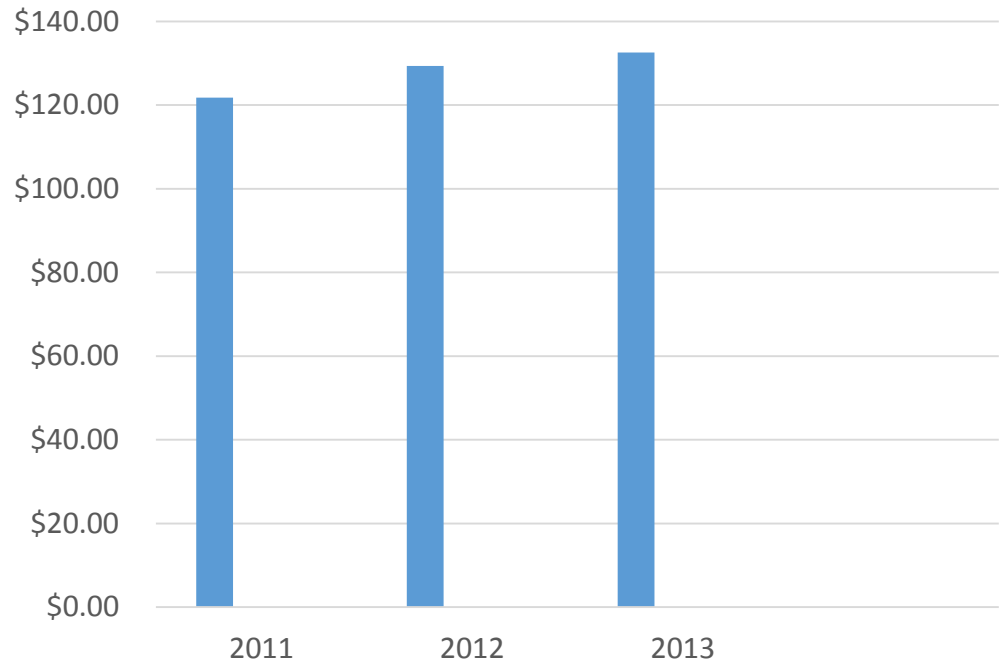
Update on Regional Tourism Program

January 20, 2015

Blacksburg | Christiansburg

MONTGOMERY COUNTY, VA

Tourism *Spending in Montgomery County



*By Visitors

FY11- $121.8 mil
FY12- $129.4 mil
FY13- $132.6 mil- most recent

Source: Virginia Tourism Corporation

Tax Rates

2011	**Meals**	**Transient**	**Admission**
County	4%	3%	NA
B'burg	6%	7%	NA
C'burg	7%	7%	NA
***2012**			NA
County	4%	3%	NA
B'burg	6%	7%	NA
C'burg	7.5%	9%	NA

Source: Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service
**Information collected SP, S, early Fall*

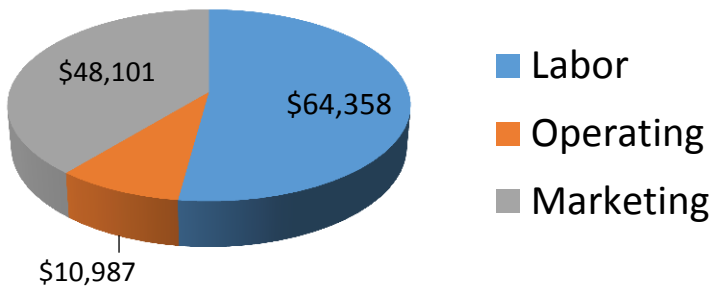
Regional Tourism Budget

As of January 20, 2015

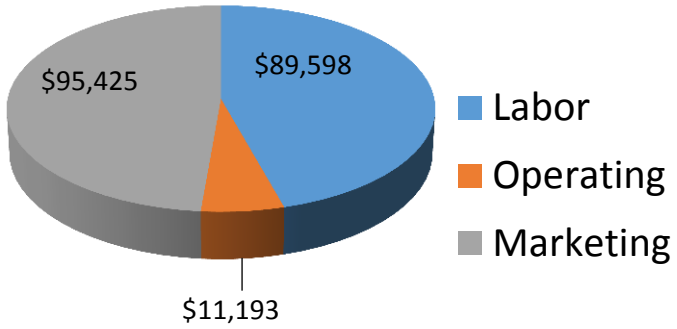
Total Assets
$486,047.48

Two quarters pending , approx. $60,000 to be added.
Excludes grant awards.
Excludes FY Expenditures below.

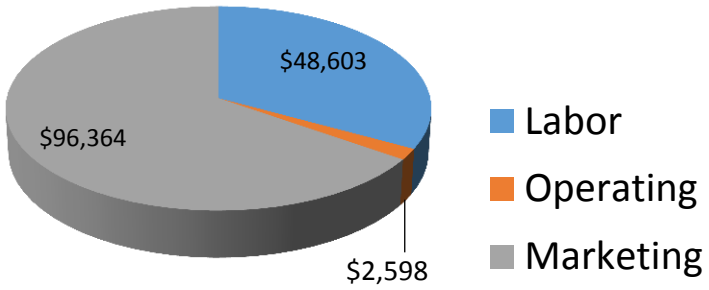
FY13 Expenditures
$123,445.43



FY14 Expenditures
$196,216.86



FY15 Expenditures
$147,564.56



“Tax Relief”

Revenue derived from tourism spending in our area generated **$230.40 per Household** in Montgomery County in 2013!

Compliments of our Visitors

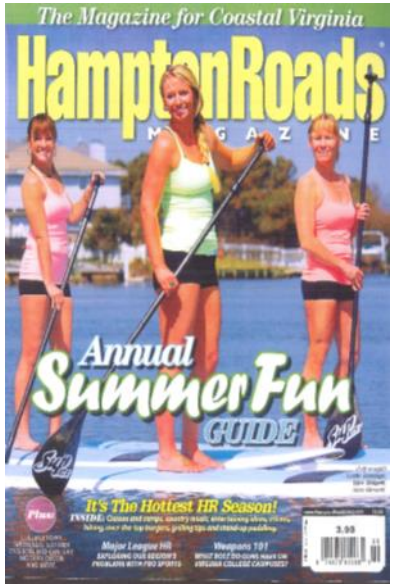
Math behind the Amount

$8,003,713.98 combined state and Montgomery County taxes generated from **visitor** spending in our County in 2013
Source: Virginia Tourism Corporation – US Travel Association

34,739 households in Montgomery County
Source: US Census Bureau

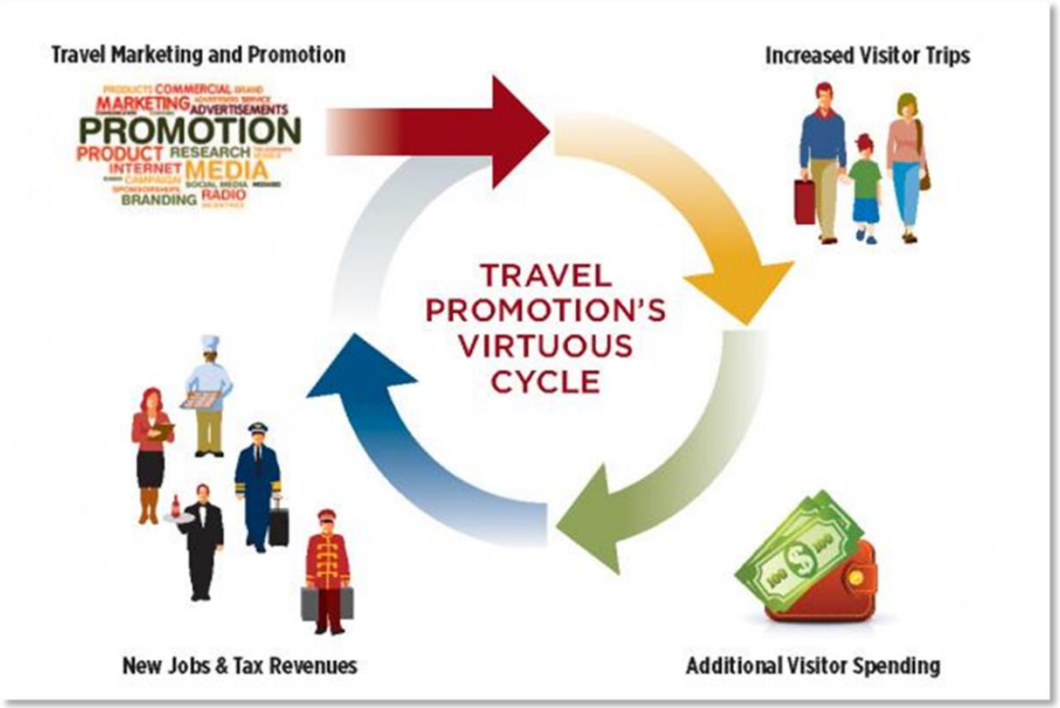
Sponsorship

Public Relations



Promotion

Accolades



VHTA
Virginia Hospitality & Travel Association

HOSPITALITY AND TRAVEL NEWS FROM ACROSS VIRGINIA

A quick glance at the week's top tourism news from your friends at VHTA.

Newport News to ask People Express to repay grant funds. Go to - http://www.dailypress.com/business/tidewater/dp-newport-news-to-ask-people-express-to-repay-grant-funds-20140930,0,1983418.story

Tourism numbers are up in Montgomery County. Go to - http://www.wdbj7.com/news/local/tourism-numbers-are-up-in-montgomery-county/28217376

Hermitage Hill Farm and Stables received Virginia Tourism Corporation grant for tourism marketing. Go to - http://augustafreepress.com/hermitage-hill-farm-stables-receives-virginia-tourism-corporation-grant-tourism-marketing/

VMFA, Maymont receive grants; VMFA gets match for crowdfunding campaign. Go to - http://www.timesdispatch.com/business/local/vmfa-maymont-receive-grants-vmfa-gets-match-for-crowdfunding-campaign/article_5bb621a6-4f11-5b61-9759-b2399b6c8d6b.html

Blacksburg | Christiansburg

MONTGOMERY COUNTY, VA

Tourism Mission:
Stimulate economic opportunity and enhance the quality of life by the celebration and sharing of our culture, heritage and natural beauty through authentic experiences. We will promote our destination in a manner that fosters partnerships and sustainable growth.

GOAL 1. Increase Tourism Marketing

Objective 1. Tourism Marketing Plan

A. Research based marketing plan- Feb 2015
B. Branding, theme, logo, identify- Feb 2015

Objective 2. Develop effective data collection and success measurement program

Progress to date

- Procurement processes for brand development and marketing items.
- Connections with Universities, organizations, interest groups to obtain cost effective support for initiatives.
- Discussed and have received proposal from VT to conduct baseline visitor profile
- Data Sharing arrangement with VTC for Event Calendar (Master)
- Social Media: Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram. Overall marketing plan will include integrated social media plan.
- Research (through the branding process, interns, secondary through associations)
- Grants to support marketing initiatives: VTC MLP, VTC LOVEworks
- VTC Electronic Marketing- Updated listings
- Increased utilization of "third-party" websites and marketing channels: Explore New River Valley, MySWVA, Heartwood Visitor's Center, NRV Visitor's Center, Strategically located State Welcome Centers and Rest Areas, local businesses.
- Building media relationships with print and broadcast by press releases, news stories and article support.

Coming Soon!

- Our Brand
- Website with interactive map
- Image library

GOAL 2. Improve Tourism Infrastructure

Objective 1. Improve, coordinate and communicate information about current infrastructure

A. State-certified Visitors Center and kiosks (other locations such as VT visitors center, libraries, chamber, retail)
B. Develop marketing materials
C. Implement Ambassador program

Progress to date

- Tear-off Map test version
- Temporary VIC at Gvmt Center. Establishing best policies and procedures.
- Marketing research- VT, RU, classes and interns
- Welcome Centers and Rest Area brochure fulfillment
- Brochure fulfillment from leads, calls, walk-ins, emails (on-going)

Coming Soon-!
Comprehensive Visitors Guide

On the Horizon-
Information distribution at VT and RU points of entry i.e. visitors center, websites, student orientations.
Ambassador program supported by destination training
Develop and implement visitor's signage and way-finding plan (Overall Destination i.e. area gateways)

GOAL 3. Develop and Cultivate Tourism Partnerships

Objective 1. Support regional planning by acting as a catalyst for stronger local, state, and regional partnerships.

A. Identify and prioritize partnership opportunities to develop and grow

Objective 2. Encourage Private and Non-Profit Sector Partnerships for Cooperative Marketing

Objective 3. Develop a marketable identity with partners for shared goals and interests

Progress to Date

- Initiated first New River Valley Destination Marketing Organization meeting now held quarterly
- Initiated first Hotel Director of Sales Meeting now held quarterly and expanding
- Worked with local businesses on promotion through 'Round the Mountain and Crooked Road Affiliation
- Led non-profit groups in producing first Crooked Road Festival in Montgomery County, March 2014.
- Lead office in "East Zone" of Mountains of Music Homecoming Crooked Road Festival, June 2015
- Partner in LoveWorks Murals in Blacksburg and Christiansburg, 2013
- Partner in Civil War Marker Grant, 2015
- Partner in NRV Trail Guide Grant, 2014
- Partner in Blacksburg Visitors Guide Grant, 2014
- Partner in Tri-County Agtourism Grants, 2014
- Partner in Montgomery County Crooked Road Festival Grant, 2014
- Partner in Crooked Road's Mountains of Music Homecoming Festival Grant, 2014
- Partner in Fish Virginia First
- Partner in the Wilderness Road
- Partner in MySWVA initiatives including the Crooked Road, 'Round the Mountain and Appalachian Spring
- Partnered with the Christiansburg Aquatic Center and Christiansburg Recreation Center to hold Sports Marketing information session for local businesses to learn about the sports groups, schedules, profile etc., 2014
- Generate leads to hotels for "city-wide" meetings and events
- Support traditional economic development while building tourism sector (Tradeshows, VT connections)

On the Horizon

- Marketing Plan for the New River Valley (working with NRV DMOs) to enhance current visitation.
- Working with existing initiatives including NRV Green and Virginia Green to educate and encourage sustainable operational practices that many travelers have come to expect.

GOAL 4. Develop Tourism Education Programming and Advocacy

Objective 1. Increase customer service training

A. Create certified training program

Objective 2. Increase resident and front line staff awareness of tourism assets

Progress to Date

- Researched variety of ways to provide training to local businesses including front line and management staff. Discussion still needed to determine most effective and sustainable manner considering budget is a big contributing factor.
- Tear-off map will be as much an education and marketing tool as a way to assist the visitor from point A to B
- Ongoing speaking engagements and guest appearances throughout the year including audiences of civic groups, community organizations, professional organizations, and student groups

On the Horizon

- National Tourism Week Celebration, May 2015 to increase recognition for the local hospitality and travel businesses and employees as well as to educate residents on the value of tourism

GOAL 5. Enable Growth through Strong Program and Policy

Objective 1. Evaluate, improve and continue to create policy and procedures for the tourism program

Progress to Date

- Research in tax rates within the competitive set and opportunities for increased revenue
- Membership in VHTA to remain abreast of policy affecting the local hospitality and tourism businesses and the best way to support.
- Frequent stories through print and broadcast communicating the value of tourism in our area
- Researched and share, when appropriate, incentives and zoning to facilitate tourism

On the Horizon

- Participation in VHTA Tourism and Film Day at General Assembly January 2015
- Local Public Relations Campaign to educate on the value of tourism. Will support the unveiling of the brand and timing will coincide with National Tourism Week, May 2015