



# HARRISONBURG VA FRIENDLY BY NATURE



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Contact: Jennifer Bell, Harrisonburg Tourism Manager  
Jennifer.Bell@harrisonburgva.gov



*(Above) People enjoy a festival Downtown. Tourists contributed more than \$243 million to Harrisonburg's economy in 2024.*

## Visitor Spending Reached \$243M in Harrisonburg in 2024

HARRISONBURG, Va. – The Friendly City remained an attractive destination for travelers last year, and the local economy benefited because of it.

Tourists contributed more than \$243 million to Harrisonburg's local economy in 2024, according to an annual report from the Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC), an increase over 2023. Tourism supported 2,677 jobs in the city, and tourism-related local taxes collected topped \$13 million.

For Harrisonburg Tourism, the growing number of visitors to the area is a significant benefit to the community that staff is working hard to see continue.

“We worked on some new initiatives in 2024 to draw tourists to the area, and we received recognition for our promotion of Harrisonburg as the ‘Basecamp for Outdoor Recreation’ in the region,” Harrisonburg Tourism Manager Jennifer Bell said. “For those across the East Coast looking to visit the beautiful Shenandoah Valley, Harrisonburg is the perfect place to stay, eat and play.”

Harrisonburg Tourism won two awards in 2024 for the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Trail Guide: the Trailblazer Award from VTC for outstanding work and dedication to innovative tourism marketing and the VIRGO Award from Virginia Association of Destination Marketing Organizations. Harrisonburg Tourism also launched the Harrisonburg Coffee Trail featuring 11 local, independent coffee shops and worked with the Shenandoah Valley Bicycle Coalition to improve and expand the Rocktown Trails. Harrisonburg Tourism also was awarded grants valued at about \$40,000. Meanwhile, the Hardesty-Higgins Visitor Center saw more than 40,000 visitors and the Valley Mall Visitor Center saw more than 16,500 people.

“As well as 2024 went, we’re already excited about all we’ve been able to do so far in 2025,” Bell said. “We continue to add new initiative to attract tourists, and have just launched House Tours of the historic Hardesty-Higgins House which are given Friday and Mondays, free to attract more visitors.”

Harrisonburg Tourism is a division under the Economic Development Department which serves Harrisonburg by promoting the community as an attractive tourist destination, supporting Harrisonburg’s tourism-related businesses, providing promotional materials to showcase Harrisonburg, working with travel professionals to schedule meetings and conferences and managing the Hardesty-Higgins Visitor Center. The mission of Harrisonburg Tourism is to promote Harrisonburg as a unique travel destination and enhance the community’s public image as a dynamic place to live, work and visit with the goal of strengthening the local economy, creating jobs and providing opportunities for local businesses.

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It is estimated that a typical Virginia household paid \$990 less in state and local taxes for the services they received in 2024 due to tourism spending in the state. (Data is from Tourism Economics and is based on visitor spending from trips taken 50 miles or more away from home.)

“We are incredibly proud to see the continued momentum of Virginia’s tourism industry propelling us to new heights,” President and CEO of Virginia Tourism Corporation Rita McClenny said in a news release. “Through strategic marketing and close collaboration with statewide partners, VTC is driving new demand and encouraging longer stays across Virginia. From coast to cliff, our diverse destinations continue to captivate. As we look ahead to milestone moments such as the VA250 commemoration, Virginia is poised to play a leading role in how visitors engage with history, culture, and adventure.”

***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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