



HARRISONBURG | VA
FRIENDLY BY NATURE



For Immediate Release – Aug. 26, 2021

Contact: Jennifer Bell, Harrisonburg Tourism Manager
540.432.8940
Jennifer.Bell@harrisonburgva.gov

Harrisonburg Tourism selected for DRIVE 2.0 Statewide Tourism Plan implementation

HARRISONBURG, Va. – The City of Harrisonburg Tourism & Visitor Services has been selected to participate in the DRIVE 2.0 Statewide Tourism Plan implementation, which focuses on tourism promotion and product development.

The DRIVE 2.0 process, facilitated by Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC), equips communities across the state with the tools they need to succeed in an overly competitive travel and tourism market. Harrisonburg Tourism is one of only 30 communities who will complete the DRIVE 2.0 program.

“The Drive 2.0 program will help Harrisonburg grow the local tourism economy, which prior to the pandemic employed more than 1,200 people locally and led to state and local tax collection of almost \$11 million,” Harrisonburg Tourism Manager Jennifer Bell said. “What we are working to preserve are local jobs and local businesses which are supported by tourism.”

The DRIVE 2.0 program launched at an important time for the tourism industry, as communities are looking ahead to rebound efforts to mitigate the impact of the coronavirus pandemic. DRIVE 2.0 materials are an important resource and tool for these industries as they look to recovery, with a focus on promotion of outdoor recreation and development, community support, and making the case for tourism as drivers of community and economic wellness.

“Tourism will be key to economic recovery as the pandemic continues to stabilize,” Rita McClenny, president and CEO of Virginia Tourism Corporation, said. “As travelers immediately inject cash back into communities, Virginia aims to restore the tourism economy into the vibrant and highly performing economic engine it always has been. By promoting responsible tourism, innovative product development, and community cooperation, the tourism industry will return to its previous economic vitality as an instant revenue generator. DRIVE 2.0 will help our industry do just that.”

DRIVE 2.0 has developed strategies that will help make Virginia's tourism industry more robust and create sustainable opportunities for new development and growth. Throughout the implementation process, communities' input and expertise from their own local and regional tourism partners will be gathered through a community survey, expanded on through community consensus meetings, and will result in specifically tailored promotion, product development, and advocacy strategies.

DRIVE 2.0 will help create the foundation for a competitive promotion, product development, and advocacy plan, including specific action steps, success factors, timelines and priorities for implementation. At the end of implementation, communities receive a \$10,000 grant to assist with furthering or developing these plans.

Find more information about DRIVE Tourism at www.vatc.org/drive2

***The City of Harrisonburg** is centrally located in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. It is home to almost 55,000 people. More information about the City of Harrisonburg is online at www.HarrisonburgVA.gov.*

