groups and demographic segments, local culture, regional differentiation, local beauty, area history, regional affordability, and other quality of life and visitor indicators.
- Support group travel, visitation, and bookings to increase regional brand exposure and economic impact (recommend a focus on Meeting Incentives Conferences and Events Market "MICE" market with special attention on conferences, weddings, and sports recreation).



MARKETING ACTIVITIES & PROMOTION PLANNING

The Danville and Pittsylvania County Tourism Marketing Program will provide comprehensive support for the region's businesses and visitors by developing a robust marketing program that includes:

- Tourism Branding and Brand Management
- Advertising and Promotion
- Public Relations, Earned Media, and Reputation Management
- Experiential Marketing and Destination Development
- Content and Digital Marketing
- Operational Governance and Regional Leadership
- Industry Event and Conference Participation

Branding:

Danville and Pittsylvania County's Destination Marketing Organization should prioritize the swift development and launch of a new brand to help unify the region and anchor promotional messaging for the destination.

Positioning:

Danville and Pittsylvania County's travel, tourism, and hospitality brand should be centered around the region's rich and diverse assets and experiences. Area activities should be promoted according to six narrative themes:

- Adventure Recreation
- Arts & Culture
- History and Architecture
- High-Quality Food and Beverage
- Exciting Local Festivals and Events
- Family Friendly Activities

The region's promotional voice, headline formulas, and photo styles should all be carefully defined to support the destination's vision, demonstrating abundance of offerings, exciting itineraries, and fun and relaxation for all ages and traveler types.

This structure will help visitors plan meaningful itineraries and continuously emphasize and cross-promote the abundant recreation, relaxation, and entertainment offerings available across the region.

Continued on Page 52



Continued from Page 51

Naming:

Because Danville and Pittsylvania County are long and distinct names with unique histories, assets, and offerings, an entirely new name should be selected to help reintroduce the area to visitors and unify the destination as a single place with diverse assets. A name that is short, memorable, friendly, and new but that ties back to a common link between the communities will be preferable.

Visual Identity System:

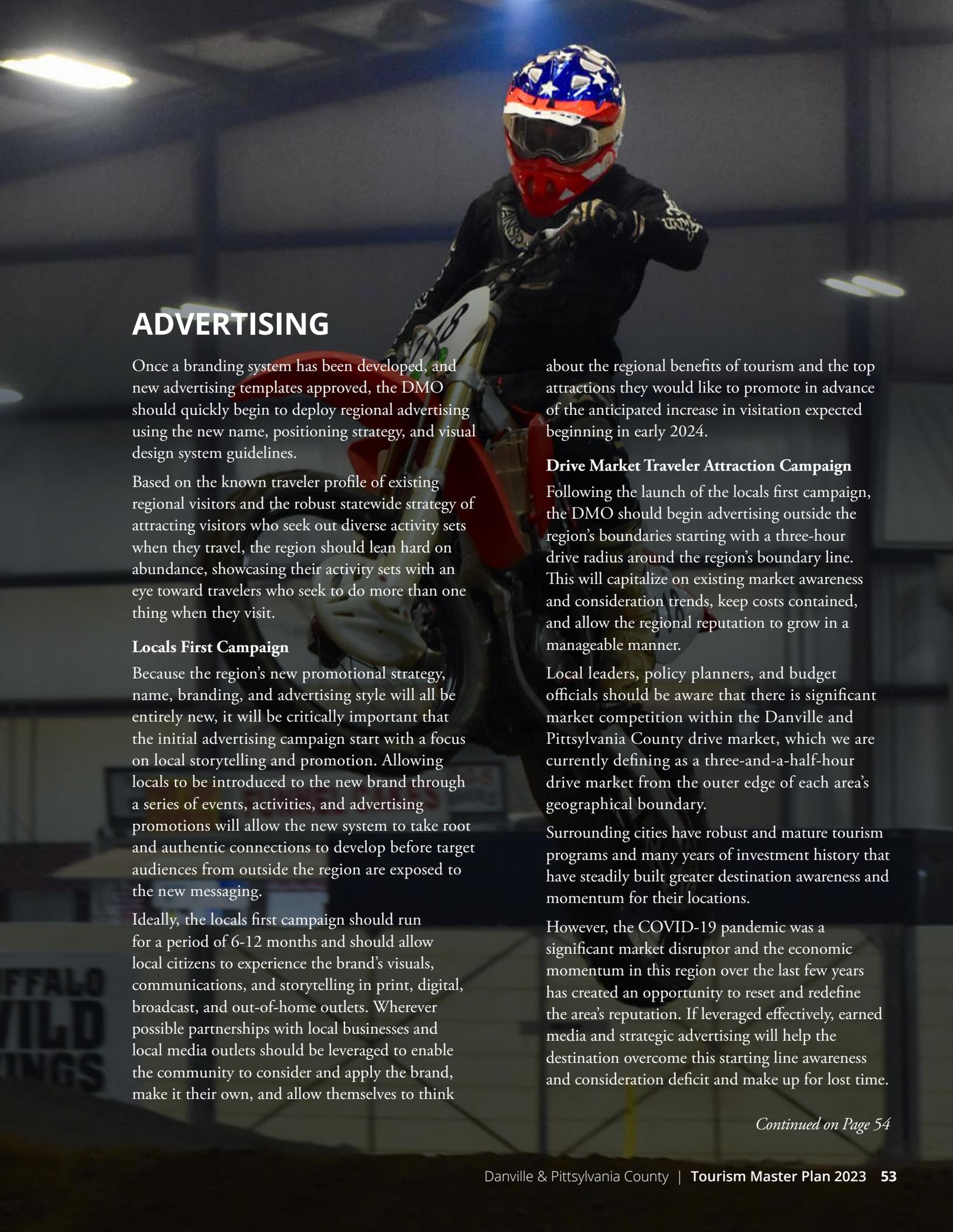
The new brand should include primary and secondary logos, color palettes, pre-set font families, elements, and textures that all work together under detailed design guidelines to clearly communicate the region's value and diversity as a destination. With many end-users and locations to brand and limited resources with which to deploy, the destination marketing organization should take steps to ensure that, to every extent possible, brand usage rules tightly adhere to the provided guidelines. This will protect the region's investment, help unify the region, and more quickly build area recognition with target visitors.

Usage:

The new brand should be deployed consistently by the destination marketing organization, but it should also be leveraged consistently by regional businesses, assets, and entertainment venues via cross-promotion to create a unified regional identity, provide and enhance community connections across assets, and drive maximum economic lift and impact across the region quickly and consistently.

Advertisement Templates:

The new brand should include sample print and digital advertisements, tradeshow and event displays, and other environmental application examples of the final concept to help demonstrate how the brand will be used to actively promote and unify the region.



ADVERTISING

Once a branding system has been developed, and new advertising templates approved, the DMO should quickly begin to deploy regional advertising using the new name, positioning strategy, and visual design system guidelines.

Based on the known traveler profile of existing regional visitors and the robust statewide strategy of attracting visitors who seek out diverse activity sets when they travel, the region should lean hard on abundance, showcasing their activity sets with an eye toward travelers who seek to do more than one thing when they visit.

Locals First Campaign

Because the region's new promotional strategy, name, branding, and advertising style will all be entirely new, it will be critically important that the initial advertising campaign start with a focus on local storytelling and promotion. Allowing locals to be introduced to the new brand through a series of events, activities, and advertising promotions will allow the new system to take root and authentic connections to develop before target audiences from outside the region are exposed to the new messaging.

Ideally, the locals first campaign should run for a period of 6-12 months and should allow local citizens to experience the brand's visuals, communications, and storytelling in print, digital, broadcast, and out-of-home outlets. Wherever possible partnerships with local businesses and local media outlets should be leveraged to enable the community to consider and apply the brand, make it their own, and allow themselves to think

about the regional benefits of tourism and the top attractions they would like to promote in advance of the anticipated increase in visitation expected beginning in early 2024.

Drive Market Traveler Attraction Campaign

Following the launch of the locals first campaign, the DMO should begin advertising outside the region's boundaries starting with a three-hour drive radius around the region's boundary line. This will capitalize on existing market awareness and consideration trends, keep costs contained, and allow the regional reputation to grow in a manageable manner.

Local leaders, policy planners, and budget officials should be aware that there is significant market competition within the Danville and Pittsylvania County drive market, which we are currently defining as a three-and-a-half-hour drive market from the outer edge of each area's geographical boundary.

Surrounding cities have robust and mature tourism programs and many years of investment history that have steadily built greater destination awareness and momentum for their locations.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic was a significant market disruptor and the economic momentum in this region over the last few years has created an opportunity to reset and redefine the area's reputation. If leveraged effectively, earned media and strategic advertising will help the destination overcome this starting line awareness and consideration deficit and make up for lost time.

Continued on Page 54

To do this well, the region should double down on this moment and launch their advertising campaign with bold media placements that confidently reintroduce the region to your target drive market audiences, showcasing leading assets and clearly defined itineraries grouped according to the six positioning categories outlined above.

During the research and discovery work phase of this project, citizens and industry stakeholders alike noted that, while they were happy to see large investments from new entertainment providers in the region, they hoped to avoid an overreliance on any one business or industry in the future, and very specifically didn't want to see one organization or asset dominate external storytelling about what the region had to offer visitors.

With significant new investment coming into the region, the best way to ensure that this desired balance and diversification of market perception is achieved, is to thoughtfully and competitively fund and curate a highly effective and continuous paid media campaign that promotes the welcoming nature and full abundance of the region.

Given the current size and staffing levels of Danville's Office of Economic Development and Tourism staff, and the time it will take to grow the organization into a fully market competitive operation with robust media planning and creative execution capabilities, the region should consider retaining the services of an established marketing agency who can help competitively execute creative and negotiate media buys with an eye toward public accountability.

An agency that knows the media markets where you will be buying placements, has a robust knowledge of the tourism marketing landscape, and that has demonstrated relationships and past performance can help Danville and Pittsylvania County effectively negotiate their investment planning, benchmark their share of voice, measure reach, and report out on demonstrable market impact.

Advertising Channel Allocations

Regardless of whether the program is run internally or externally, over the next few years, digital advertising must anchor your advertising investment. These placements will provide the greatest trackability and return on investment (ROI), allowing new messages to be quickly tested and calibrated for optimum market reception. This approach will also help the program capture real-time audience intelligence and conversion tracking, and deliver the clearest, most accurate customer journey information back to your team.

Under this plan, approximately 50% of the total annual advertising budget should be applied to a digital program that allows for layered targeting and ongoing research which allows for multi-pronged behavioral, contextual, geographical, and demographic targeting.

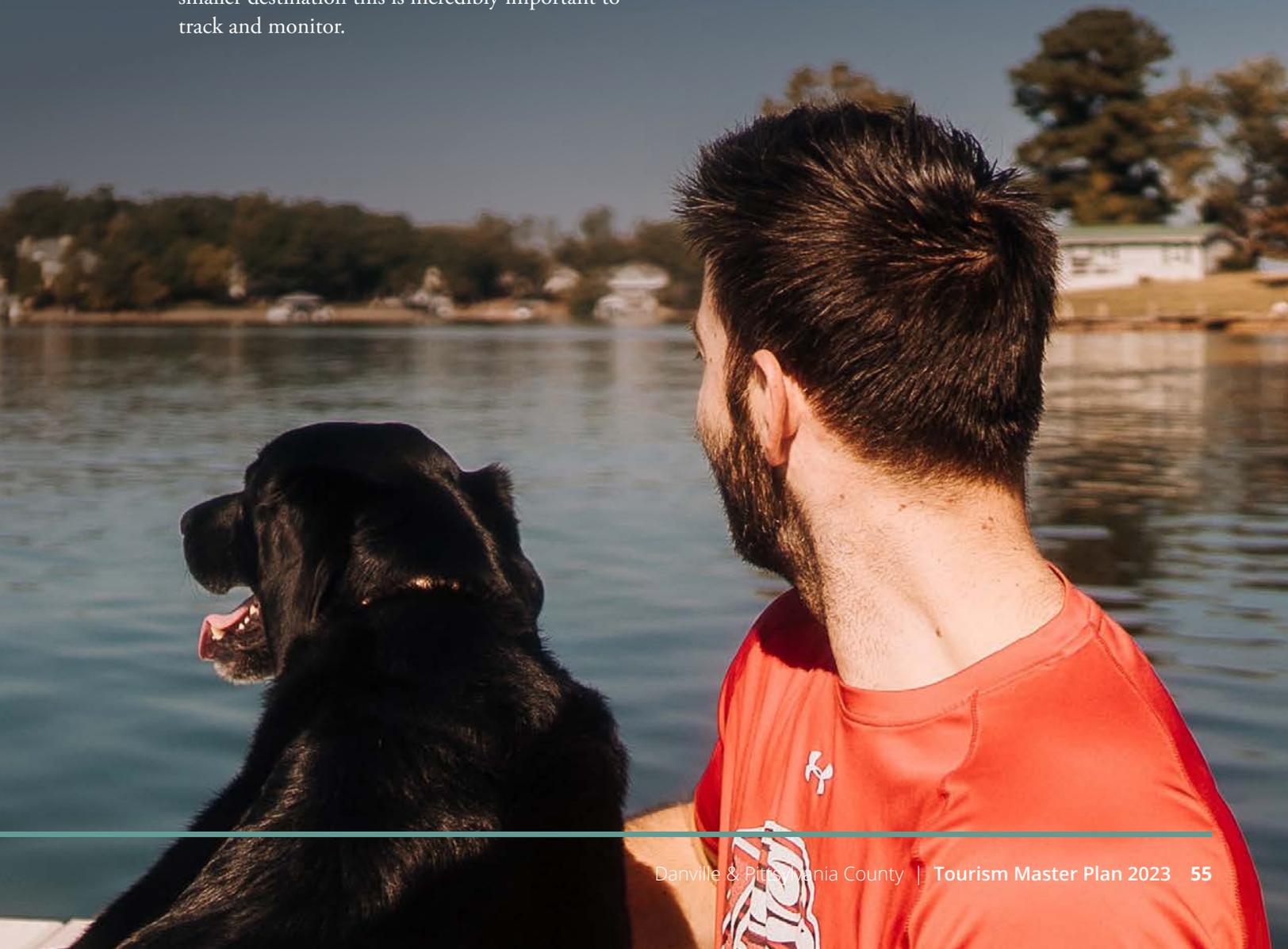
Comparatively, 30%-35% of the total marketing budget should be allocated to print and broadcast placements. These higher-profile attention-grabbing ads will reach a larger audience earlier in the buyer's journey. They will help add market prestige and push net new consideration at a greater rate, but they will not convert into trackable visitation behavior in quite the same way. Still, because the region's brand, positioning, and messaging will all be new, these more disruptive placements will create the "cause for pause" needed to drive new consideration and ultimately new conversions.

Finally, strategic events and conference participation should be further reinforced with ~5-10% of the overarching advertising spend.

When planning for the upcoming advertising program, it will be critically important that the Danville Office of Economic Development and Tourism leverage strategic partnerships, state and regional resources and co-op programs to ensure your program provides maximum reach and desired impact.

The Virginia Tourism Corporation routinely offers matching grant programs, special negotiated rates, research, and staff resources that can help your program grow and compete. Additionally, regionally based programs, large regional employers, and strategic partners are also often willing to match funding when a specific initiative can support a common goal. However, before taking advantage of any discount program or matching grant opportunity, it is important that whoever is negotiating the buy fully understand standard market rates, program restrictions, complete life cycle activation costs, and the level of reporting effort required to take full advantage of acceleration resources. Often these programs can be incredibly advantageous, but it is worth noting that there are times when the “deals” or program requirements end-up “costing” localities more than they save – often in required manpower or restrictions. As a smaller destination this is incredibly important to track and monitor.

Similarly, when purchasing advertising through multiple channels it is important to be wary of how all digital purchases and add-on incentives interact. Many digital markets are auction based. That means a free asset in one place may drive up your base cost somewhere else. Hiring or partnering with a trained digital media buyer to ensure these kinds of overlaps don't inadvertently drive up your costs or rebalance your marketing mix can be incredibly valuable and save far more than it costs.



EXPERIENTIAL DESIGN

When a region advertises as a destination, it implicitly introduces a brand promise to market. Experiential marketing helps connect the pre-visit experience and reputation to the actual visitor experience once they've arrived.

To unify the region and connect local experiences to the brand promise that will soon be advertised, the Danville Office of Economic Development and Tourism will work with local businesses, non-profits, and other government agencies on placemaking initiatives and new development

projects that connect and deliver on the new brand promise across the community. These efforts are likely to include new product development (events, trails, facilities, business attraction), business support (façade grants, signage support, wayfinding), transportation initiatives (to move people into and across the region more efficiently), public art, and beautification programs.

Experiential marketing can also bring a taste of the local experience and brand promise to a group of people who have not yet visited.



EVENTS & CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION

Each year, the Danville Office of Economic Development and Tourism should be expected to serve as the region's representatives in industry associations, conferences, and events.

At a minimum, as a regional destination marketing organization in the state of Virginia, involvement should include:

- Annual attendance at the VA1 Governor's Tourism Summit

- Membership and Participation in VADMO - *The Virginia Association of Destination Marketing Organizations*
- Membership and Participation in VRLTA - *The Virginia Restaurant, Lodging, and Travel Association*

Additionally, there are several industry associations, conferences, and events that will help accelerate the region's marketing efforts and should be built into your programmatic outreach as resources allow.

GROUP TRAVEL, MEETINGS, INCENTIVES, CONFERENCES, AND EVENT SALES RECRUITMENT

ABA – The American Bus Association is the most trusted motorcoach, group tour, and travel association in the industry. They publish Destinations Magazine, a guide to North America’s best group travel destinations, state-by-state itineraries, and planning calendars.

AENC – Association Executives of North Carolina is the premier trade organization for association executives in North Carolina. Members include CEOs and staff of associations across the state, as well as representatives from the association service and hospitality industries.

MPI – Meeting Professionals International’s global network of local chapters help activate, educate, and support meeting planners and other professional connectors. MPI serves the entirety of the meeting and event industry, regardless of need, audience, or specialization. The organization empowers communities to visualize and execute one-of-a-kind experiences that inspire gathering groups to evolve their outlooks, reexamine their preconceptions, and take positive action.

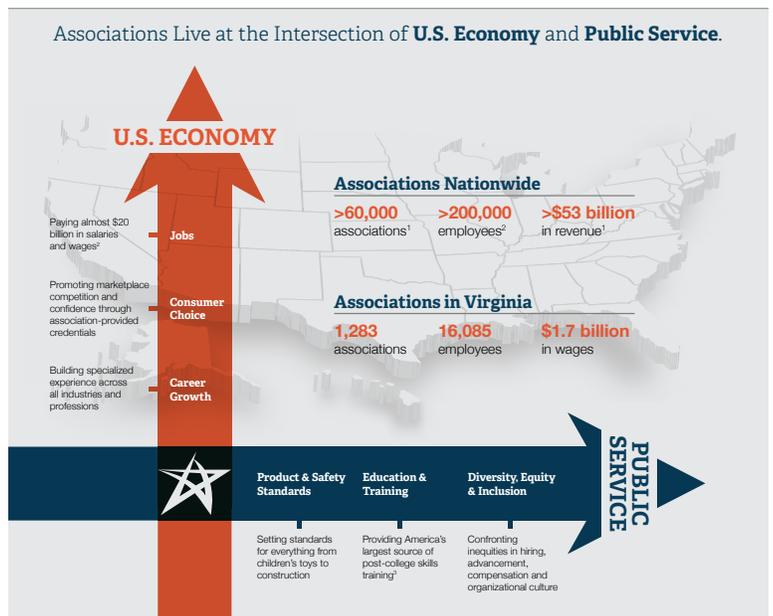
NTA – The National Tour Association is the gathering place — in-person and online for packaged-travel professionals: tour operators, travel advisors, and people from the places and experiences that make memorable itineraries. NTA publishes a range of travel industry destination reviews,

data, statistics, and fact sheets. They host the Annual National Tour Association Travel Exchange conference each year, featuring the best experiences from every U.S. state, Canadian province, and 30+ countries worldwide.

VSAE – Virginia Society of Association Executives is the only association in Virginia that exclusively serves the Commonwealth’s association management industry. With more than 400 members, their events and conferences are rich with decision-makers.



American associations contribute in direct and significant ways to U.S. economic stability and societal advancement. They help build up vital industries, professions, workers, businesses and communities.



[New Video: The Power of Associations is the Power of America](#)

[The Essential Pillars and Purpose of American Associations](#)

¹IRS Data Book 2019, North American Industry Classification System (NAICS), U.S. Census Bureau.
²Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019 Annual Averages, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW).
³IRS Data Book 2016, NAICS (North American Industry Classification System), U.S. Census Bureau.



asaecenter.org
 powerofa.org
 in

PUBLIC RELATIONS & EARNED MEDIA ASSOCIATIONS

MATPRA – The Mid-Atlantic Tourism Public Relations Alliance is a cohesive unit of regional tourism partners encompassing Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Washington, D.C., and West Virginia that serves travel journalists by offering resources that ignore geographic boundaries. Common threads and regional highlights help provide more stories for journalists, and more positive earned media attention and local business coverage for communities.

PRSA Blue Ridge – The Public Relations Society of America Blue Ridge chapter is a professional association serving Central and Southwest Virginia public relations practitioners. Founded in 1992, the chapter brings together professionals to enhance the practice, provide an exchange of experiences and ideals, and promote professional development.

HISTORY, HERITAGE, AND CULTURE

WTACH – The World Tourism Association for Culture and Heritage (WTACH) is the global authority on the protection and preservation of cultural heritage assets through the development of responsible, sustainable, and ethical tourism practices and policies. As a globally recognized and respected NGO, they bring together public, private, community-based, and specialist academic sector organizations to assist Governments, Donors, Destinations, and the Tourism sector as a whole, achieve their long-term goals and objectives while minimizing the risks associated with inadequate or ineffective Cultural Heritage Tourism (CHT) planning. The World Tourism Association for Culture and Heritage (WTACH) is the global authority on the protection and preservation of cultural heritage assets through the development of responsible, sustainable, and ethical tourism practices and policies.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS, TRAINING, ADVOCACY, RECOGNITION AND COLLABORATION

DI – Destinations International is the definitive resource for professional development and destination management. They set the standard for international destination management and offer several tools that help unify measurement and performance and set the industry benchmarks for public investment in tourism promotion.

STS – Southeast Tourism Society encourages a regional approach to tourism that improves the lives of locals and visitors and empowers a diverse network of tourism professionals.

USTA – The U.S. Travel Association is the premier advocacy and education organization for the U.S. Travel industry. They hold two annual events of interest. IPW is a national showcase of American destinations, where U.S. travel exhibitors connect with travel buyers and media from more than 70 countries to promote their product, negotiate future business, and build relationships. IPW secures America's position as a foremost global travel destination by increasing international visitation and showing the world the best of what the U.S. has to offer. Similarly, The U.S. Travel Association's Educational Seminar for Tourism Organizations (ESTO) is a leading national forum where destination marketing professionals at the state, regional, and local levels can walk away with critical tools, tips, and information to help them better market and grow their destinations.



SPORTS & ADVENTURE RECREATION

NBS – The League of American Bicyclists will hold their National Bike Summit in Washington, D.C. in 2023. The annual event features in-person workshops, mobile discussion groups, opportunities to ride, and networking events for both professional and amateur bike-riding advocates who are working to build a Bicycle Friendly America for everyone. Affiliation with this organization will be valuable to the region long-term and the event’s 2023 proximity will provide a great platform to introduce your new tourism campaign to a high-impact special interest group.

OREC – The Outdoor Recreation Economy Conference is the nation’s leading outdoor recreation economic development conference. The 2023 event will be held in Cherokee, North Carolina and will focus on Equity, Sustainability & Resiliency, Funding, Accessibility & Inclusivity, Workforce, Leadership, User Retention & Growth, Policy, Data & Trends.

Sports ETA – The Sports Event and Tourism Association is the only non-profit 501(c)3 trade association for the sports and events tourism industry in the United States. Sports ETA supports sports tourism and sports event planning.

FAMILY FRIENDLY

FTA – The FTA is the leading non-profit trade association that provides tools, resources, education, and certification to travel advisors, travel media, and travel suppliers to increase the quality and experience of family travel. They publish a series of Family-Friendly Standards and Guidelines outlining how the travel industry should be serving the specific interests, unique needs, and expectations of traveling families. This includes training, certification, and marketing programs for qualifying organizations.

By becoming involved with these these influential industry associations and participating in their strategic industry events, Danville and Pittsylvania County tourism can help increase the application of industry best practices locally, connect and share information across local stakeholder networks, and promote connection, tools, network resources, and accountability, that enables the region to mature the tourism industry and drive measurable economic impact and quality of life improvements more quickly.



HOSPITALITY TRAINING & AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

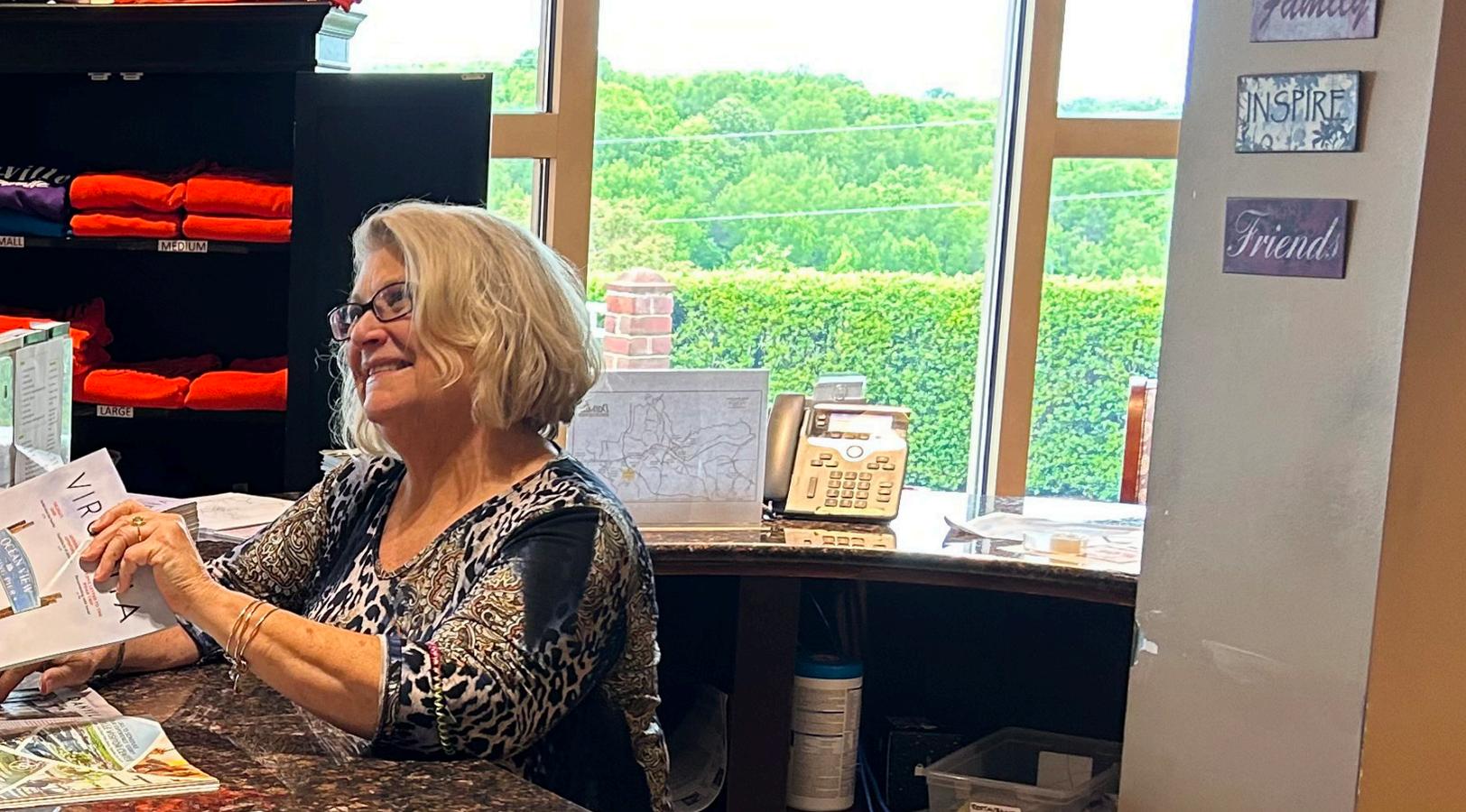
A critical component of any tourism program is hospitality and ambassadorship. The Danville and Pittsylvania County tourism program will soon roll out a hospitality training program county-wide for all front-line industry workers across the community.

Free to all industry workers, half-day training will offer a local certificate career credential in hospitality and customer service and help spread valuable education about tourism industry service best practices, local visitation, economic impact, and local product inventory and promotional assets region wide. This program will further support emergent local workforce development needs and help businesses find trained and experienced talent to fill critical new positions regionally.

Similarly, the tourism department will deploy a new local ambassadors' program to enable local citizens of all ages and backgrounds to assist with various visitor based needs. This training program will

educate the public on all Danville and Pittsylvania County have to offer, tour locals through the community to learn about local assets and their appeal to visitors and educate local citizens on the important impact tourism has on the local economy. Once trained these local volunteers can be called upon to help with special events and participate in important industry outreach initiatives.

Finally, Averett University has recently announced the launch of a new Hospitality Management program that will help train future tourism industry leaders across the region. In the fall of 2023 they will launch both career certificate and degree programs in hospitality management. The Danville Office of Economic Development and Tourism is working closely with the university to ensure the new curriculum ties back to local workforce needs and industry development plans.



VISITOR CENTER MANAGEMENT

The Danville Office of Economic Development and Tourism has recently taken over the management of the region's visitor center in Danville. The Center will continue to be staffed with a full-time center manager and four part-time visitor staff who all collectively support area visitors, helping plan their stay in the region, introducing the region, addressing concerns, providing maps, guides, and other materials that promote local businesses, assets, and attractions.

The Visitor Center team promotes a wide variety of regional assets including food, craft beverages, retail and lodging opportunities, local entertainment options, regional history, insights into local culture, and must-see attractions. Their goal is always to encourage visitors to stay longer, ensure they have a great trip, and invite them to come back frequently.

Visitor Center guests are counted, and their interests and feeder markets are tracked and used to help drive impactful programming and promotional investments. These behaviors are industry best practices and should be continued. Moving forward this information should also be continuously analyzed and fed back to the community in annual reports as well as leveraged to support more effective media buying as the program matures.

DIGITAL & CONTENT MARKETING

Visitors Guide:

The Danville Office of Economic Development and Tourism has partnered with Leisure 360 to develop a new visitors guide brochure that will be distributed throughout the region and via statewide Welcome Centers. This brochure will be used to promote the region and its assets to visitors and will be updated and reprinted annually.

Regional Map:

The Danville Office of Economic Development and Tourism has partnered with CitySelect to develop a new regional map that can be distributed with the new regional Visitors Guide.

Website:

In the coming months, the Danville Office of Economic Development and Tourism will unveil their new tourism website which is already under development. This new regional resource will promote and cross-promote a wide variety of local events, services, and attractions.

The website will be built on a Simpleview Platform and allows industry stakeholders direct access to an extranet that allows them to update their listings profiles, track activities, and stay in direct connection with the regional destination management organization.

In addition to food, lodging, and attractions, the new website will feature a wide variety of useful content including transportation tips and a new blog that will feature a wide variety of local stories and recommended travel itineraries.

Content Marketing:

Soon after launching the new site, the DMO can be expected to begin developing a steady stream of fresh search engine-optimized content that draws visitors into the region's story, encourages visitation, and drives richer regional experiences. Working in collaboration with community partners, the DMO will publish a wide variety of articles such as:

- One Day Itineraries (Focused on each of the six segments)
- Three Day Itineraries (Focused on each of the six segments)
- Seven Day Day Itineraries (Focused on each of the six segments)
- 25 Instagram-able Local Locations
- Top Ten Must-See Area Attractions
- Happy Holidays – Regional festivities in Danville and Pittsylvania County's small towns and communities
- Celebrate the Grow–Harvest fun in Danville and Pittsylvania County
- The incredible Civil Rights history of Danville, VA
- Racing Right Along –A history of fast cars and pushing boundaries, the Wendell Scott Story
- Tobacco for Sale – The Danville Method and its lasting impact on Virginia's economy
- Remember the Mills – How Danville got its bricks.
- Agriculture and Entertainment – Agritourism celebrates all year long at the Old Dominion Agricultural Complex
- The World's Biggest Tank Museum (Yes, you read that right)
- Science for Fun – What's new at Danville's Incredible State-Funded Science Center
- Art, History, and Millionaire's Row
- The Best Drinks in Town – Ten Relaxing Local Libations
- Down the Hill: From Schoolfield to the River District – 10 must-see attractions
- Coming Soon: Top three reasons to come back soon

Each of these blog posts will help drive traffic to the new website asset and attraction listings, and local events calendar. In addition, this content will also help anchor new social media handles that will allow locals and visitors alike to engage with local tourism content.

This work will underpin media outreach and engagement- encouraging news coverage around the positive stories that support and align to the destination brand.

Social Media:

Initially, the DMO will manage only a Facebook and Instagram page. Twitter may be added for the express purpose of engagement with travel media. Posts will include fast facts and trivia, local event previews, asset features, videos and advertisements, seasonal call outs, and brand compliant local pictures and videos.

All posts will be monitored with the goal of growing both followers and engagement.



OPERATIONAL GOVERNANCE

Staffing

To meet the robust needs of this emerging tourism program, the destination marketing organization must be staffed with skilled professionals who understand both the interconnected nature of a local tourism ecosystem, tourism marketing best practices, public relations, media planning and buying, and brand-compliant graphic design. The Danville Office of Economic Development and Tourism is led by Director Corrie Bobe who is a strong and trusted advocate for thoughtful and transformative economic development across the region. The Tourism program is led by Lisa Meriwether, a known and trusted industry leader who is leading the development of this new tourism capability.

Stakeholder Engagement

One of the top priorities of the new program will be engaging local stakeholders in the planning and implementation process, encouraging engagement collaboration and cross-promotion.

To facilitate this, the Danville Office of Economic Development and Tourism will hold four annual industry stakeholder and community interest meetings.

To start, the following areas of focus are recommended:

- **Stakeholder Engagement - Community Input, Direction, and Reporting** – Tourism provides an opportunity for mutual benefit between locals and visitors, but keeping a balance between the needs and desires of both groups is essential for any destination marketing program to flourish. There are a variety of models that allow for community input into DMO planning and priorities.

In this initial start-up phase, the Danville and Pittsylvania County Destination Marketing Organization should rely on three primary ways to engage and support the community through communication:

- **Public Meetings & Community Surveys** – The DMO should present to both the City Council and the County Board of Supervisors twice annually to ensure both citizens and leaders are kept abreast of activities, initiatives, and calls for support that will help the program thrive. Every three years, the DMO should also seek to publish a community-wide survey designed to gather input from citizens about new and emerging regional assets, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.





This survey should always include a net-promoter score question to track citizen satisfaction with local quality of life. Researchers may also want to include questions that speak to citizen satisfaction with the quantity and quality of tourism and visitation in the region as well.

- **Proactive Industry Outreach** – The DMO should develop and maintain a database of stakeholders by industry sub-group (lodging, food and beverage, entertainment, etc.) and special category (history and architecture, festivals and events, adventure recreation, family-friendly activities, arts & culture, etc.) and engage them frequently in focus groups, interviews, and pulse surveys to ensure the program benefits from a wide-cross sampling of industry insights, perspectives, and capabilities on issues of relevant interest.
- **Annual Report** – Each year the DMO should publish an annual report that highlights the programs, activities, and initiatives that were completed in support of the region’s tourism program. This report should include detail about

the amount invested in local tourism marketing and promotion efforts and the source and efficacy of that investment, the number of visitors welcomed, related visitor taxes collected (transient occupancy tax and similar), and estimated overall local visitor spending.

At a minimum, the first community stakeholder meeting of each calendar year should be used to report on program priorities, goals, and progress as the Danville Office of Economic Development and Tourism releases an annual report. The second community stakeholder meeting of each year should include extranet training for those who need it and then be followed up with a facilitated session to seek stakeholder input on the unique stories area businesses want to be promoted as part of the regional tourism story (aligned to the established six positioning categories). The third community stakeholder meeting should be used to share industry trends and encourage local businesses to brainstorm on ways the industry can prepare for and take advantage of new industry opportunities. The final meeting of each year should seek to share public information on new development projects and to seek input on destination development opportunities and ongoing industry visioning.

Operational Maturity

Growing Capabilities for a Growing Destination

To function effectively, a destination marketing organization must be equipped with the staffing and resources required to adequately support the robust and essential functions it is expected to perform.

These responsibilities include:

- Effectively marketing and advertising regional assets across known and targeted feeder markets to raise awareness and drive consideration and preference
- Promoting assets and itineraries locally to encourage destination selection, increase the average length of stay, and drive repeat visitation
- Support group sales, meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibits (MICE business)
- Manage media and influencer engagement to encourage strategic coverage of destination assets - hosting familiarization tours, responding to queries, proactively pitching

valuable positive narratives

- Managing the regional visitors center, information stations, wayfinding programs, and promotional assets
- Managing digital assets including website and social media handles
- Publishing annual visitors guide
- Engaging, aligning, and advocating for local industry stakeholder success
- Working with other organizations on issues related to sustainability to achieve common goals.
- Addressing resident concerns related to tourism
- Advocating on behalf of the industry with relevant state and local offices and elected officials
- Writing and securing grant funding to better leverage public investment through matching dollars and private contributions
- Monitoring and reporting on the local industry's key performance indicators

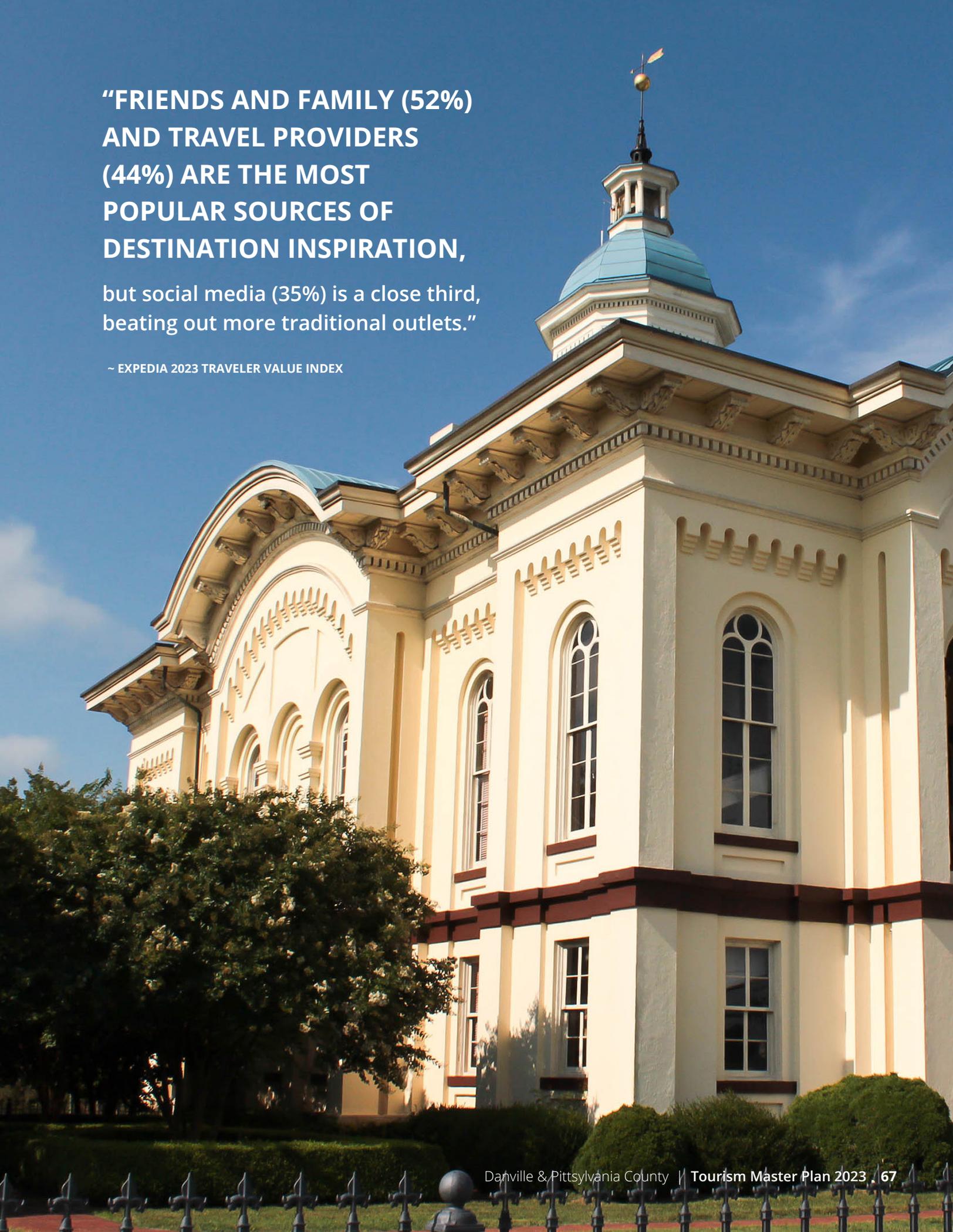


To do this well, the Tourism Marketing Department should have the specialized professional resources at its disposal to develop effective multi-channel media and advertising campaigns, develop and maintain all promotional products (brochures, visitors guide, new product development, etc.), support the sale of local meeting and event space, operate the visitor center, and manage all digital properties including the website, social media, events calendar, and media buying for all digital advertising, and manage all vendor relationships. While some of these roles and responsibilities could be outsourced some lend themselves better to being full-time city-paid positions.

**“FRIENDS AND FAMILY (52%)
AND TRAVEL PROVIDERS
(44%) ARE THE MOST
POPULAR SOURCES OF
DESTINATION INSPIRATION,**

**but social media (35%) is a close third,
beating out more traditional outlets.”**

~ EXPEDIA 2023 TRAVELER VALUE INDEX



BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS

Danville and Pittsylvania County do not have a long history of dedicating significant public funding to the tourism and hospitality industry, so the question of how much is needed to support a program like this is very important.

Like all marketing, the level of investment needed to be successful is relative to local goals, market size, competitor spending, and desired share of voice. From the research gathered, it is known that Danville and Pittsylvania County attract most of their visitors from a three to four-hour drive market radius. This makes sense since assets tend to be spread apart, the local airport is relatively

small, and train and bus services, while reliable, don't currently offer nearly the same capacity as car-based visitation.

With that in mind, it may be helpful to consider what other communities seeking to attract visitors from these same feeder markets are currently spending.

While many of these communities have more inventory and assets than Danville and Pittsylvania County do currently, they are also advertising in their own three to four-hour drive market which directly overlaps with Danville and Pittsylvania

DMO*	~ Annual Visitation	# of Local Hotel Rooms	DMO Budget	Annual Visitor Spending	Share of State, Land Area	Share of State, Visitor Spending	Direct Industry Employment
Visit Virginia's Blue Ridge	Unknown	5,404	\$4.8M	\$678M	3.89%	2.68%	6,196
Lynchburg	Unknown	3,073	\$1.9M	\$218M	.12%	.86%	2,507
Virginia Beach	5.7M	12,499	\$26M	\$2.1B	6.3%	8.41%	17,606
Greensboro/ Guilford County	Unknown	9,088	\$5.8M	\$1.3B	.37%	4.5%	9,550
Asheville/ Buncombe	6.4M	8,500	\$27M	\$2.6B	1.44%	9.1%	18,278
Raleigh/ Wake County	15.8M	6,000	\$9.6M	\$2.3B	.29%	8.1%	21,357
Richmond Region	4.9M	22,000	\$8M	\$2.8B	3.5%	11.21%	23,705
Danville & Pittsylvania County	Projected* - 2.2M+	726**	~\$500k	\$129M	2.5%	.51%	1,328

* Based on local rate of growth, projected numbers have been placed to help with planning, budgeting, and comparison purposes ** Danville is projected to have another 774 rooms come online the next 24 months, bringing the local total to 1,500+ by the end of 2025 ***NOTE: All numbers are estimated based on publicly available information which is often limited as competitive intelligence. Each DMO uses their own methodology to calculate.

County and the region's known feeder market footprint.

This means the region will be very directly competing for share of voice, paying to be in the same advertising outlets, and seeking the same attention from the same potential travelers as several larger destinations with more established, better-known, and better-funded destination marketing programs.

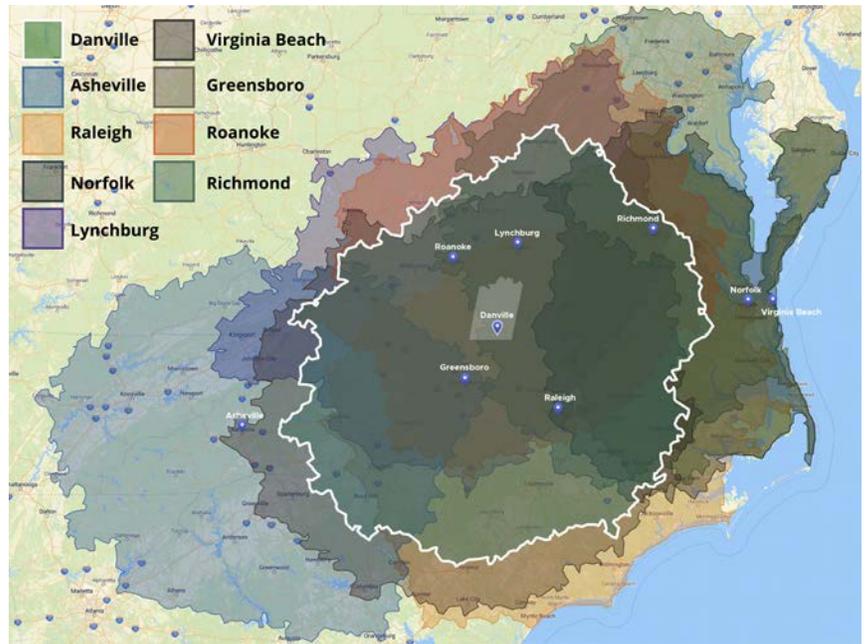
Because of this, proportionally more promotional visitor spending is likely required to jump-start the program.

Regardless of where Danville and Pittsylvania County ultimately starts their program in terms of their annual budget, it is recommended that the new destination marketing organization quickly partner with local leaders to develop a sustainable strategy to enable sufficient ongoing investment in the program.

This will be required to provide adequate human resources, advertising budget, public relations resources, and project management funding to meet all required tasks and strategic objectives as outlined.

To do this right, Eddy Alexander estimates that the community should budget a minimum of \$1.2 to \$ 1.8M annually for the first two years of the program targeting an increase of approximately 10% annually for the next five years (in proportion with regional hotel room growth, and TOT tax revenue collection).

As business attraction and retention targets are met, the community should strive to build the program up to at least \$5M a year in sustainable resourcing by 2030. This would make the region competitive with other regional destination marketing and management organizations like Visit Virginia's Blue



Location and Its Impact on Budget: Danville and Pittsylvania County benefit from their central location on Virginia's southern border. The majority of the region's daytime and overnight visitors come from a 3.5 to 4-hour drive market radius. However, these same target audiences are also feeding well-established destinations with sophisticated marketing programs including Richmond VA, Roanoke VA, Lynchburg VA, Coastal Virginia, Raleigh NC, Greensboro NC, and Asheville NC. This competitive marketing environment means that advertising buys and earned media outreach will need to be strategically focused on disruption and calibrated to achieve a competitive share of voice.

Ridge but, very likely, still smaller than Greensboro, Winston Salem, Richmond, Coastal Virginia, Asheville, and other destinations competing for the same visitor base.

Once effectively established, the region can decide if it would like to keep the program aligned to economic development within the city's direct infrastructure, split it off into its own city department, or if they would like to explore moving the DMMO responsibilities to a non-profit, public-private partnership, or political subdivision to provide greater agility and open up additional opportunities for external funding and collaboration. Many communities explore special tax districts, lodging alliance contributions, and public-private partnerships arranged through a membership model to ensure ongoing financial stability at a competitive level. This could prove to be a valuable long-term strategy for Danville and Pittsylvania County's program as the region's industry base grows as well.

Continued on Page 70



Continued from Page 69

When considering these costs, it is important to remember that this funding should always be considered and measured as an investment. Tourism ROI should also be expected to deliver with a shorter turnaround time than traditional economic development investments, incentives, or project contributions.

Many communities deploy destination marketing organizations under several different models and there are large numbers of successful examples of each type nationwide that can be further evaluated once the program's initial foundation is strong, local private sector leaders have bought into the importance of supporting the program, and ROI has been clearly demonstrated to all stakeholders.

Regardless of the final governance structure, when managed properly, tourism marketing programs should be expected to offer a relatively predictable investment for your community and one with a relatively quick return on investment (ROI). Once established, for every dollar invested, several more should be returned directly to the local tax base through transient occupancy tax and food and beverage tax collections. Further, for every dollar spent on promoting the community, significantly more will be added back into the broader local economy through direct visitor spending only to circulate further through local job creation and subsequent local spending.

Once the budget for the new program is officially established with manageable contributions from both the City of Danville and Pittsylvania County, it will also be important that a model be developed to ensure that the funding level is predictable year after year.

While some communities use a population-based dollar (or two) per head model, others work off a set amount per hotel room night or bed model, and others on a percentage of TOT receipts collected from the previous year. The right answer and balance is unique for each community but when thinking about and planning the annual tourism budget allocation it is important to consider that when the budget can be established and anticipated in a predictable manner, media placements can be pre-booked at significant discounts. Because the media market is volatile, pre-planning provides significant savings for those communities with the flexibility to pre-book their placements. Creative however does not need to be provided in advance which enables the DMO to remain flexible to evolving market conditions, responsive positioning strategies, and community priorities.



PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

To ensure the program continues to be a responsible investment for the region, certain key performance indicators should be continuously monitored and used to continuously optimize and mature the tourism program.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Tourism Occupancy Tax Revenues – Collected by Local Government Entities, tracked and reported in aggregate by the DMO
- Annual Visitor Spending Reports – Provided each fall by VTC, tracked and reported in aggregate by the DMO
- Local and Visitor Net Promoter Scores – Collected via surveys – community-wide surveys should be repeated via a wide-scale pulse check (including net promoter score capture) every three years as part of a strategic tourism marketing planning program
- Quantity and quality of business assets listed under each attraction category on the new tourism website
- Hotel occupancy and short-term rental rates
- The average length of stay (Can be calculated via annual cell phone analysis, credit card spending reports, or for overnight visitation only via subscription to industry tools that track hotel and short-term rental bookings data)
- Quantity and quality of media mentions, audience reach and size, sentiment analysis, and coverage and topic type
- Number and size of group bookings in the region – collected in partnership with local venues, tracked and reported in aggregate by DMO



REINVESTMENT IN INFRASTRUCTURE, PROGRAMMING, AND PRODUCT

Over the next few years, as the tourism program meets the outlined goals and influences the metrics above, Danville and Pittsylvania County's economy will continue to grow and expand. This will allow for more collaborative creativity and hopefully supplemental funding via grants and partnerships. When managed successfully, this can lead to a plethora of new assets and offerings, all of which will help to make the community more attractive to visitors.

These same assets often make the community's culture and values more accessible and help populate area attractions. However, one risk related to this kind of prolific new asset and program development is that initiatives funded by one-time gifts, grants, or non-sustainable funding sources quickly atrophy and then become overly burdensome for the community to maintain.

As Danville and Pittsylvania County begin to pursue a new programmatic approach to local tourism promotion, it will be important that the newly established DMMO take an early leadership position on long-term planning for all tourism-related community assets.

Developing sustainability plans for critical infrastructure and encouraging other local businesses and tourism industry stakeholders to do the same will be essential to ensuring a high-quality program that provides long-term value across the community.

DESTINATION STEWARDSHIP

Sustainable tourism is defined by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) as “tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social, and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment, and host communities.”

The destination stewardship movement focuses on several key areas, including:

1. Environmental Sustainability

This involves reducing the negative impacts of tourism on the natural environment, such as carbon emissions, water pollution, and habitat destruction. Sustainable tourism practices aim to conserve natural resources, protect biodiversity, and promote sustainable use of natural resources.

2. Social Sustainability

This involves promoting tourism that benefits local communities, respects their culture and heritage, and enhances their quality of life. Sustainable tourism practices aim to involve local communities in tourism planning and development, create employment opportunities, and support local businesses.

3. Economic Sustainability:

This involves promoting tourism that generates economic benefits that are distributed fairly

and contribute to the long-term economic well-being of host communities. Sustainable tourism practices aim to create economic opportunities that are environmentally and socially responsible and promote economic growth that is inclusive and sustainable.

Communities around the world are using tourism to create meaningful cultural exchange, uplift the economy and increase the quality of life for entire regions, but as they do so they must also, simultaneously, balance resident needs and desires.

As the Danville and Pittsylvania County tourism program matures, the new destination marketing and management organization must work proactively and in a cross-disciplinary fashion to help both the city and the county plan for, address, and apply industry best practices to minimize negative environmental, social, and economic impacts of rapid visitation increases, while helping the region maximize the positive benefits of the economic lift that tourism provides.

Accordingly, the Danville Office of Economic Development and Tourism should work closely with local, regional, and state policy organizations as needed to advocate for this delicate balance and to establish proactive methods of aligning the needs and desires of local populations with the visitation goals of each target audience they seek to attract.



Conclusion

Making the Most of This Moment

DANVILLE AND PITTSYLVANIA County have tremendous economic opportunity on their doorstep. However, regional leaders have a choice. They can choose to use the momentum of the moment to help define, diversify, enrich, and stabilize the local economy for long-term sustainability or they can sit back and let the next wave of growth define the region organically.

In the short term, the hospitality and tourism industry in this area will grow either way, but large investments and big projects like those recently announced are clearly redefining this part of the state. They are simultaneously providing a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to reshape the area's reputation.

In this important moment, regional leaders have an opportunity to proactively control the new narrative and use this moment to proudly and proactively brand, advertise, and promote the authentic attributes and diverse and abundant experiences that make this destination unique and appealing.

Rich, detailed storytelling, culture sharing, historical preservation, arts promotion, and carefully measured activity and placemaking investments can help empower citizens and ensure the region doesn't become defined by any one single business, attraction, or neighborhood.

An effective destination marketing and management organization will provide reliable, professional, and highly visible area promotion, proactive visioning, destination development, and project management services. They will also serve as a coordination, information, and best practices

resource for tourism and hospitality business operators all across the region.

This report has provided a number of baseline industry assessments from which the region can measure industry growth and impact. It has also highlighted several key areas for consideration and initiative recommendations that will serve to align stakeholders and ensure that the region's destination marketing organization can be effective regional stewards.

This plan will help guide the industry's maturation and economic impact and help to define the destination in a way that leaves room for every citizen, business, and attraction to benefit. With this infrastructure in place and the effective implementation of the roadmap provided, the region will begin to recognize the kind of predictable ROI that surrounding regions already enjoy.

Today, Danville and Pittsylvania County are uniquely positioned to build the area's reputation and diversify the tourism economy. However, it will continue to take vision, planning, and committed long-term investment to fully realize the monumental opportunity ahead.

This Tourism Master Plan is designed to be used as a roadmap to help establish the new destination marketing and management organization according to well-documented industry best practices. If implemented as outlined, the direction provided will help frame future visioning, activities, projects, and priorities in support of the well-being of the residents, visitors, and industry stakeholders for generations to come.





Acknowledgements

Special thanks to the following organizations and individuals who contributed to the development of this strategic plan and tourism marketing roadmap.

2 Witches Winery & Brewery Co., Inc.

AIRDNA

Amtrak

Averett University

Brand USA

Caesars Virginia

Cardinal News

Chatham Hall

Chatham Star-Tribune

City of Danville

Crema & Vine

Danville City Council

Danville Community College

Danville Museum of Fine Arts and History

Danville Pittsylvania County Chamber of Commerce

Danville Public Schools

Danville Regional Airport

Danville Regional Foundation

Danville Register and Bee

Danville Science Center

Hampton Inn Danville, VA

Hargrave Military Academy

Institute for Advanced Learning and Research

Lee Enterprises

Longwoods International

Me's Burgers

Mountain View Farms of Virginia

Danville VA NAACP

Old Dominion Agricultural Complex

Pittsylvania County

Pittsylvania County Board of Supervisors

River District Association Danville VA

Smith Mountain Lake Regional Chamber of Commerce

Smith Travel Research (STR) Global

The Bee Hotel

The Tank Museum

Tourism Economics

Virginia Business

Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation

Virginia International Raceway

Virginia Restaurant and Lodging Travel Association

Virginia Tourism Corporation

WDBJ7

West Piedmont Planning Commission

Wilkins & Co Realtors

WSLS Channel 10

*A sincere thank you and note of significant appreciation is due to the thousands of survey, interview, focus group community, stakeholder, and validation meeting participants, who lent their valuable time, perspectives and insights to this important regional planning effort.

Addenda

2023 Tourism Master Plan





Recommended DMO Activities & Program Priorities

There will be many tasks and responsibilities for the DMO/DMMO in the months ahead. The following list can be used to help prioritize these efforts, activities, and initiatives, in alignment with this report's recommendations.

Category	Possible Initiatives	Leads Partners/ Potential Partners	Priority	Notes
Destination Development	Consider leading a civic placemaking initiative, educating community groups on the value of placemaking, and ask for their help adopting an identified place that could be reimagined. Provide guidelines for ensuring the space plan supports the community's larger brand positioning strategy then incentive action with a small materials grant. Celebrate local places created through the brand maker program with social media posts, press releases, or an end of year community ambassador party where you can bring together space makers, trained ambassadors and industry stakeholders for a community tourism pep rally style event.	The Danville Office of Economic Development and Tourism, The Pittsylvania County Office of Economic Development or Business License Office, Chamber of Commerce, River District Association, Historical Association, Danville Area Foundation for Arts & Humanities, The Launch Place	Mid-term opportunity	There are a fair number of grant programs available for placemaking initiatives. See Supplemental Funding section for more information.
Destination Development	Consider and implement distinctive ways to move visitors around the region efficiently and memorably, generate welcoming and exciting experiences that have an enthusiastic flair - especially within the City of Danville's urban boundaries. Consider a wide variety of possibilities that seek to move beyond the immediately expected modes and methods of transportation.	City of Danville, Pittsylvania County, Danville Foundation, Averett University, Amtrak, private businesses	Longer-term priority	Trails, trolleys, people movers, scooters, e-bikes, buses or mini buses, tracked electric vehicles, ski lift system, monorail, pedicabs, themed cars for hire, special partnership or ride sharing systems, and similar all offer unique and brandable experiences that add to the community's appeal, design, and differentiation. Fun and unexpected modes of transportation help get visitors to stay longer and do more by encouraging people to move around a community in a variety of ways. If deployed wisely they can also alleviate traffic and congestion, increase cultural sensitivity through historical education and exposure. Some Examples: Hotels that offer limo service or other "cool car" rides to dinners or shows for guests often successfully encourage guests to stay "one more night", San Francisco's Street car trolley system, tuk tuks in India, gondolas in Venice, and pedicabs in New York City create popular "bucket list" activities for visitors and add to the local tourism product portfolio, and theme parks like Walt Disney World build their brand by educating guests about their parks while transporting them on their monorail system.

Category	Possible Initiatives	Leads Partners/ Potential Partners	Priority	Notes
Destination Development	Create an experience development program with an eye toward quickly establishing/elevating two regional events to signature status. These events should be designed to attract visitation and drive repeat travel year after year. They can be used to help bring your brand to life in the eyes of the public and help add depth and dimension to your visitor landscape while more permanent businesses and structures are being developed and launched.	ODAC, The Danville Science Center, Danville and Pittsylvania County Parks & Recreation, Public Works, Fire, EMS, Local Civic Groups and places of faith and worship, Averett, the Danville Community College,	Longer-term priority	Given the community's expressed interest in ensuring Danville and Pittsylvania County are seen as family-friendly destinations perhaps a region-wide "Fam-Fest" is worth exploring. By partnering with the state funded Science Center, local faith-based and civic organizations, the local agriculture community, the arts community, and government entities the region could work together to create a large one to two week family friendly festival with "Touch a Truck events, Farm Tours and Experiences, Science Stations, Public Park Play Dates, makerspaces, parenting workshops, and similar." Out of area family-friendly vendors and franchise organizations could be involved as a way to showcase the community to businesses that we would like to invest in the region.
Destination Development	Create and implement a public arts and experience program with an eye toward placemaking and visitor experience enhancement. Consider using art walks, "Instagram able moments" and 3D art and science engagement opportunities to move visitors around the community and to engage more meaningfully with neighborhoods and towns in ways that enrich cultural exchange, promote organic sharing of positive experiences through social media and other personal channels. Consider lighting as a part of the original plan to ensure new assets are fully leveraged.	Danville Office of Economic Development and Tourism, Danville Parks and Recreation, Pittsylvania County Office of Economic Development, Pittsylvania County Parks and Recreation, Danville Art & History Museum, Averett University, Main Street Art Collective, Danville Area Foundation for Arts & Humanities, Danville Concert Art Association, Arts and Cultural Fund of the Community Foundation of the Dan River Region, Pittsylvania County Department of Parks & Recreation, Danville Public Schools, Pittsylvania County Public Schools, The Danville Science Center	Longer-term priority	Remember public art can be 2D, 3D, live, or virtual, permanent, or temporary. For example, the City of Eureka, CA hosts an annual Street Art Festival where they bring in muralists from around the world each year to bring beauty to diverse buildings and spaces that need rehabilitation or could benefit from added and intentional visual interest. During this one week festival they sponsor artist talks, art walks, and arts alive street parties. The LUMA Projection Arts Festival is an annual event in Binghamton, IN that uses projection mapping to turn the cityscape into a giant community movie theater.
Destination Development	Develop a Regional Sports Master Plan to better leverage the regions tremendous parks to attract lucrative group travel events and corresponding visitation.	Danville Office of Economic Development and Tourism, Danville Parks and Recreation, Pittsylvania County Office of Economic Development, Pittsylvania County Parks and Recreation	Longer-term priority	The City of Danville recently engaged a partner to help develop a sports recreation master plan so this effort is already underway. Care should be taken to link the efforts of Tourism and Parks and Recreation and private sector asset development region-wide while planning for the future.
Destination Development	Develop a shared assessment tool to help analyze the tourism and community impact of proposed community investments.		First-term Priority	This can be a 10-20 factor evaluation scorecard with recommended go, no-go, or modify matrix to help civic leaders evaluate, improve on or adjust plans to account for the importance of the tourism industry to quality of life in the region.

Category	Possible Initiatives	Leads Partners/ Potential Partners	Priority	Notes
Destination Development	Develop and promote the business case for heritage tourism and use it to recruit and develop new investment and businesses that are focused on helping to share the region's authentic history through programming, placemaking, and accessible storytelling.	Danville Office of Economic Development and Tourism, Danville Parks and Recreation, Pittsylvania County Office of Economic Development, Pittsylvania County Parks and Recreation, The Launch Place, The Advancement Foundation, United Way of Danville and Pittsylvania County, The Danville Foundation	Near-term priority	There are several unique businesses that have already organically started to do this. Care should be taken to involve them in the planning for more assets with similar focus. Starting with a Gap Analysis and an Opportunity assessment will help the community plan strategically to maximize opportunity and expedite progress.
Destination Development	Hold annual destination visioning workshops to capture local and visitors ideas and buy-in. Carefully consider the needs, desires, and impacts of a wide variety of traveler types including: Meetings, events, conferences, leisure, business, sports, special interest, cultural heritage, family, romance travelers, retirees, and international visitation.	City of Danville Office of Economic Development and Tourism, Pittsylvania County Office of Economic Development and Tourism, ODAC, The Danville Museum of Fine Arts & History, The Institute for Advanced Learning and Research, Averett university, Danville Community College, Danville Public Schools, Pittsylvania County Public Schools, Local Civic Groups and Centers of Faith and Worship	Longer-term priority	
Destination Development	Partner with industry to establish a variety of "tourism storytelling stations" and micro "brand experiences" throughout the region. These locations will allow for the strategic placement of print and digital signage and experiential placemaking for visitors showcasing more of what there is to see and do, and measurably increasing the average length of stay and positive economic impact of every visitor, and increasing regional unity. Consider building multi-sensory experiences but keep local sustainability, pride, comfort, and authenticity top of mind in all planning efforts.	City of Danville, Pittsylvania County, Virginia Tourism Corporation, Danville Science Museum, Averett University, The Institute, The River District Association, Amtrak, The Danville Art Museum, The Tank Museum, The Old Dominion Agricultural Complex, Chatham Hall, Hargrave Military Institute, and similar	Longer-term priority	These stations can include both traditional print racks and digital signage but the region should be encouraged to think beyond the obvious. These information and experience centers should offer consistent brand experiences, quality information, brand accessibility, cultural exchange, and social interaction points.
Destination Development	Continue to develop, fund, and enhance new and existing Façade Grant Programs with an eye toward making streetscapes across the region visitor friendly.	City of Danville, Pittsylvania County, Danville Foundation, VDOT, Civic Groups, Places of Worship	Near-term priority	Danville's River District has been widely celebrated for its revitalization efforts but still faces some unique challenges tied to the size, scale, and style of its large warehouse buildings. Consider ways to decrease the space between attractions/ product to invite more visitors to comfortably stroll between offerings.

Category	Possible Initiatives	Leads Partners/ Potential Partners	Priority	Notes
Destination Stewardship	Consider accessibility and work to develop programs that encourage community partners to develop and offer experiences that are open and friendly to all visitors regardless of ability. Consider partnering with trade associations who can provide training materials, sample programs, and certifications that will help your community improve awareness, increase accessibility, and promote accessibility as a key differentiator. For instance, SNG offers a one-hour, three-module Special Needs travel advocacy training program that focuses on understanding accessible travel, building expertise in accessible travel and demonstrating accessible travel advocacy skills. These are critical subject matter areas for travel professionals if they wish to service the accessible travel market.	Special Need Groups (SNG), Wheel the World	Mid-Term opportunity	This is a useful recent article about the benefits of offering and promoting a region or attraction as an accessible destination: https://www.travelweekly.com/Articles/Seven-unintended-benefits-of-being-an-accessible-hotel
Destination Stewardship	DEI in the travel industry means many things - but at its core, it represents the value of treating everyone equitably. Regional leaders should ensure ongoing, proactive, and visible commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). Virginia's tourism industry out performs many other states with multiple diverse travel segments including affluent suburban black families. Developing programs and product that directly target these segmented group interests and appeal to travelers interested in cultural exchange and diversity issues will help differentiate the region, drive longer lengths of stay from more visitors, and offer unique perspectives and stories for travelers known to help advance the local economic goals through their visitor spending habits.	VTC, Travel Unity, DI, US Travel Association, The Center for Responsible Travel	Mid-term opportunity	VTC, Richmond Regional Tourism, and Charlottesville VA all have highly effective and national award winning DEI programs and promotional campaigns that can be further leveraged for inspiration. Danville already has some tremendously valuable cultural assets that can be further amplified through these programs.
Destination Stewardship	Develop advertising and programming with proactive sensitivity to the concerns of diverse travelers. Calibrate for ways to continuously welcome all who choose to visit. Monitor visitation demographics to determine if additional programming outreach or product development is needed to serve an underrepresented segment of the market.	The Danville Office of Economic Development and Tourism	Ongoing	Consider Richmond VA's Award-winning BLKRVA program as an example of customizing content and itineraries for a specific high value visitor segments
Destination Stewardship	Invest in training and developing the regional workforce as well as investors focused on serving visitors. Help these stakeholders understand the growing importance of tourism to the local economy and empower them to work together in collaboration, using the new brand assets and the DMO professionals to help improve financial prospects region-wide.	City of Danville, Pittsylvania County, Averett, Danville Community College, Local Lodging Operators, Restaurants, and Attraction Teams	Near Term Priority	

Category	Possible Initiatives	Leads Partners/ Potential Partners	Priority	Notes
Destination Stewardship	To ensure the tourism industry remains healthy, vibrant and economically productive it is important to maintain open lines of communication with your public, partners, and stakeholders, monitor visitor traffic year over year, and continuously gauge local sentiment and enthusiasm toward visitation. Develop a standard set of KPIs that you will measure and report on annually. At a minimum, these should include a local net promoter score to measure citizen perceptions around quality of life, visitation counts, visitor spending, asset inventory counts by category, TOT tax collections and similar revenues, amount invested in tourism promotion/advertising, audience reach and engagement, and average market RevPAR, Occupancy, and ADR.	The Danville Office of Economic Development, Danville Police Fire & EMS, Pittsylvania County Office of Economic Development, Pittsylvania County Sherriff, Fire, & EMS, Town of Chatham, Hurt, and Gretna Police, Fire, & EMS, Sovah Health, Averett University Campus Police Department, Danville Area Community College Security, VDOT, State Police, Danville Department of Transportation, Danville Department of Parks and Recreation, Pittsylvania Department of Parks and Recreation, Pittsylvania County Department of Transportation	Near Term Priority	
Destination Stewardship	Work to increase regional collaboration through working groups, trade association involvement, and collaboration with industry trade groups. Consider starting/supporting a lodging alliance, consider starting/supporting a new regional chapter of VRLTA.	VTC, Local Hotel Operators, VRLTA	Mid-Term Opportunity	
Destination Stewardship	Work with elected officials and career civil servants to develop a sustainable and predictable financial model for supporting tourism and continuously funding each of the core functional areas of destination management annually.	The Danville Office of Economic Development and Tourism, Pittsylvania County Board of Supervisors, Danville City Council, Danville City Managers Office, Pittsylvania County Administrators Office	First-term Priority	Consider whether the common models of funding tourism based on a set percentage of previous year Tourism Occupancy Tax collections, or sales tax revenue collections might work or if the common alternate approach - a set rate per population head count model might work better for this community.
Industry Advancement & Advocacy	Develop an official tourism district designation status, and determine the local rights and responsibilities that would correspond for areas that chose to participate. Consider whether the new Virginia TID program (https://www.vatc.org/tids/) make sense for any trade areas inside Danville and Pittsylvania County.	The Danville Office of Economic Development and Tourism	Mid-term priority	This designation will help officials focus in on priority areas and initiatives and develop clear visitor migration paths between them. Adding more districts over time will help build out the region in a more manageable and systematic way.
Industry Advancement & Advocacy	Develop and facilitate industry input with ongoing stakeholder meetings aligned to a strategic industry framework. These creative input and planning sessions should be used to encourage industry collaboration and position the DMO to serve as a the leading resource for strategic tourism planning advocacy and support region-wide.	City of Danville Office of Economic Development and Tourism, Eddy Alexander	Longer-term priority	

Category	Possible Initiatives	Leads Partners/ Potential Partners	Priority	Notes
Industry Advancement & Advocacy	Develop and facilitate industry input with ongoing stakeholder meetings aligned to a strategic industry framework. These creative input and planning sessions should be used to encourage industry collaboration and position the DMO to serve as a the leading resource for strategic tourism planning advocacy and support region-wide.	City of Danville Office of Economic Development and Tourism, Danville and Pittsylvania County Parks and Recreation, Food and Beverage, Lodging, Retail, Agritourism, and Entertainment or education through play based organizations, The River District Foundation, Danville Pittsylvania County Chamber of Commerce	Longer-term priority	See proposed schedule for four annual stakeholder meetings.
Industry Advancement & Advocacy	Develop and implement group travel incentive programs to help local events and conference and venues and regional attractions solicit group travel, conferences, events, and tour travel to the area (especially during the off-season and shoulder seasons). Consider product bundles, discount passes, group hosts or tour guides, transportation, special speakers, public entertainment, or behind the scene access.	Danville Office of Economic Development and Tourism, VTC	Near-term priority	
Industry Advancement & Advocacy	Monitor public policy discussions and draft legislation as they could impact the local tourism economy. Work with City and County Leadership, the Virginia Tourism Corporation, VADMO, VRLTA, and the local Chamber of Commerce to establish and/or align government relations advocacy positions and activities in support of the region's tourism industry, economic goals, and community quality of life needs.	City of Danville Office of Economic Development and Tourism, Danville City Managers Office, Pittsylvania County Administrators Office, Virginia Tourism Corporation, The West Piedmont Planning District, the Danville Pittsylvania County Chamber of Commerce. The Smith Mountain Lake Chamber of Commerce	Longer-term priority	Membership and active participation in VRLTA and VADMO will be helpful ways to track state wide concerns and responses to key issues and to find allies to help support the region through addressing important challenges as they arise.
Industry Advancement & Advocacy	Publish an Annual Report and share it with government officials, industry stakeholders, and community partners at the local, regional, and state levels.	The Danville Office of Economic Development and Tourism, VTC, West Piedmont Planning District, Danville Pittsylvania County Chamber of Commerce	Ongoing - annual	
Operational Excellence	Build out new regional tourism brand emphasizing the growing abundance, rich cultural heritage, and tremendous momentum and energy across the region. Create an on-ramp for local businesses to tie back to these core messages and visual systems ensuring the brand is experiential, not just paper-based.	City of Danville Office of Economic Development and Tourism, SimpleView	First-term priority	

Category	Possible Initiatives	Leads Partners/ Potential Partners	Priority	Notes
Operational Excellence	Build out tourism department with an eye toward developing a competitive operational capability across all functional areas. The typical structure for such an organization in a region this size includes a director of tourism, a program manager, a sales manager, a public relations manager, a marketing manager, a marketing coordinator, visitor center staff, and/or equivalent levels of agency or partner support to ensure effective execution of all responsibilities.	City of Danville, Pittsylvania County, Virginia Tourism Corporation	Near-term	The region's competitive markets are similarly positioned with many overlapping audiences and assets. In order to attract increased visitation from valuable cultural travelers, the community must be ready to invest in destination development and simultaneous authentic but professionally coordinated storytelling.
Operational Excellence	Collect and maintain a robust database of area attractions, points of interest, and business and partner contact information.	The Danville Office of Economic Development and Tourism, The Pittsylvania County Office of Economic Development or Business License Office, Chamber of Commerce, River District Association, Historical Association,	First-term Priority	This asset inventory process has already begun. Area businesses that link to tourism are being encouraged to participate in on of several SimpleView extranet trainings.
Operational Excellence	Collect and maintain a robust database of visitors and prospective visitors who have expressed interest in the Danville and Pittsylvania County region and the most relevant areas of interest for each.	The Danville Office of Economic Development and Tourism	First-term Priority	The Danville Visitors Center maintains a visitors log, when the new website launches that will be another source for visitor contact information collection. The new website under development has an embedded CRM to help manage this data.
Operational Excellence	Continue evolving with an eye toward moving from a start-up destination marketing organization to a mature destination marketing and management organization. This organization should serve in a regional leadership capacity driving industry visioning, community stakeholder coordination, promotion, advocacy, and marketing and promotional efforts region-wide.	City of Danville, Pittsylvania County, VTC	Immediate	The entire global tourism and destination management industry is swiftly moving in this direction. The Danville and Pittsylvania County region will benefit enormously from having a leadership organization who can set the direction for what's to come related to tourism in the region and serve as a hub for information, special projects and resourcing but this organization must be staffed with knowledgeable and respected local leaders and facilitators, adequately resourced, transparent, and trusted in order to be effective.
Operational Excellence	Develop a new regional website and social properties that professionally feature events, activities, food and beverage, lodging and other hospitality concerns region-wide in digital forums. Consider investing in robust extranet capabilities to help unify communications and impact tracking across the wide and diverse industry stakeholder community.	City of Danville Office of Economic Development and Tourism, Eddy Alexander	First Term Priority	
Operational Excellence	Develop an incentive program for entrepreneurs to start or move tourism based businesses that align with the region's vision - helping to share and enrich the abundant and diverse activity landscape by 1) offering many diverse "things to see and do" across categories 2) making historic and cultural assets more accessible to locals and visitors alike, and 3) generating sustainable job growth and tax base revenue growth for the community.	City of Danville, Pittsylvania County, Virginia Tourism Corporation, The Danville Foundation, The Launch Place	Near-term	Controls should be put in place to limit too much duplication of activity types within the program, requiring regional tourism hospitality training for all staff at organizations seeking funding, and encouraging seed contributions or good faith honorariums back into the fund from businesses after their initial 2-3 year start-up period to ensure long term industry engagement, sustainability, and return on investment.

Category	Possible Initiatives	Leads Partners/ Potential Partners	Priority	Notes
Operational Excellence	Develop, organize, and accurately label/tag an up to date portfolio library of appropriately licensed and released promotional photography and videography of the region and its top tourism assets, attractions, and things to do. Ensure you have wide representation of traveler types, ethnic age and ability diversity, and types of activities to showcase the welcoming nature of the community and the abundance of activities and offerings available in this region.	The Danville Office of Economic Development and Tourism	First Term Priority	Consider investing in a Digital Asset Management System to allow for streamlined retrieval, controlled sharing, and legal rights management and risk mitigation.
Regional Promotion	Design and implement a "Locals First" Advertising Campaign to introduce the new brand to the region, allowing locals to find their voice within the new system and to integrate the new brand into their individual businesses and experience design strategies.	City of Danville Office of Economic Development and Tourism, Danville and Pittsylvania County Parks and Recreation, Food and Beverage, Lodging, Retail, Agritourism, and Entertainment or education through play based organizations, The River District Foundation, Danville Pittsylvania County Chamber of Commerce, The Smith Mountain Lake Chamber of Commerce, The Towns of Chatham, Hurt, Gretna, Averett University, Danville City Public Schools, Pittsylvania County Public Schools, Chatham Hall, Hargrave Military Academy	First-term priority	
Regional Promotion	Develop an annual visitors guide booklet that introduces the regions brand, asset portfolio, and positioning strategy to both the community and to visitors. Publish enough copies that these booklets can be distributed at visitors centers, hotel and restaurants throughout the community, distributed through state visitors centers, and mailed out to prospective visitors and meeting or group travel planners who request them through the new tourism website.	The Danville Office of Economic Development and Tourism, Leisure360	Ongoing - annual	
Regional Promotion	Develop and Implement a regional earned media and public relations strategy focused on strategic media relations, press events, fam tours, influencer engagement, annual desk side pitching, and industry and industry event participation.	Danville Office of Economic Development and Tourism, VTC, MATPRA, North American Travel Journalists, Society of American Travel Writers	Near-term priority	
Regional Promotion	Develop and publish 1,2,3,5, and 7 day itineraries to help visitors plan their trips and help local businesses recruit group travelers.			Consider splitting itineraries by interest area and make them evergreen so your content library can grow overtime. Review annual to ensure relevance and update as needed.

Category	Possible Initiatives	Leads Partners/ Potential Partners	Priority	Notes
Regional Promotion	Establish a robust email marketing program to engage visitors and prospective visitors in all there is to see and do in the region, encourage visitation and repeat visitation, incentivize travel, and distribute timely information about local venues, events, and activities.	Danville Office of Economic Development and Tourism, VTC		Consider a robust marketing automation platform to increase engagement, improve timeliness and relevance of messages to each visitor, and streamline operational efficiency.
Regional Promotion	Establish a robust industry ambassador program to include awareness building, citizen training, website extranet training, and hospitality industry training resources.	The Danville Office of Economic Development and Tourism, Eddy Alexander, Simpleview, and Averett University	Near-term priority	
Regional Promotion	Implement a regional advertising program focused on attracting multi-interest travelers within a 3.5 hour drive radius.	Danville Office of Economic Development and Tourism, VTC,	Near-term priority	Leverage new brand and an adequately side media budget that will allow for a robust and synergistic media mix that includes print, broadcast, digital and activation activities, weighting digital channels and earn media activities more heavily in the first two years to drive trackable conversions, agility, ROI Tracking, and real time message resonance research for at least the first two years of program. Seek co-op funding and grant contributions to help extend resources. See grant landscape tracker for more detail.
Regional Promotion	Partner with Virginia Tourism Corporation to take advantage of existing state-wide programming, ad campaigns, grants, and subject matter expertise.	The Danville Office of Economic Development and Tourism, VTC	Near-term priority	
Regional Promotion	Take advantage of available grants, co-ops, and partnership programs to implement consistent marketing campaigns that keep the region top of mind for travelers and drive ever-larger and more sophisticated regional promotion campaigns that maximize target audience reach, resonance, recall, and influence.	Danville Office of Economic Development and Tourism, VTC, US Department of the Interior, US Department of Agriculture, National Endowment for the Arts,		
Safety and Security	Establish/Join a public safety working group to proactively monitor and discuss public safety through the lens of tourism. Seek representation from local police, fire, EMS organizations, as well as the local hospital and meet 2-4 times per year to discuss tourism's impact on local public safety and security and the state of local safety and security on the state of tourism. Work to develop collaborative solutions to pressing problems, apply industry best practices from other communities, and proactively develop new programs where needed to mitigate potential concerns. Transparently communicate tourism safety and security strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in a special section of the annual report.	The Danville Office of Economic Development, Danville Police Fire & EMS, Pittsylvania County Sherriff, Fire, & EMS, Town of Chatham, Hurt, and Gretna Police, Fire, & EMS, Sovah Health, Averett University Campus Police Department, Danville Area Community College Security, Hargrave Military Academy Security, Chatham Hall Security, VDOT, State Police, Danville Department of Transportation, Danville Department of Parks and Recreation, Pittsylvania Department of Parks and Recreation, Pittsylvania County Department of Transportation	Mid-term priority	Consider Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design including natural surveillance and visibility; lighting; territorial reinforcement, space delineation, and natural access control. Consider neighborhood ambassador programs in designated tourism districts to help manage houseless citizens and transient population concerns as relevant.



Grant Opportunity Landscape

Many DMO's supplement their marketing and program budgets with additional grants and matching co-ops. Resourcing your staff with skilled grant writers can prove to be a valuable investment. The following programs may be of particular interest:

Opportunity	Sponsoring Organization	Description	Notes:
2023 AARP Community Challenge	AARP	The AARP Community Challenge provides small grants to fund quick-action projects that can help communities become more livable for people of all ages. In 2023, the AARP Community Challenge is accepting applications across three different grant opportunities, two of which are new this year	
AFID Infrastructure grant	Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services	The Governor's Agriculture and Forestry Industries Development Fund Infrastructure Grant Program (AFID Infrastructure Program) provides grants of up to \$50,000 per grant to political subdivisions for community infrastructure development projects ¹ that support local food production and sustainable agriculture.	
Agribusiness Grant Program	Virginia Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission	To promote agricultural and agribusiness growth, development and diversification in the tobacco region of the Commonwealth in order to assist the agricultural industry in pursuing market opportunities and reducing dependence on tobacco and tobacco-related business.	Not open at this time
Arts in Practice Grants	Virginia Commission for the Arts	Research Grants in the Arts support research studies that investigate the value and/or impact of the arts, either as individual components of the U.S. arts ecology or as they interact with each other and/or with other domains of American life.	Grants not to exceed 50% of the total cost of the project
BUILD Transportation Grants	Department of Transportation Federal Transit Administration	BUILD Transportation grants supporting planning and capital investments in surface transportation infrastructure including roads, bridges, transit rail and sidewalks. The FTA awards these funds to projects that will have a significant local or regional impact and considers factors such as safety, quality of life, economic competitiveness and partnership in making awards. DOT awards these funds to local and state government entities. Individual organizations may be able to guide their local governments' use of funds, but cannot access them directly. Creative placemaking practitioners could request that their local governments use this grant to fund streetscape improvements along corridors designated for placemaking activity.	Half of the funding will go to projects in rural areas, and half of the funding will go to projects in urban areas. At least \$15 million in funding is guaranteed to go towards projects located in Areas of Persistent Poverty or Historically Disadvantaged Communities, and projects located in these areas will be eligible for up to 100 percent federal cost share, as directed by Congress in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Otherwise some match, approximately 20% is required.
Caesars Foundation	Caesars Foundation (Hunger Poverty & Chronic Disease)	Caesars Foundation is a private foundation funded by resorts owned or operated by Caesars Entertainment. The Foundation is the entity through which Caesars funds national and local non-profit programs and projects, and meets not-for-profit giving requirements imposed by certain operating jurisdictions. The Foundation's objective is to strengthen organizations and programs in the communities where our employees and their families live and work.	

Opportunity	Sponsoring Organization	Description	Notes:
Challenge America Grants	National Endowment of the Arts	<p>"Challenge America offers support primarily to small organizations for projects in all artistic disciplines that extend the reach of the arts to groups/communities with rich and dynamic artistic and cultural contributions to share that are underserved.</p> <p>Grants require a cost share/match of \$10,000 consisting of cash and/or in-kind contributions. Total project costs must be at least \$20,000 or greater."</p>	
Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grant Program	Office of Public and Indian Housing (PIH)	<p>The Choice Neighborhoods program leverages significant public and private dollars to support locally driven strategies that address struggling neighborhoods with severely distressed public and/or HUD-assisted housing through a comprehensive approach to neighborhood transformation. Local leaders, residents, and other stakeholders, such as public housing authorities, cities, schools, police, business owners, nonprofits, and private developers, come together to create and implement a plan that revitalizes distressed HUD housing and addresses the challenges in the surrounding neighborhood. The program helps communities transform neighborhoods by redeveloping severely distressed public and/or HUD-assisted housing and catalyzing critical improvements in the neighborhood. To this end, Choice Neighborhoods is focused on three core goals: Housing: Replace severely distressed public and assisted housing with high-quality mixed-income housing that is well-managed and responsive to the needs of the surrounding neighborhood; People: Improve outcomes of households living in the target housing related to income and employment, health, and education; and Neighborhood: Create the conditions necessary for public and private investment in distressed neighborhoods to offer the kinds of amenities and assets, including safety, good schools, and commercial activity, that are important to families' choices about their community.</p>	<p>"\$1.3 million for Planning and Action Grants Implementation Grants vary, but can be significantly higher due to the cost of revitalizing the publicly funded housing properties at the heart of the plans (\$10 million+). 5% match and substantial reporting required. "</p>
Creative Community Partnership Grants	Virginia Commission for the Arts	<p>To encourage local and tribal governments to support the arts. Grants to independent, ADA-compliant arts organizations for arts activities in the locality, including activities that provide opportunities for underserved, under-resourced, and under-represented communities. The Commission does not match payments paid to performers for specific performances.</p>	1:1 Match
Days of Service Grant	Americorp	<p>"The mission of AmeriCorps is to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering. Through AmeriCorps, AmeriCorps Seniors, and the Volunteer Generation Fund, AmeriCorps has helped to engage millions of citizens in meeting community and national challenges through service and volunteer action. The Days of Service grant competition includes funding for both September 11th Day of Service and Remembrance (September 11th) and Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service (MLK). Applicant organizations may apply for either September 11th, MLK, or both. Applicants may not submit more than one application for each Day of Service. The purpose of the September 11th National Day of Service and Remembrance grant funding is to mobilize more Americans to engage in service activities that meet vital community needs and honor the sacrifice of those who lost their lives or family members on September 11, 2001, or who rose in service as a result of that tragedy. The purpose of the Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service grant funding is to mobilize more Americans to observe the Martin Luther King Jr. federal holiday as a day of service in communities, to encourage those who serve on this holiday to make a long-term commitment to community service, and to bring people together to focus on service to others.</p> <p>"</p>	
Destination Disaster Recovery Fund	Tourism Cares	<p>The Destination Disaster Recovery Fund focuses on restoring and rebuilding tourism resources and infrastructure that have been impacted by disasters. Our strategy revolves around recovery investments to rebuild tourism assets and help bring back quality of life at a destination once tourism begins to recover. Grant Funding supports community-tourism initiatives that are seeking: Bridge-financing to keep community-level businesses open/ ready to re-open post natural disaster, Community-level support and resources for tourism reliant destinations, Infrastructure renovations, reinforcements, restoration work, Destination and community-level marketing support to bring business back to the region</p>	

Opportunity	Sponsoring Organization	Description	Notes:
Diversity in Tourism Fund	Tourism Cares	The tourism industry's greatest asset is the cultural diversity of the destinations and communities it visits. However, the tourism industry workforce is not illustrative of this very principle. Grants directly support programs and activities that increase diversity, equity, and inclusion within travel, build capacity for underrepresented markets and amplify voices representative of the entire travel and tourism industry. Eligible programs and activities include: Training, certification, talent development, market research, and product development. Costs associated with mentoring, training, or academic study for professional development programs that advance and upskill individuals and/or organizations.	
Drive Outdoor Grant Program	Virginia Tourism Corporation	The DRIVE Outdoor grant program builds on the DRIVE 2.0 Statewide Strategic Plan with a goal of enhancing outdoor recreational development, assets, and entrepreneurial opportunities within Virginia. Applicants need to complete Drive2.0 workshop.	DMOs apply to be a part of the program that utilizes the DRIVE 2.0 Strategic Plan applied to Outdoor Recreation tourism development. After successful application to enter the program, the DMO will hold a VTC led workshop to discuss outdoor rec development in the community. Upon completion of the grant round, the community can use the \$10,000/ \$20,000 grant fund towards specific outdoor recreation development outlined by the program guidelines
Education Impact Grants	Virginia Commission for the Arts	To provide opportunities for Virginia's students, educators, and other adult populations throughout Virginia to participate in and learn through the arts by working with highly qualified professional artists, in support of lifelong learning.	These grants provide Virginia's Pre-K-12 students and teachers opportunities to work with professional artists in an in-school, after-school, or other community setting, including summer activities. Education Impact grants may support educational programs in the arts that enhance arts instruction in the school curriculum, and professional development for professional artists and educators to work with elementary and secondary school students, or other adult populations in community settings, meeting identified learning goals. Synchronous or asynchronous virtual learning with a specific Virginia population is eligible.
Federal Highway Administration	Federal Lands Access Program	Current 2023-26 cycle has closed. The next cycle date hasn't been posted	

Opportunity	Sponsoring Organization	Description	Notes:
FY23 IJJA Bureau of Land Management Headquarters (HQ) Recreation and Visitor Services Department of the Interior	Bureau of Land Management	The Recreation and Visitor Services Program provides a wide variety of recreational opportunities that benefit the public and local communities. The program is also responsible for implementing Administration and Department priorities, including projects to improve racial equity, diversity and inclusion; help strengthen the U.S. economy; and reduce impacts to the environment and climate.	
Grants for Arts Program	National Endowment of the Arts	Grants for Arts Projects is our largest grants program for organizations, providing comprehensive and expansive funding opportunities for communities.	
Mainstreet America Community Vitality Grant (CVG)	Main Street America	As a Main Street America™ Coordinating Program, Virginia Main Street helps to lead a powerful, grassroots network consisting of over 40 Coordinating Programs and over 1,200 neighborhoods and communities across the country committed to creating high-quality places and to building stronger communities through preservation-based economic development. Danville is currently an official Mainstreet community (through the River District Association) and is eligible to apply for:	Community Vitality Grants (CVGs) are designed to assist Main Street communities/ organizations achieve their downtown revitalization goals. CVG projects are momentum generators that spark Main Street efforts and create long lasting positive impact on the historic downtown or neighborhood commercial district. CVG grants are available for downtown revitalization activities
Mainstreet America Downtown Investment Grant (DIG)	VA Department of Housing and Community Development	Downtown Investment Grants (DIGs) allow Main Street organizations to take on unique, one-time projects that measurably, creatively, and sustainably advance the organization's goals and strategies. DIGs involve multiple downtown partners and require active leadership and participation by the organization's board, committees, and volunteers.	2:1 Match Requirement
Mainstreet American Financial Feasibility Grant (FFG)	VA Department of Housing and Community Development	Financial Feasibility Grants (FFGs) allow Main Street communities to work with owners of significant "white elephant" buildings or structures with non-productive upper floor space. These buildings could be (functionally) vacant and/ or deteriorated properties whose poor condition creates a notion of physical and economic blight in the surrounding area, which is often a deterrent for development. This grant also allows for small-scale development by providing feasibility resources to new or beginning developers for buildings within the district.	Focus on Downtown redevelopment. Chatham, Hurt, Gretna are not Mainstreet Communities but could be.
Mainstreet American Virginia Business District Resurgence Grant	VA Department of Housing and Community Development	The Virginia Business District Resurgence Grant fund seeks to advance and accelerate the post-pandemic recovery of Virginia's business and commercial districts. Specifically, these funds will support historically economically disadvantaged communities and other business districts that were disproportionately impacted by the pandemic and subsequent recession. T	5:1 Match Requirement
Marketing Leverage Program	Virginia Tourism Corporation	The Virginia Tourism Corporation is offering these grant funds to spur economic activity and overnight travel across the Commonwealth. Reimbursable grant.	Award Announcements made mid-April 2023, programs must be completed by 10/15/24

Opportunity	Sponsoring Organization	Description	Notes:
Microbusiness Marketing Leverage Program	Virginia Tourism Corporation	The Virginia Tourism Corporation is offering these grant funds to spur economic activity and travel across the Commonwealth to support small businesses and drive shoulder season visitation (September to May).	For businesses with 20 or fewer full-time equivalent employees. Reimbursement program for expenses dated /1/22-5/31/2023
NAR Placemaking Grant - Level 1	National Association of Realtors	<p>"The healthier a community, the better the environment for REALTORS®. Keeping a community attractive, livable and functioning well is a complex task. NAR's Placemaking Grant is available to REALTOR® associations to help them plan, organize, implement and maintain these types of Placemaking activities in their communities. Complete information about NAR's Placemaking Grant, including applications, the types of projects the grant funds(link is external), and examples of REALTOR® Associations' Placemaking Projects(link is external) at the Placemaking Program & Grant page at realtorparty.realtor(link is external). Please direct questions to PlacemakingGrants@nar.realtor or Catherine Mesick, cmesick@nar.realtor.</p> <p>Level 1 Grant Program Details: Fund outdoor demonstration and temporary projects to test a project's viability or inspire permanent projects that increase community livability and downtown revitalization Applications are accepted on a rolling basis from January 3rd through October 16, 2023; decisions announced within approximately one week. Maximum award: \$3,000. Associations may receive one Level 1 grant per calendar year. Approved activity must take place within one year of grant approval to be eligible for funding reimbursement. Grant recipients must complete an evaluation form for the supported activity. Please note: we are unable to offer extensions for delayed Placemaking Grants. If a delay will cause your association to miss the year deadline, please withdraw the grant until you know it is ready to move forward. You are then welcome to resubmit and receive your previous grant award. There is no penalty for withdrawing a grant and resubmitting. Grant recipients must complete an evaluation form for the supported activity. Note - 10% Grant Commitment Waived in 2023. As part of NAR's Right Tools, Right Now, the 10% financial contribution requirement is waived.</p>	
NAR Placemaking Grant - Level 2	National Association of Realtors	<p>"The healthier a community, the better the environment for REALTORS®. Keeping a community attractive, livable and functioning well is a complex task. NAR's Placemaking Grant is available to REALTOR® associations to help them plan, organize, implement and maintain these types of Placemaking activities in their communities. Complete information about NAR's Placemaking Grant, including applications, the types of projects the grant funds(link is external), and examples of REALTOR® Associations' Placemaking Projects(link is external) at the Placemaking Program & Grant page at realtorparty.realtor(link is external). Please direct questions to PlacemakingGrants@nar.realtor or Catherine Mesick, cmesick@nar.realtor.</p> <p>Level 2 Grant Program Details: Level 2 Placemaking grant funds the creation of new outdoor public spaces and destinations in a community accessible to everyone and open at all, or most, times such as trails and trailheads, playgrounds, pocket parks, parklets, pedestrian plazas, community gardens, public gardens, dog parks, downtown gathering spots and alley activations. Review the Ideas for Using a Placemaking Grant for additional inspiration. New in 2023! Placemaking Grants now allow funding of community asset improvements such as street benches, lamps and/or wayfinding signs as well as improvements to existing spaces. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis from January 3rd through October 16, 2023; decisions announced within approximately one week. Maximum award: \$7,500. Associations may receive one Level 2 grant per calendar year. Approved activity must take place within one year of grant approval to be eligible for funding reimbursement. Grant recipients must complete an evaluation form for the supported activity. Please note: we are unable to offer extensions for delayed Placemaking Grants. If a delay will cause your association to miss the year deadline, please withdraw the grant until you know it is ready to move forward. You are then welcome to resubmit and receive your previous grant award. There is no penalty for withdrawing a grant and resubmitting. Grant recipients must complete an evaluation form for the supported activity. Note - 10% Grant Commitment Waived in 2023. As part of NAR's Right Tools, Right Now, the 10% financial contribution requirement is waived Level 2 Placemaking Grant Application Placemaking Grant Reimbursement Request Form Placemaking Grant Evaluation Form</p>	

Opportunity	Sponsoring Organization	Description	Notes:
NAR SMART Growth Grant - Level 3	National Association of Realtors	<p>"Smart Growth Grants support state and local REALTOR® Associations' efforts to advance programs, policies and initiatives aligned with one or more of the 10 Smart Growth Principles. Questions? Email SmartGrowthGrants@nar.realtor , Hugh Morris, hmorris@nar.realtor 202/383-1278. Frequently Asked Questions Ideas for Using a Smart Growth Grant REALTOR Party Success Stories. Level 3 Smart Growth Grant supports comprehensive initiatives leading to long-term impact in a community with significant REALTOR® and public and private stakeholder involvement. Level Three - Details: Applications are accepted on a rolling basis from January 3 through October 16, 2023; decisions announced within approximately two weeks. Maximum award: \$15,000. Associations may receive one Level 3 Smart Growth grant per calendar year. Funds are disbursed using a reimbursement process. Approved activity and reimbursement request must take place within one year of grant approval to be eligible for funding reimbursement. Grant recipients must complete an evaluation form for the supported activity. LEVEL 3 SMART GROWTH GRANT APPLICATION SMART GROWTH GRANT EVALUATION FORM SMART GROWTH REIMBURSEMENT REQUEST FORM</p>	
Our Town Grants	National Endowment of the Arts	<p>Our Town is the NEA's creative placemaking grants program. Through project-based funding, the program supports activities that integrate arts, culture, and design into local efforts that strengthen communities. Our Town projects advance local economic, physical, or social outcomes in communities, ultimately laying the groundwork for systems change and centering equity. These projects require a partnership between a nonprofit organization and a local government entity, with one of the partners being a cultural organization. Grants range from \$25,000 to \$150,000, with a minimum cost share/match equal to the grant amount.</p>	Requires equal match contribution
Outdoor Recreation Grant Program	Federal Economic Development Administration – Philadelphia Office	<p>The Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership (ORLP) program was established in 2014 and is funded through the Land and Water Conservation Fund. ORLP is a nationally competitive program targeting grant assistance to help economically disadvantaged urban communities with no, or almost no, access to publicly available, close-by, outdoor recreation. Funds can be used for the acquisition and/or development of, or to substantially renovate obsolete, public parks and other outdoor recreation spaces. Projects are selected for funding by the Director of the NPS. City size cap of 30,000.</p>	
Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program	National Parks Service	<p>The LWCF State and Local Assistance Program was created by Congress in 1964 to assist in preserving, developing and assuring accessibility to present and future generations of U.S. citizens and visitors "such quality and quantity of outdoor recreation resources as may be available and are necessary and desirable for individual active participation in such recreation and to strengthen the health and vitality of the citizens of the United States.</p>	
Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization Grants Program	National Parks Service	<p>"The Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization Grant Program, named in honor of the late preservation leader from Vermont, fosters economic development in rural communities through the rehabilitation of historic buildings in those communities. The program provides recipients (referred to as prime grantees) with a single grant that is then regranted in smaller amounts to individual projects (subgrants). Prime grantees design and administer subgrant programs that support the economic development goals and needs in their chosen service area. Subgrants could be limited to a single town, made available to rural communities in a particular county, or throughout a multi-county region or an entire state. Similarly, it is up to the prime grantee to determine what types of buildings and community resources will be eligible for subgrants. Will funding be limited to specific resource types (i.e. theaters, community centers, businesses) or can any building in an eligible community receive a subgrant? Prime grantees must determine the focus and criteria for the subgrant program they wish to administer and describe this program in the application. If successful, the recipient then develops their own application process and project selection criteria for choosing which buildings will receive subgrants. Prime grantees cannot use grant funds for their own properties or submit applications for individual buildings or pre-selected projects. The intent of this program is to provide funds that can be regranted to projects that have been selected through a locally administered competitive process after the prime grant is awarded."</p>	
Project for Public Spaces' Community Placemaking Grants	Project for Public Spaces	<p>Project for Public Spaces' Community Placemaking Grants enable US-based nonprofits and government agencies to address this inequality of access by working directly with local stakeholders to transform public spaces or co-create new ones. We do this by providing direct funding, technical assistance, and capacity building facilitated by Project for Public Spaces.</p>	Applications now closed and awarded to Northwest Arkansas

Opportunity	Sponsoring Organization	Description	Notes:
Promise Neighborhood Grants	Department of Education Office of Elementary and Secondary Education	"Promise Neighborhoods is a large-scale, multisector initiative intended to improve the educational and developmental outcomes of children and youth in distressed communities and transform the communities themselves. Promise Neighborhoods require collaborative planning and implementation by a range of partners including local governments and government agencies, schools, and community based nonprofit developers and service providers. They work together to build a cradle-to-career continuum of educational programs and family and community supports. In communities where a Promise Neighborhood coalition is working, creative placemaking practitioners can seek ways to participate in planning and implementation to incorporate arts and cultural elements into the community plan."	https://danvillenc.org/ , Danville City Schools, The Institute, Averette, Danville Community College
Rural Business Development Grant	USDA	"RBDG is a competitive grant designed to support targeted technical assistance, training, and other activities leading to the development or expansion of small and emerging private businesses in rural areas that have fewer than 50 employees and less than \$1 million in gross revenues. Programmatic activities are separated into enterprise or opportunity type grant activities."	
Rural Placemaking Innovation Challenge	USDA	"USDA is making available up to \$4 million in cooperative agreement funds under the Rural Placemaking Innovation Challenge (RPIC) for eligible entities to help provide planning support, technical assistance and training to foster placemaking activities in rural communities. Qualified entities can use the funds to help rural communities create plans to enhance capacity for broadband access; preserve cultural and historic structures; and support the development of transportation, housing, and recreational spaces. For more information, contact RD.RPIC@usda.gov.- Qualified entities may use the funds to provide technical assistance and training to help rural communities develop actionable placemaking plans, convene partners and identify community needs. - USDA encourages applications that support communities' planning projects that enhance capacity for broadband infrastructure, deployment and/or access. - The assistance must be provided for up to two years."	15% match required
Safe Streets and Roads for All Program	U.S. Department of Transportation	The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) established the new Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) discretionary program with \$5 billion in appropriated funds over the next 5 years. The SS4A program funds regional, local, and Tribal initiatives through grants to prevent roadway deaths and serious injuries. Expected to award 400 grants	
Southwest and Southern Virginia Programs	VA Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission	Moving forward, the Commission's largest budget line will be directed toward community and business lending. This approach will solve a significant issue related to access to capital in the region while also contributing to the Commission's financial sustainability. This increased lending activity will, in many cases, result in awards consisting solely of loans whereas past guidelines may have resulted in a grant award.	"As required by the Code of Virginia, all requests for grant funds require at least dollar-for-dollar (1:1) matching funds, with no more than 25% of the match requirement from "in-kind" sources. "
T-Mobile Hometown Grant Program	T-Mobile Small Town Grant	Community development project funding. Open to populations under 50k.	Projects have spanned technology, education, environment, health care and more all with the focus of making the community stronger
The Impact Tourism Fund	Tourism Cares	The Impact Tourism Fund focuses on investing in the resiliency of destinations through community-level tourism initiatives that spread the benefits of tourism. This fund creates a sustainable value chain by investing in organizations that create social and environmental impact around tourism destinations, establishing more market success for the community and sustainable tourism. Grant Funding supports community-tourism initiatives that are seeking: Capacity building, upskilling, and training to advance education and employ-ability in the hospitality and tourism industry. Infrastructure grants to scale micro and small businesses to accommodate and put in place more sustainable initiatives. Networking and community building of non-profits and seek a platform in front of the industry.	

Opportunity	Sponsoring Organization	Description	Notes:
Tobacco Region Opportunity Fund	VA Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission	The purpose of the TROF program is to help make localities in the Tobacco Region more attractive to potential business expansion or attraction projects. It accomplishes this goal by providing performance - based monetary grants and loans to localities for the purposes of supporting specific projects.	Not open at this time
Touring Assistance Grants	Virginia Commission for the Arts	This grant program supports touring by Virginia performing artists and ensembles within the state. Grants are made to the presenter, not to the touring artist(s). Touring artists apply to be listed in the Tour Directory, with a set dollar amount reserved to support their touring. performances must take place in Virginia but outside of the performer's home base.	
Tourism Development and Financing Program (TDFP)	Virginia Tourism Corporation	"2- Tiered Gap financing program. Is there a sector of local tourism activity in your area which has reached such high demand, that current tourism product cannot meet? Does your current, updated Community Comprehensive Plan identify and address these demands? Do your current, updated Tourism Development Plan and Tourism Marketing Plan identify, benchmark and track traveler visitation, activity and visitor spending? Do potential Developer partners have a current Market / Feasibility Study with research and data proving their project can fill that local Deficiency? Tier 1 = 70/30 projects ... < \$100 million Tier 2 = 80/20 projects ... \$100 million +"	
VA250 Marketing Leverage Program	Virginia Tourism Corporation	This program is designed to support, promote, and market programming, events, and interpretive signage related to quests for freedom against the backdrop of the 250th commemoration.	Programs must support the mission of the VA250 Commission and drive visitation to Virginia destinations. 1:1 Cash match
Virginia Business Ready Site Program	Virginia Economic Development Partnership	VBRS is a discretionary program to promote development and characterization of sites to enhance the Commonwealth's infrastructure and promote its competitive business environment. The program's goal is to identify and assess the readiness of potential industrial sites of at least 100 acres in the Commonwealth of Virginia (the "Commonwealth") or 50 acres in GO Virginia Region 1 or 2 for marketing in alignment with the goals outlined in the Governor's economic development plan.	
Virginia DMO Marketing Grants	Virginia Tourism Corporation	The Virginia Tourism Corporation is offering Official Virginia DMOs for marketing expenses that show positive and significant impact on tourism	Requires 50% cash or in kind match. Eligible expenses from 8/1/22-2/28/23 can be used as part of your marketing plan. Programs must be completed by 10/15, 2024
Virginia Outdoors Foundation	Virginia Outdoors Foundation	VOF is seeking proposals for projects that will create safe access to open space and provide other public benefits. Applications are due March 7, 2023.	
Virginia Special Events and Festivals Program	Virginia Tourism Corporation	The Virginia Special Events & Festival Sponsorship Program purpose is to assist with marketing and production of established Virginia special events and festivals. Preference is given to special events and festivals that have a significant and positive economic impact on the Virginia local community.	Requires 50% cash or in kind match. Eligible expenses from 8/1/22-2/28/23 can be used as part of your marketing plan. Programs must be completed by 10/15/2024
Volunteer Generation Fund	Americorp	Volunteer Generation Fund grants will be used to develop and/or support community-based entities to recruit, manage, and support volunteers. AmeriCorps seeks to fund effective approaches that expand volunteering, strengthen the capacity of volunteer connector organizations to recruit and retain skill-based volunteers, and develop strategies to use volunteers effectively to solve problems.	
VTC Annual CO-OP Program	Virginia Tourism Corporation	The FY23 Industry Advertising Co-Op Program offers simple, affordable and flexible advertising opportunities so our industry partners can participate in impactful media campaigns,	Virginia is for Lovers logo may be required

Sources & Additional Resources

2022 KOA North America Camping Report - <http://koa.uberflip.com/i/1465395-2022-koa-na-camping-report/0?>

AIRDNA Short Term Rental Statistics - https://www.airdna.co/?utm_term=airdna&utm_campaign=brandcore&utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&chsa_acc=6167315757&chsa_cam=17800124565&chsa_grp=142138831187&chsa_ad=611451046477&chsa_src=g&chsa_tgt=kwd-316106200999&chsa_kw=airdna&chsa_mt=e&chsa_net=adwords&chsa_ver=3&gclid=CjwKCAjwuqiiBhBtEiwATgvixLF0tW4Qp-A6rApiAp0LrzkZsWRje9SDeOdmYpbwU6xvpgTDj2kF1BoCxl8QAvD_BwE

American Hotel & Lodging Association's 2023 State of the Hotel Industry Report - https://www.ahla.com/sites/default/files/AHLA.SOTI_Report.2023.final_.002.pdf

Buncombe County Tourism Economic Annual Reports - <https://www.ashevillecvb.com/annual-reports/>

City of Danville VA Reports and Studies - <https://www.discoverdanville.com/business-support/reports-and-studies/>

Community Marketing & Insights (CMI) LGBTQ COVID 19 and LGBTQ Travel Research - https://cmi.info/documents/temp/CMI_LGBTQ-COVID_May-2021.pdf

Danville Economic Development Master Plan – Need Link

Danville Transportation Plan - <https://danvillempo.org/long-range-transportation-plan/>

Danville Transportation Master Plan – Need Link

Expedia 2023 Traveler Value Index - https://welcome.expediagroup.com/tvi-2023/report/EN_US_TVI-2023_Main-Report.pdf

Expedia Inclusive Traveler Report - https://go2.advertising.expedia.com/rs/185-EIA-216/images/_FINAL-InclusiveTravel_Whitepaper_2022.pdf

Expedia April 2022 Traveler Sustainability Study - https://go2.advertising.expedia.com/rs/185-EIA-216/images/April_2022-Sustainable-Travel-Study-PDF-No-URL.pdf

Explore Asheville - Destination Dashboard and Performance Index - <https://www.ashevillecvb.com/monthly-indexes/>

Explore Asheville – Tourism Economics 2021 Destination Economic Impact Report - <https://www.ashevillecvb.com/wp-content/uploads/Asheville-Tourism-Economic-Impact-2021.pdf>

Lynchburg Office of Economic Development and Tourism 2022 Annual Report - <https://www.opportunitylynchburg.com/office-of-economic-development-tourism-releases-fy-2022-annual-report/>

North Carolina Economic Impact Report - <https://partners.visitnc.com/economic-impact-studies>

Raleigh Tourism Economic Development Report - https://assets.simpleviewinc.com/simpleview/image/upload/v1/clients/raleigh/April_2023_Economic_Development_Report_5d7d4b1d-f633-43e1-b2c5-12b134cff9f0.pdf

Richmond Regional Tourism Master Plan - https://assets.simpleviewinc.com/simpleview/image/upload/v1/clients/richmond/18298_20_RRT_Richmond_Tourism_Master_Plan_Report_v2_99e31edc-207a-4a8a-80f8-e264509f88e5.pdf

Smith Travel Research - <https://str.com/data-insights>

Smith Travel Research March 2023 Market Report - <https://eddycommunications.egnyte.com/dl/188Pey9R2m>

TripAdvisor 2022 Travel Trends Report - <https://www.tripadvisor.com/TravelTrendsReportJan2022#section-Home-NCtgbEoWZD>

The 2022 American Hotel and Lodging Association Annual Report - <https://www.ahla.com/news/report-hotels-continue-recover-2023-industry-begins-new-era-operations>

US Department of Commerce National Travel Strategy - <https://www.commerce.gov/news/fact-sheets/2022/06/fact-sheet-2022-national-travel-and-tourism-strategy>

U.S. Travel and Tourism Advisory Board Letter to Secretary of Commerce The Honorable Gina Raimondo Dec 3, 2021 - https://www.trade.gov/sites/default/files/2021-12/TTAB%20Employment%20Letter_Dec%203.pdf

US Travel Fact Sheet - <https://www.ustravel.org/sites/default/files/2022-05/ust-data-master.pdf>

United States Census Bureau State Area Measurements and Internal Point Coordinates – <https://www.census.gov/geographies/reference-files/2010/geo/state-area.html>

United States Census Bureau Virginia Quick Facts - <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/VA>

VATC Regional Drive 2.0 Report - <https://www.vatc.org/drive-2-0-regional-plans/>

VATC Economic Impact of Visitors in Virginia 2020 Report - <https://www.vatc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Virginia-Tourism-Economic-Impact-2020.pdf>

Virginia Tourism Corporation Research Library - www.vatc.org

Virginia Tourism Corporation VA Economic Impact Report - <https://www.vatc.org/research/economicimpact/>

Virginia Meetings & Conventions Inventory Index - <https://www.meetings-conventions.com/Meeting-Event-Venues/Virginia>

Virginia Casinos - <https://www.virginiacasinos.com/casinos/>

Visit Raleigh Budget - <https://www.visitraleigh.com/charts/budget/>

Visit Raleigh Visitor Volume Reports - <https://www.visitraleigh.com/charts/visitor-volume/>

Explore Asheville – Strategic Imperatives - <https://www.ashevillecvb.com/explore-ashevilles-strategic-imperatives/>

Visit Richmond Economic Impact Report - https://assets.simpleviewinc.com/simpleview/image/upload/v1/clients/richmond/2022_RRT_Impact_of_Tourism_Digital_72e4bf0b-17b6-4a05-9883-1d469a823e96.pdf

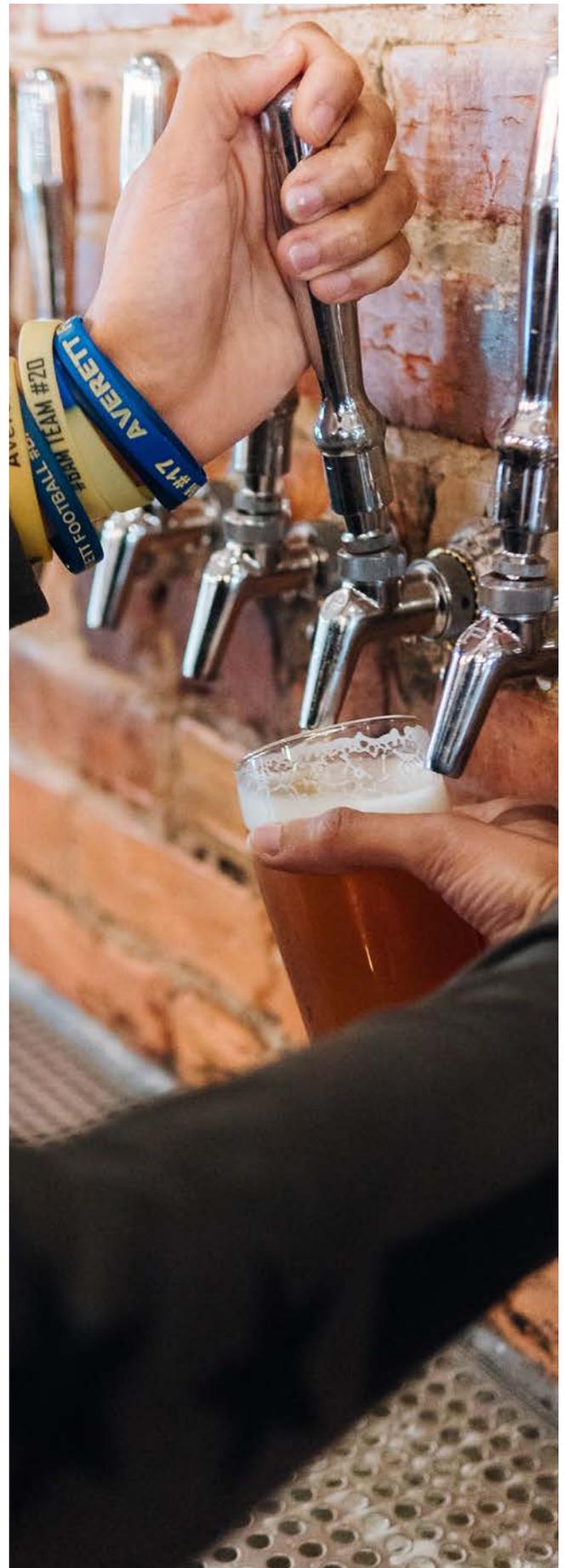
Visit Greensboro FY23 Budget - <https://www.visitgreensboronc.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/FY2022-2023-Proposed-Budget.pdf>

Visit Virginia’s Blue Ridge Economic Recovery Report - <https://www.visitroanokeva.com/about-us/economic-impact-progress-report/>

Wunderman Thompson Future 100 - https://wtdotcom-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/assets/The-Future-100-2023.pdf?X-Amz-Content-Sha256=UNSIGNED-PAYLOAD&X-Amz-Algorithm=AWS4-HMAC-SHA256&X-Amz-Credential=AKIATOWYNPAOQ6OR6VNU%2F20230428%2Fus-east-1%2Fs3%2Faws4_request&X-Amz-Date=20230428T004726Z&X-Amz-SignedHeaders=host&X-Amz-Expires=120&X-Amz-Signature=da7396e074ff8c30013920d6a5449ce3115cff58a61ee6f7b35551df61a346e7

West Piedmont PDC CEDS - <https://westpiedmontpdc.org/ceds/>

West Piedmont CEDS - <https://westpiedmontpdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/West-Piedmont-CEDS-Final-2-3.24.2022.pdf>



| Glossary

Accessible Travel/Accessible Tourism - the process, planning, and effort required to ensure tourist destinations, products, and services are accessible to all people, regardless of their physical or intellectual limitations, disabilities, background, or age.

Advertising - Any paid form of promotion of destinations, products, or services.

Advertising Agency - A specialized company that provides advertising services to destinations and businesses.

American Bus Association (ABA) - A trade association representing motorcoach and tour companies, travel and tourism organizations, and suppliers of bus products and services who work in partnership with the North American motorcoach industry.

Average Daily Rate (ADR) - Room revenue divided by rooms sold, displayed as the average rental rate for a single room.

Bed tax - Most counties and states charge a tax for anyone that stays in a hotel. It can range from a few percentage points to double digits. Also called a hotel occupancy tax, the funds are often used to support the local tourism promotion agency, as well as infrastructure repairs.

Blackout dates - This is a term for suppliers such as hotels and attractions. It refers to admission that won't be sold to tour operators at a discounted rate. Tour operators prefer to work with limited blackout dates so use these sparingly.

Brand - Your reputation and a promise of what you are going to deliver. This term is also used to describe the visual and verbal identity system used to describe and promote a destination, product, or attraction.

Buyers - in the tourism industry, a buyer is a tour operator. They 'buy' product, usually in bulk, whether it is admission tickets, hotel rooms or airline tickets. Buyers can be small mom and pop tour companies, or international online travel agencies.

Channels of distribution - How travel is sold. Products or services can be sold directly to the consumer (direct distribution) or through the travel trade (indirect distribution).

Charters - a tour company may tell you that they work with charters. The definition of a charter is "the reservation of an aircraft, boat, or bus for private use." An example might be a school band that needs to get to the Macy's Day Thanksgiving parade. They will charter a bus to get them there. Sometimes charters are just transportation, and other times there is some tour planning involved.

Collateral - A marketing strategy that involves the use of various printed and online materials that communicate a brand, market position, product/service features, benefits to the customer, and for businesses -- pricing. The regional DMO and area map are considered collateral.

Commission - A fee paid to an agent for transacting a piece of business or service. In the travel business, commissions are paid to travel agents, tour operators, and wholesalers as compensation for marketing and selling products or services to their markets.

Competition - When entities go after the same markets or customers they are in competition **with** one another.

Contract Rooms - Contract rooms are occupied at rates stipulated by contracts - such as for airline crews and permanent guests. Room allotments that do not require guaranteed use or payment should not be classified as contract.

Contingency Planning - Part of the overall marketing plan that provides flexibility with plans and budgets in order to allow an entity to take advantage of unexpected opportunities.

Cooperative marketing/promotion - Two or more organizations share the cost of the promotional program, such as advertising, sales promotion, or public relations).

Cost per click - The cost per click that an ad receives. This is a metric that applies to all digital ads to link back to a website, landing page, or social media platform. Many digital advertising channels will offer CPC-based pricing meaning you won't pay for impressions, only for engagement with a specific advertisement (regardless of whether the ad is text, image, or video-based). Buying CPC-based advertising placements in auction-based settings is a best practice because it enables niche targeting and more value than traditional advertising and CPM-based digital media buying. This technique can be used to gain a significant market advantage for your product or destination.

Cost per conversion - A calculation of the cost of a promotional activity divided by the number of bookings received. For example, if an ad cost \$100 and 4 people booked a trip based on that ad, then the cost per conversion was \$25.

Cost per inquiry - A calculation of the cost of a promotional activity (e.g. an advertisement) divided by the number of inquiries received. For example, if an ad cost \$100 and 100 people responded to the ad, then the cost per inquiry was \$1.

Cost per thousand (CPM) - The cost of an advertisement per thousand readers, viewers, or listeners that are reached.

Cultural Tourism/Geotourism - Tourism that sustains or enhances the geographical character of a place-its environment, heritage, aesthetics, culture, and the well-being of its residents.

Demand (rooms sold) - The number of rooms sold or rented (excludes complimentary rooms) in a given period.

Demographics - A way to segment the market based on age, household income, or other population statistics.

Destination - The place to which a traveler journeys.

Direct Mail - An advertising vehicle involving the mailing of promotional materials directly to consumers or to travel trade representatives.

Direct Bill - this is a term a tour operator will use when they want to be billed on a monthly basis, versus every time a customer of theirs comes to a attraction. Most suppliers will have a tour operator fill out a credit check before they agree to a direct billing relationship. This makes payment and billing more efficient.

Direct Marketing - A broad term that includes all forms of marketing directly to the consumer and travel trade and includes direct mail, telemarketing, and e-marketing. Direct Marketing, like advertising and public relations, is an important component of any strategic marketing campaign.

Destination Management Company - A DMC is a professional management company specializing in the design and delivery of events, activities, tours, staffing and transportation, possessing and utilizing extensive local knowledge, expertise, and resources.

| Glossary

DMO (Destination Marketing Organization)

- An organization whose primary function is to attract visitors to its locale for the purpose of enhancing the local economy through the purchase of room nights, food and beverage, retail items, transportation, visitor services, etc.

Familiarization (“FAM”) Trips - Free or reduced-priced trips given to travel agencies, tour wholesalers and operators, travel writers, and others by destination marketing organizations and travel suppliers. FAM Tours and media engagement outreach is an important part of any DMO programming plan.

FIT - A fully independent tour is a custom-designed travel itinerary designed by travel agents or tour operators for travelers who prefer to have a fully planned vacation but do not want to be part of a group tour.

Fly-Drive - This is a bare-bones package for a FIT customer. It includes only a flight and a rental car. Many companies will upsell fly drives by offering touring ideas with unique stops that they can then book.

Focus Group - A small group of people gathered to participate in a discussion about a specific topic, moderated by a research professional.

Fulfillment - The process of delivering a product, such as a brochure, to a customer.

GDS - A Global Distribution System is a network operated by a company that enables automated transactions between travel service providers (mainly airlines, hotels and car rental companies) and travel agencies. Travel agencies traditionally relied on GDS for services, products & rates in order to provision travel-related services to the end consumers.

Group Leaders - Group leaders will bring groups to your attraction, so they are valuable contacts. Often these contacts fill a volunteer position or plan events as a hobby. Many church groups or social organizations fall into this category. Typically they get a discount from your general admission pricing, but it is not as large a discount as a tour operator would receive.

Group Rooms - Group rooms are sold simultaneously in blocks of a minimum of 10 rooms or more (e.g., group tours, domestic and international groups, association, convention and corporate groups).

Interactive Marketing - Interactive marketing engages the consumer in a conversation and allows them to connect with destinations, products and services in an active and timely manner. Interactive marketing includes websites, RSS feeds, social media, e-newsletters, blogs, e-blasts, etc.

Lead Prospecting - A technique used to find potential sales prospects.

Lifestyle Segmentation - A market segmentation approach that divides the market by lifestyle categories, such as types of media used, vacations taken, electronics owned, or hobbies and activities enjoyed.

Market Analysis/Market Research - The study of the demand of a potential market for a product or service.

Market share - The percentage relationship of an organization's sales (or number of visitors) to total industry sales.

Marketing - The process or technique of promoting, selling, and distributing a product or service.

Marketing Mix - The activities selected to communicate an organization or business's brand, market position, product/service features and benefits to the customer.

Marketing Objective - A goal focused on a target market that an organization or business attempts to achieve. Objectives should be results-oriented, target market-specific, quantitative/measurable, and time specific.

Marketing Plan - A written plan, usually covering a year, which describes how an organization will use the marketing mix to achieve its marketing objectives.

Marketing Strategy and Actions / Tactics - Marketing strategy is a course of action leveraging a mix of tactics used to communicate value to various target markets. Marketing strategies include pricing structures and how a product or service is distributed or sold.

Media - A means of communication that reaches a wide variety of people, such as newspaper, radio, television, magazine, and internet.

Mission - A broad, general statement about an organization's business and scope, services or products, markets served, and overall philosophy.

Occupancy - Rooms sold divided by rooms available multiplied by 100. Occupancy is always expressed as a percentage of rooms occupied.

OTA - Online travel agency. Expedia, Travelocity, Orbitz are all examples of websites where people can book travel directly. Chinese OTA's such as Ctrip and Alitrip will be larger than all the other OTA's combined within a few years.

Percent Change - Amount of growth - up, flat, or down - this period versus same period last year (month or year-to-date). Calculated as $((TY - LY) / LY) * 100$.

Pre-formed Tour - This is a type of tour group. It means that someone has a group of people who want to travel together and they call a tour operator and have them plan the tour for them. That means that sometimes they have the opportunity to plan a tour to an area they don't usually feature. Even if all their tours are planned for the year, there might be a preformed group that will have them create something new.

Retail Pricing - this is the full ticket price without any discounts. A visitor walking through the door of a attraction pays the retail price. By contrast, wholesale pricing (see definition below) is what tour operators and online booking companies like Viator or Expedia will pay.

ROI - stands for Return on Investment. This is a common term in many industries. In tourism, it usually refers to judging whether a tradeshow, sales mission or ad campaign was worth the money spent on it. ROI can be a challenge to track.

Revenue (Room Revenue) - Total room revenue generated from the sale or rental of rooms.

RevPAR (Revenue Per Available Room) - Room revenue divided by rooms available. This is a critical performance indicator for destinations, hotels, short term rentals, and industry health.

Shoulder Season - The time of year a attraction or destination is most popular. Low season has the fewest. Shoulder seasons (in between seasons) is usually the best place to develop growth.

Scenic Byway - A program that is part of the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration that helps to recognize, preserve and enhance selected roads throughout the U.S. through grass-roots collaboration. See www.byways.org.

Supplier - Suppliers are businesses that supply tourism products to travel buyers. A supplier is typically an attraction, a hotel, a shopping venue,

| Glossary

a restaurant, or a transportation provider. If you welcome visitors, you are most likely a supplier.

Supply (Rooms Available) - The number of rooms times the number of days in the period.

Tiered Pricing - Varied different levels of pricing for different customers. In the group tour industry, retail is the highest price. There is a level with a 10-15% discount for group leaders, and the highest discount (between 15-30%) is for tour companies. Look for a future blog post on tiered pricing.

Tour operator/Tour company - This is a business who's main focus is to sell a package tour to customers. They have websites and staff, which is what separates them from group leaders. They typically receive a discount of 20-30% off.

Transient Rooms - Transient rooms include rooms occupied by those with reservations at rack, corporate, corporate negotiated, package, government, or foreign traveler rates.

Niche Markets - A portion of the overall market that has a specific focus, such as Culinary Tourism or Bicycle Tourism. These markets typically have their own specialized trade associations and events as well.

Packaging - The combination of related and complementary travel and hospitality services into a single-price offering.

Partnership - Cooperative promotions/marketing efforts and other cooperative offerings made by travel and hospitality organizations.

Perishability - Something that cannot be regained if not sold. A unsold hotel room or seat on a tour is perishable -- meaning it can be lost.

Place - In marketing terms "place" refers to the distribution channels for selling a product or

service. In terms of "placemaking" place refers to a small area that is made into a destination or attraction through thoughtful community planning, art, historical markers, or similar.

Positioning - How an offerer describes what they are selling.

Press/News Conference - Prearranged meetings where prepared presentations are made to invited media professionals.

Press (Media) Kits - A pre-packaged selection of promotional materials, such as press releases, articles, photographs, brochures, infographics, and video clips that are made available and distributed to the press.

Press/News Releases - Short articles about organizations that are used to seek media attention, leading to media coverage or the material contained within the releases.

Primary Research - Data collected for the first time by various methods, such as surveys, focus groups, or personal interviews.

Print Media - Newspapers, magazines, direct mail, outdoor advertising and other printed materials in which advertising can be placed.

Product/Service Mix - The assortment of services, facilities, and products that an organization provides to customers.

Programming - The development of special activities, events, or programs to increase customer spending or added value and appeal to a package or other hospitality or travel service.

Promotion - All the techniques that hospitality and travel organizations use to promote their services.

Psychographic Segmentation - A market segmentation approach based on psychological

profiles of customers and psychologically based measures of distinctive modes of living or lifestyles.

Public Relations - Activities designed to generate and maintain awareness of a destination, product or service among target markets and other organizations through nonpaid communication or information about what is offered. May include media research, pitching, press releases, media events, conferences, deskside media pitching, private meetings, influencer relations, FAM tours and more.

Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) - an official local or regional destination marketing organization.

DMMO - Destination Management and Marketing Organization.

Reach & Frequency - Reach refers to the number of households exposed to a given advertisement, while frequency refers to the number of times they are exposed to the advertising message.

Receptive Tour Operator - A local tour operator that manages products and services for incoming visitors, often for tour operator groups or overseas tour groups.

Response Rate - The percentage of all people surveyed who supply answers to the researcher's questions.

Sales Mission - A visit by an organization or a group of organizations to a target market area, such as another country, to promote their destination or business.

Secondary Research - Published information about markets that is available from existing sources.

Social Media - An overall term that refers to Internet-based tools for sharing and discussing information among human beings.

Survey Research - A form of primary research that includes telephone, Internet, mail, and personal interview surveys.

Tactical/Action Planning - The specific actions or activities included an organization's marketing plan, with specific information on timelines, budgets, and responsibilities.

Target Market/Audience - A market segment that is selected by an organization for marketing attention.

TOT - A Transient Occupancy Tax is a tax on lodging that funds tourism promotion and destination development.

Tour Operator - A company or individual that operates packages or tours that are included in packages.

Tour Wholesaler - A company or individual who plans, prepares, markets, and administers travel packages, usually combining the services of several suppliers.

Trade Show - Events where all parts of an industry are brought together to share information.

Travel Agent - A person or business who sells and reserves the services of suppliers to individual and group customers and receives commissions for these efforts.

Travel Trade - Travel agents, tour wholesalers and operators, corporate travel managers, incentive travel planners, and convention/meeting planners.

VFR - An overnight visitor whose purpose is to visit friends and relatives.

Viator - a large online booking company that specializes in attractions and experience ticketing. Viator is now owned by TripAdvisor tickets for local attractions can be sold right from the TripAdvisor listing. I recommend looking into it for your business.

VTC - Virginia Tourism Corporation. The Commonwealth of Virginia's State Travel and Tourism Office. They manage the Virginia is for Lovers brand and Virginia.org.

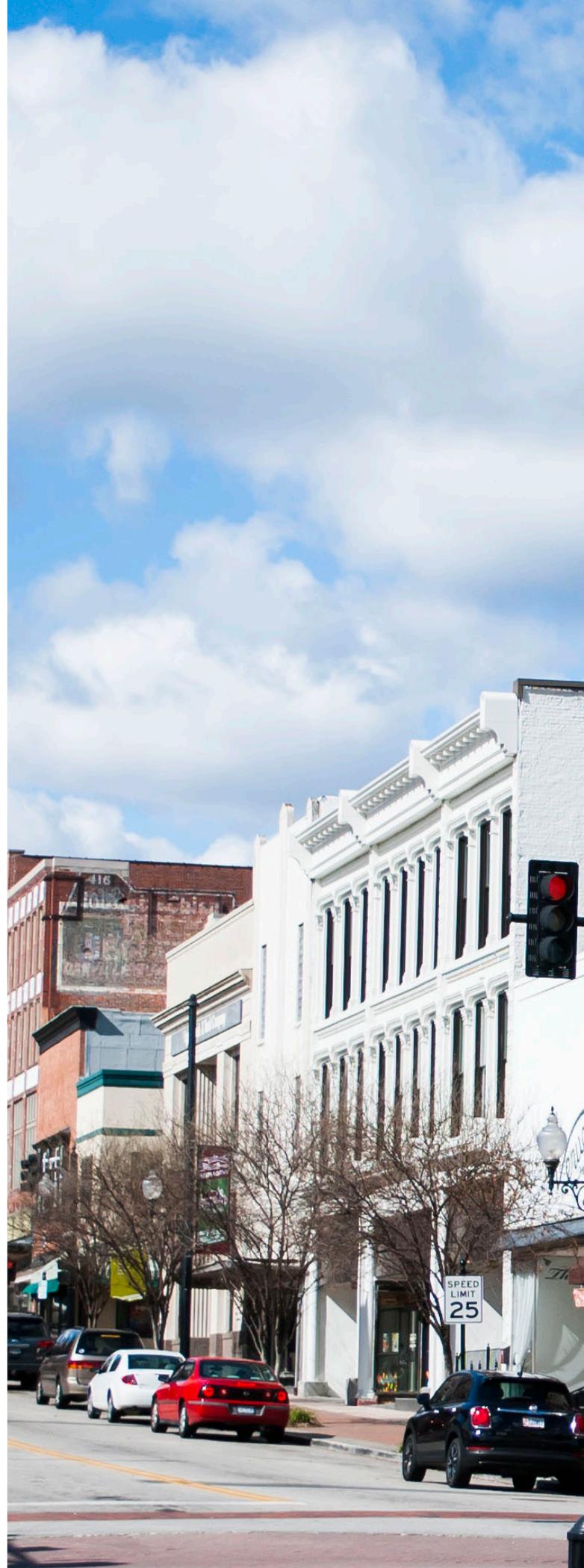
| Glossary

Voucher - this is a piece of paper that a tour company will have their customer (tour guide or group leader) turn in at your attraction. The voucher confirms that they will pay. This is often easier for companies to use instead of sending a check or paying with a credit card. In order to receive payment, an attraction will have to show the vouchers that were turned in and bill accordingly. Vouchers can also be used with FIT guests.

Wholesale Pricing - This is the lowest level of pricing offered to a tour company or online travel company. The lower price is necessary because they will purchase your tickets, mark them up and resell them as part of a tour package.

Sources for Definitions-

Great Destination Strategies, LLC, SallyDavisBerry.com, Travel Oregon, Miriam-Webster Dictionary, Hospitality and Travel Marketing by Alistair Morrison, Association of Destination Management Executives, Wikipedia, U.S. Tour Operators Association, National Tour Association, American Bus Association





← CRAGHEAD 100 ST
MEMORIAL 100 DR →

The

LIZZY LOU
BOUTIQUE



Tourism Master Plan

Danville & Pittsylvania County
Published May, 2023