



**HARRISONBURG | VA**  
**FRIENDLY BY NATURE**



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## Free tours of the historic Hardesty-Higgins House coming in September

HARRISONBURG, Va. – Community members interested in learning more about The Friendly City’s history are invited to take a tour of the Hardesty-Higgins Visitor Center.

The center will host historic house tours beginning Labor Day, Sept 1, with tours offered at 3 p.m. weekly on Monday and Friday. Tours of the Hardesty-Higgins House given by visitor center staff are free to the public and expected to last approximately 30 minutes. Reservations can be made by calling the Visitor Center at 540-432-8935. Walk in visitors will be added to the tours when space allows.

“So many people are fascinated with the history of the building and want to learn more, so we developed a formal tour to offer to the public,” Harrisonburg Tourism Manager Jennifer Bell said. Bell hopes the tour will attract tourists and locals to learn more about the history of the house and the city.



*(Above) Rebecca Huffman shows community members some of the exhibits in the Hardesty-Higgins Visitor Center. House tours will be available to the public starting in September.*

The Hardesty-Higgins House, home to Harrisonburg’s first mayor Isaac Hardesty, bears his name and the name of the physician, Henry Higgins, who began construction in 1848. Isaac Hardesty was born in 1795 and became the city’s first mayor by charter on March 16, 1849. He hosted Union General Banks in the house during the Civil War in 1862. Hardesty completed construction of the home by 1853 and lived in the house with his wife, Ann, and two children.

The City of Harrisonburg purchased the house in May 2001 thanks in part to a \$420,000 federal Transportation Enhancement Act grant. A second grant of \$175,000 was received in 2003 to assist with renovation costs. The City created a multi-use facility to serve the community as a visitor center and museum that would restore the home’s significance. Today, the building includes the Valley Turnpike Museum, a Civil War Orientation Center, a state-certified visitor center, the Rocktown Gift Shop and the Heritage Bakery (who is a tenant).

**The City of Harrisonburg** is centrally located in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. It is home to approximately 56,879 people. More information about the City of Harrisonburg is online at [www.HarrisonburgVA.gov](http://www.HarrisonburgVA.gov).

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