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Bell named new Harrisonburg Tourism Manager

HARRISONBURG, Va. – Harrisonburg has a new advocate in encouraging and welcoming visitors to the Friendly City.

Jennifer Bell, formerly the City of Winchester Downtown Manager, has officially joined the City of Harrisonburg staff as tourism manager. She is responsible for Harrisonburg Tourism and Visitor Services, including managing the Hardesty-Higgins Visitor Center, developing strong partnerships with area businesses and regional partners, recruiting conferences and meetings and assisting in the advocacy of the tourism industry.

Bell is eager to begin shining a fresh light on all Harrisonburg provides to visitors.

“Harrisonburg is a dynamic city with much to offer tourists – from unique restaurants and shops to numerous attractions ranging from traditional museums to active outdoor adventures,” Bell said. “I am thrilled to be able to contribute to the growth of the Friendly City.”



Harrisonburg Tourism Manager Jennifer Bell

Tourism continues to be a strong economic driver within Virginia and the Shenandoah Valley region. It also is a top priority for the Harrisonburg City Council and the Economic Development Department.

Bringing in someone with Bell’s experience will make a big difference in how the City approaches those efforts. She has worked in economic development, tourism and community development for the last 12 years. With her most recent position, in Winchester, Bell led the promotion and revitalization of Old Town Winchester – resulting in a net gain of 44 new businesses, \$12 million in private investment, an \$8 million increase in spending yearly at downtown restaurants, significant gains in parking revenue and the doubling of meals tax collected.

City officials are excited to see Bell’s impact on economic development in Harrisonburg.

“Tourism is a vital piece of our economic development strategy,” explained Brian Shull, Harrisonburg’s economic development director. “The Shenandoah Valley is a powerful tourism magnet, and Harrisonburg wants to continue to be our visitors’ home base as they explore all the beauty and experiences that the Valley has to offer. Jennifer brings a wealth of knowledge and leadership skills, and I am so excited to have her hit the ground running as Harrisonburg’s tourism manager.”

Bell's first day was Monday, July 29. Her office is located within the Hardesty-Higgins Visitor Center at 212 S. Main St. The house also hosts a Civil War Orientation Center and the Valley Turnpike Museum.

The City of Harrisonburg is centrally located in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. It is home to approximately 54,000 people. More information about the City of Harrisonburg is available online at www.HarrisonburgVA.gov.



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