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Harrisonburg Tourism receives grant for tourism marketing

HARRISONBURG, Va. – Harrisonburg Tourism has received \$20,000, the maximum amount awarded, from the Virginia Tourism Corporation’s (VTC) Recovery Marketing Leverage Program (RMLP). The grant is designed to help local and regional tourism entities attract more visitors by leveraging limited local marketing dollars through a local match of the state grant.

Harrisonburg Tourism will use the VTC Recovery Marketing Leverage grant funds to promote Harrisonburg’s conference, meeting and event facilities to help bolster the local lodging industry. Harrisonburg has more than 21 lodging facilities with more than 2,100 rooms and three more expected to open in 2021.

People who visit Harrisonburg to attend meetings or events spend money at local restaurants and other local businesses. They pay meals and lodging taxes, which help support local initiatives and local jobs.

“Lodging is an important component of the local economy and this grant will help us promote our facilities to a broader audience and attract more events and meetings to the area,” Harrisonburg Tourism Manager Jennifer Bell said.

The grant aims to support an industry seriously impacted by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

“Tourism is a crucial section of the Virginia economy and when we invest in this industry, we support local job creation and drive regional economic growth, which is desperately needed now due to the pandemic,” Virginia Governor Ralph Northam said. “These funds give localities and businesses access to critical marketing resources that will help bring more travelers to our Commonwealth, increase visitor spending, and grow demand for Virginia products.”

Tourism is one of the Commonwealth’s largest economic engines, with visitors to Harrisonburg spending more than \$136 million in 2019, supporting 1,234 work opportunities and contributing more than \$10 million in local and state tax revenue. The tourism and hospitality industries have also been among the hardest-hit by the pandemic, experiencing decreased revenue and job loss, along with the temporary closure of many tourism-related businesses. A revived tourism economy can help spur new economic activity and inject critical funds back into Virginia communities.

Harrisonburg Tourism promotes area businesses and attractions, draws visitors to the area and provides informational services to visitors. Most recently, Harrisonburg Tourism launched a new Trip Planner app and a Scavenger Hunt app to adapt to the way people prefer to access information and experience a destination through their mobile device. Harrisonburg Tourism has actively promoted area businesses and attractions using social media, printer media, YouTube, and radio.

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.

