



2021/2022 ANNUAL REPORT





“THE ONLY
CONSTANT
IN LIFE IS
CHANGE.”

- Heraclitus

**Economic Development Authority
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Vice Chair

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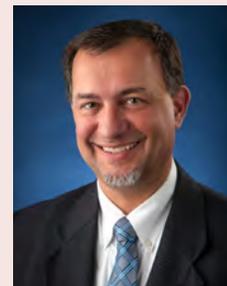
As it did for most areas of the world, 2021 brought many changes in York County. From new leadership and merged departments to ever-changing pandemic protocols and new business developments, the overarching theme was CHANGE.

York County's business community responded to the new normal by evolving their processes, protocols and places. While some had no choice but to close, many more new businesses opened during the pandemic than in the past several years. COVID-19 changed consumers' priorities and the way they live and want to do business. Savvy entrepreneurs used the down time to come up with unique new ideas to meet the public's changing desires. The most successful businesses were those that embraced the changing business environment—for instance, many restaurants switched to delivery or carryout. New leisure-focused businesses sprang up, and many industries that fared well during the pandemic continued to soar.



Kristi Olsen-Hayes, Director

The County's Office of Economic Development also saw changes in 2021. As longtime director Jim Noel prepared for retirement, the leadership team reorganized and merged Economic Development with Tourism, to better meet the needs of our business community. Because tourism is a major part of York County's economic base, the merger has provided organizational continuity, a consolidated resource base, and opportunities for new ways of doing business in the future. The new Department of Economic and Tourism Development is led by Kristi Olsen, who has served as the County's tourism manager since 2002.



Chair's Remarks

Even from its historical roots as the place where American and French forces came together to defeat the British and win our nation's freedom, the concepts of collaboration, resiliency, adapting to change, and moving forward together, have been part of what

makes York County special. Looking back over the year that was 2021, we can see that once again these key themes have been instrumental in allowing us to collectively move forward through much uncertainty brought on by a global pandemic and its impact on our business community. Just like in 1781, we worked together to face our challenges head-on and emerge stronger on the other side.

As you read through the information and stories in this annual report I hope that you will be able to appreciate the breadth and scope of the work being done to support local businesses throughout the County, and the EDA's focus to attract new and meaningful investment opportunities while helping our existing business community grow and thrive.

There are a number of EDA programs enumerated in this report which are available to businesses regardless of size or industry – not only to traditional brick-and-mortar establishments, but also to our many home-based businesses. Regardless of your business size, age, type, or location, we are here to help you. On behalf of my fellow EDA Board members, thank you for taking the time to learn more about the York County business community. And for our current and future business owners, we want to encourage you to reach out to the Economic & Tourism Development team to see how we can help your business thrive and grow to its fullest here in York County, Virginia.

CHANGES TO THE COUNTY

New to the County

- Affordable Fastener Supply Company
- Amish Custom Furniture
- Angelic Threads Boutique
- Ashley Home Store
- Bicycle Co-op of Williamsburg
- BurgerFi
- Dawg Houz Cigars & Accessories – *Bypass Rd*
- Column 15 – *new space*
- Conservatory Ballet
- County Med
- Duchess of Yorktown
- Friendly Grow Supply
- Gangsta Dog
- Graze Charcuterie
- Harper's Station
- Hibachi 2 Go
- HobbyTown
- In the Zone
- Kenny's Tree & Crane – *new space*
- Lazy Daisy
- Lilac Lane
- Lilly and Lane
- Locke Supply
- Make 'Ur Merch
- Marlowe We Care Company
- Ollie's – *upper York*
- Parkway Printshop – *opening*
- Pink Hillbilly
- Raising Cane's
- Ridgeside K9 Tidewater
- Sylvan Learning Center
- The Good Dog of Yorktown
- UPS Store
- Venue 4...All Occasions
- Wawa – *Lightfoot (6446 Richmond Rd)*
- Wild Geese Trading
- Word Roots
- Yorktown Mercantile
- Your Southern Heart



New Business Openings

Openings in 2022

488 ■■■■■

Openings in 2021

527 ■■■■■■

Openings in 2020

474 ■■■■■

Openings in 2019

451 ■■■■■

Openings in 2018

473 ■■■■■

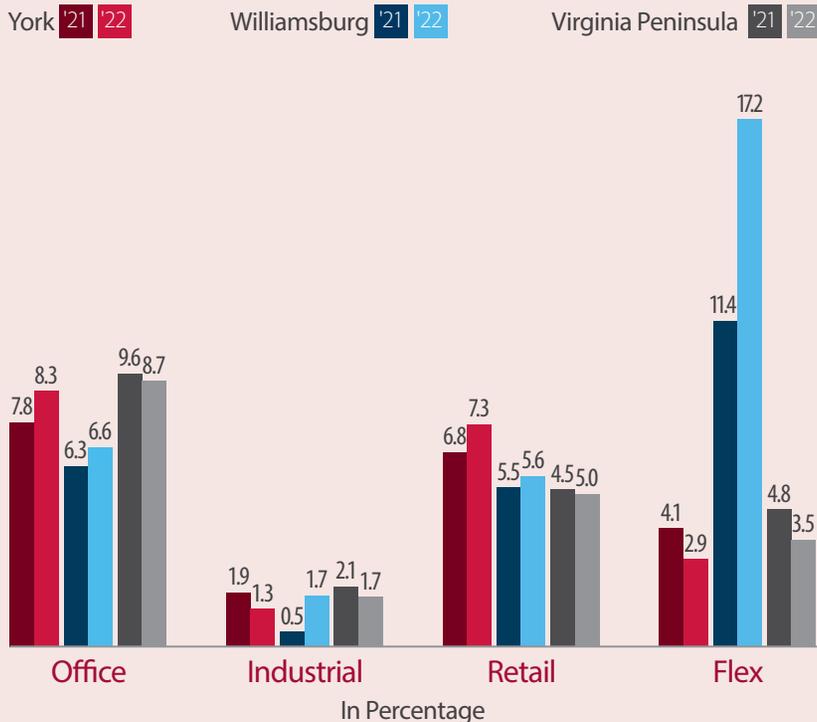


Building Permits

Year	Residential Permits		Commercial Permits	
	NO. OF UNITS		NO. OF UNITS	
2022	229	\$65,401,011	165	\$82,493,500
2021	482	\$83,295,604	134	\$31,580,340
2020	229	\$59,801,501	75	\$10,040,114
2019	258	\$51,943,389	90	\$26,102,442
2018	247	\$46,826,747	102	\$37,478,337
2017	167	\$35,145,861	92	\$16,509,119

Source: York County Division of Building Regulation

Vacancy Rates



Business Expansion Announcements

- **Dodd RV** to add new location & offerings in 2023
- **New Orleans Coffee** to add new locations
- **Operation Escape** to open second location
- **Persnickety Crane** to add Serene Bee Bakery
- **Play A Round Family Fun Center** to add go-karts
- **Water Country USA** announces new Riptide Race attraction for 2023, to open new kid area & revamp Aquazoid in 2022

Business Reopening Announcements

- **Bay Haven Grille** (new owners)
- **Granny's House of Crafts** (new owners)
- **King of Clubs** (new owners)
- **One Girl Desserts** (reopening & expansion)
- **Uncle B's Pizza Shop** (formerly The Pizza Shop)

New Construction & Coming Soon

- **Beale's**
- **Dairy Queen**
- **Harper's Station**
- **Raising Cane's Chicken Fingers**
- **Yorktown Beach Hotel** (formerly Duke of York Hotel)
- **Riverside Heating & Air Conditioning** (new warehouse)

Cliff's & No Limit Auto
 New owners to give Cliff's
 full-service restoration





While FY2021 had a total permit value of just over **\$45 million**, FY2022's total permit value grew to over **\$213 million**. New construction increased from **\$16.6 million** in FY2021 to almost **\$53 million** in FY2022, while additions and alterations increased from almost **\$13 million** in FY2021 to almost \$35.5 million in FY2022. Commercial activity was evenly distributed throughout the County and across the commercial, retail, and industrial market sectors.

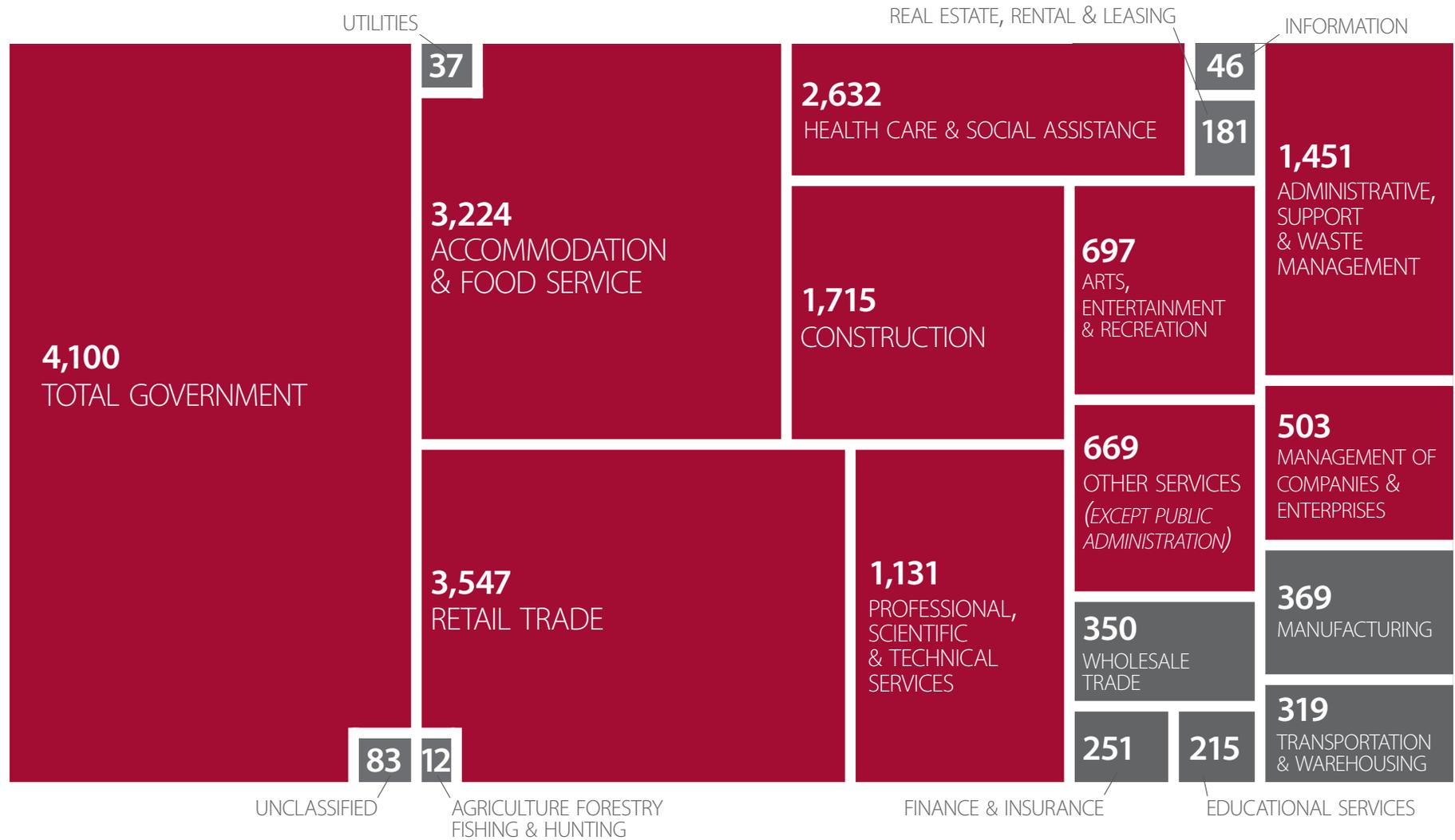
L to R: Southport Holdings site on Stafford Court and Raising Cane's

Commercial Development Activity

- The EDA went under contract for the final parcel in **York River Commerce Park South** to Metalworks, a stainless-steel welding/fabrication shop. Once this building is completed, the 6-acre park will be fully built out.
- With the EDA's assistance, the owner of **Kingsgate Green Shopping Center** announced new leases with **Ollie's** and **Ashley Furniture**, which will backfill two-thirds of the vacant Big K space on Mooretown Road in Upper York County. A third tenant, Locke Supply Co, filled the last space in the former Big K building in late 2022.
- In addition to the activity mentioned above, the County continues to see slow but steady positive movement in the commercial retail sector, with backfill of existing retail space representing many of the growth opportunities. The EDA contracted with **Retail Strategies**, a nationally recognized retail recruiting company, to continue building momentum in the overall retail commercial space, with a special focus on high-visibility and high-value retail spaces.
- The EDA sold a 3.39-acre parcel in Busch Industrial Park to the Miller Group, a Virginia Beach-based developer. The **Miller Group** began constructing a 20,000 sq. ft. flex-space building on the property that will be for lease in 10,000 sq. ft. increments.
- The EDA selected an architectural firm to redesign the **Riverwalk Restaurant/Water Street Grille** space at the Yorktown waterfront. The project will result in a reconfigured space that combines the two restaurants, updates the interior to adapt to the changing restaurant market, and improves the outdoor seating options.
- A partnership with the Army Corps of Engineers was initiated to conduct a **feasibility study for dredging the Back Creek** entrance channel that leads to the Seaford Scallop Company (SSC). Over time, the channel has silted in, making navigating the channel difficult for the fleet and negatively impacting the scallop business. If it moves forward, the dredging project would help ensure the future viability of an important legacy industry.
- **Raising Cane's Chicken Fingers** opened in November 2022 on the former site of Ruby Tuesday at 3150 Kiln Creek Parkway. Founder and CEO Todd Graves imagined his vision of Raising Cane's Chicken Fingers while he was a college student. His dream was to build a restaurant that served high-quality chicken finger meals and nothing else. Roughly 4,000 square feet, the location features a 100-seat dining room and double lane drive-thru, bringing approximately 150 jobs to the area. Raising Cane's does a lot of things you don't see in fast-food restaurants, like cook-to-order, using fresh, never frozen, products and premium chicken-finger tenderloins. They describe the chain as a brand that delivers high-quality food at fast-food speed and convenience. In addition to chicken fingers, Raising Cane's menu keeps it simple and offers crinkle-cut fries, coleslaw, Texas toast, drinks, and its signature Cane's Sauce. [Raising Cane's Chicken Fingers Is Opening Two Peninsula Locations](#)

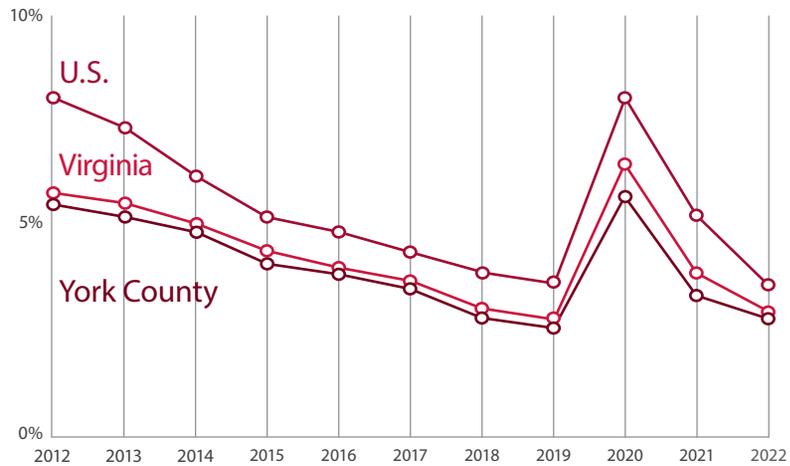
EMPLOYMENT STATS

Employment by Industry



Source: Virginia Employment Commission 2022

Unemployment Rates



Source: Virginia Employment Commission, Economic Information & Analytics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics.

Top Employers 2022

2,699 Naval Weapons Station	683 Water Country
2,375 York County Schools	439 Great Wolf Lodge
1,273 US Coast Guard Station	296 YMCA (<i>Tabb & Lightfoot</i>)
1,123 York County Government	291 Kroger
810 Sentara Williamsburg RMC	191 Snow Companies
769 Walmart (<i>Tabb & Lightfoot</i>)	146 Target



HELPING BUSINESSES GROW

York County offers a variety of incentive programs to help businesses thrive right here in the County. We're committed to the success of our local companies. Whether large or small, goods or services, in a commercial location or home-based, we've got a program that can help!

\$80,960*

Commercial Property Demolition Grant**

Incentivizing the owners of underused commercial properties to the redevelopment market, our Commercial Demolition Program Business provides loans to reimburse their demolition costs for qualified properties. *No demolition loans were granted in 2020.*

\$74,475*

Commercial Corridor Property Improvement Grant

We brought back this grant that funds a one-time exterior improvement or renovation intended to improve the property/building appearance. Up to \$10,000 in matching funds can be used for qualified external improvements, such as signs, hardscaping, lighting, parking areas or sidewalks.

\$33,858*

E-Commerce Grant

Through our E-Commerce Grant Program, businesses can receive 50% matching grants—up to \$500 per business or \$1,000 for minority and women-owned businesses—for the design of a new or upgraded website. This program allows businesses to enhance their online presence and therefore increase potential earnings.

\$114,618*

Business Growth Grant

This exciting new grant can help even home-based businesses, offering up to \$2,500 of matching funds for a one-time expense. The expense can be anything from purchasing equipment to advertising.

\$8,099*

Google Business View Grant

We've continued the Google Business View Grant Program to encourage York County businesses to claim or enhance their Google business listing. They can receive 50% matching grants, up to \$500, toward the cost of having panoramic photos taken by a Google Trusted Photographer. These interior images can then be posted as a virtual tour using Google's Street View platform, which has many search ranking and customer engagement benefits.

\$1,306,891*

COVID-19 Grants (3 in total)

In response to COVID-19, the EDA took action to aid our local business community. Working in cooperation with the County, in 2020 the EDA distributed **Cares Act** funds totaling **\$249,922** and **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)** funds totaling **\$552,762**. In 2021, a second round of CDBG funds totaling **\$504,207** was secured and fully distributed by August. In total, the three grant programs assisted 223 York County businesses.

**Grant totals are since the program's inception (not YTD).
** Formerly the Commercial Property Demolition Loan Program. Changed to a grant program in August 2022.*



Blend Family Salon

When Hair Cuttery Closes, Employee
Launches New Salon in Same Space



REGIONAL INITIATIVES

York County seeks to create a diverse economic base through recruiting, growing and retaining business across a variety of industries and through regional partnerships. York County continued to take a leadership role in several regional endeavors involving home-based businesses, entrepreneurship and regional development opportunities.



HTRFA selects firm to design and build **sports complex** in Williamsburg. [Read Story](#)



L to R: Staff at Alliance Event, Winners of Start Peninsula (2021 top row and 2022 bottom row), The Entrepreneurship Hub Event, Virtual Lunch & Learn Series, and Kings Creek Commerce Center solar facility



In December 2021, the communities of James City County, Williamsburg, and York County aligned their regional economic development association with 11 additional communities by joining the **Hampton Roads Alliance**, the region's leading economic development organization. Our entire region will benefit from the comprehensive strategic cooperation, workforce development, and general collaboration provided by membership in the Alliance. The Alliance also entered into an agreement with the Eastern Virginia Regional Industrial Facility Authority (EVRIFA) communities to serve as managing agent and has worked closely with York County on the first EVRIFA project at King's Creek Commerce Center.

hamptonroadsalliance.com



The 10th annual **START Peninsula** pitch competition was held virtually in November 2021. This regional event consists of three micro-pitch competitions throughout the year, plus one final pitch event for the micro-pitch winners. Three grand prize winners were chosen from the 12 pitchers at the final competition to receive \$5,000 each to fuel their business growth, plus admission to one of the area's business incubators, such as Launchpad. The 2021 winners were Bonilla Pet Studio, Wedded and Pocket Properties. The 11th annual competition was held in November 2022, with three new winners: Aunt Carol's Sauces, Hemo-Stat Vitamins and ChxmpionChip.

startpeninsula.com



Launchpad: The Greater Williamsburg Business Incubator is a regional development effort among York County, the City of Williamsburg, James City County, and William & Mary. Housed under the William & Mary Alan B. Miller Entrepreneurship Center, Launchpad provides access to multiple William & Mary resources, including an extensive mentor/coach network, industry experts, interns and a full-time incubator manager. In addition to residential business services, Launchpad offers a number of opportunities for entrepreneurs, resources, and interested individuals to connect and collaborate through a variety of Learn, Engage, and Build events. A total of 40 such events were held in 2022.

gwlaunchpad.com

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, York County—in partnership with the five other Peninsula localities and Gloucester County—was forced to cancel the annual **Home-Based Business Conference**, which had been planned for late October 2021. Instead, the seven partner localities focused on their monthly **Home-based Business Lunch & Learn sessions**, transitioning them to a virtual format, and continued to host the popular series from March through September 2021 and again in 2022. The new flexible format allowed more participants to attend than ever before. The group launched a redesigned regional website in fall 2021 to provide a central location for local home-based business resources.

peninsulahbb.com

In November 2018, the Peninsula localities and Gloucester officially established the **Eastern Virginia Regional Industrial Facility Authority (EVRIFA)**. The EVRIFA grew to 10 localities in FY2020 by adding Isle of Wight, Franklin and Chesapeake. Its first project will be acquiring 432 acres of surplus state property in York County formerly known as the “Fuel Farm.”

The EVRIFA closed on the property in December 2021 and is leasing 250 acres to KDC Solar for a 20MW facility. The group plans to utilize a GO Virginia grant to do the initial design for an unmanned systems testing and demonstration facility and to develop the remaining acreage as a light industrial park.



Solar Farms a Growing Trend in Hampton Roads.



The Edge District Updates

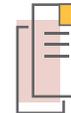
In 2020 we launched the Edge District, and 2021 was about **SHARPENING** the Edge.



The Edge District secured funding from each of the three EDAs—York, JCC and Williamsburg—to establish a **private business association** to lead the future district marketing.



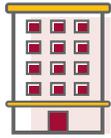
Virginia Beer Company released an **Edge District beer**—Hi-Diddly-Ho, Neighborino!—to celebrate the district.



Rack cards, funded by VTC, were designed and distributed to market dining and drinking in the Edge.



L to R: Virginia Beer, Shorty's and Parkway Printshop



The new James on the Merrimac, a 125-unit **luxury apartment complex**, added a modern vibe to the Edge District. Formerly the George Washington Inn, this complete overhaul added that “wow factor” to the area, helping to attract a younger, more diverse market. [Read Story](#)



York County partnered with the City of Williamsburg and James City County to submit a successful \$600,000 **EPA Brownfields Grant** application to fund environmental assessments of land and buildings, as well as redevelopment planning efforts, in the region over the next three years. Funds from this grant are already being applied to branding and promoting the Edge District—a food and drink destination bridging all three localities.



Additionally, the three localities collaborated to apply for two **Virginia Tourism grants** in support of the Edge District. They were successful in receiving both grants and are already developing the new marketing campaigns.

Press Coverage

[Virginia Beer Co. Co-Owner Part of Push to See Williamsburg's Edge District Turn Into a Destination Location](#)



Parkway Printshop owner Jared Chubb fell in love with a rundown, 10,000 sq. ft. commercial structure that had been sitting empty for a long time. A longtime admirer of old architecture, he also was drawn to the former TV/appliance store because of its prime location in the up-and-coming Edge District. Chubb closed on the property in August 2020 and embarked on the journey of architect consultations, permit filings and building construction. In early 2021, progress slowed as supply costs shot up and availability plummeted. Undeterred, Chubb and his team saw the project through to completion, opening in July 2021.



RECOGNIZING OUR LONGSTANDING BUSINESSES

Anniversary Stories

Henderson, Inc.

Henderson, Inc. Celebrating 65 Years of Going “Beyond the Building”

C.A. Barrs

Celebrating Our 50th Anniversary!!! So Thankful For All the Families and Customers That Have Made It Possible!

Colonial Kitchens

Kitchen Styles Have Changed, but Family Hasn't

Joe & Mimmas

'I Can Cook Anything': Joe & Mimma's Celebrates 50th Anniversary

Ken Matthews Garden Center

Cultivating Community for 50 Years

Pierce's

Pierce's Pitt Bar-B-Que Reaches Golden Anniversary by Staying Relevant and Delicious

On the Hill Gallery

Putting the “Work” in Work of Art

Davis & Associates

Davis Marks Four Decades of Development

Alexander's Photography

The Picture of Success

Envirowash

Envirowash Gushing Over New Location

Spain Commercial

Spain Commercial Constructs More Than Just Buildings

Taylor'd Printing

Competing Print Shops Ink Merger

25TH

Mid-Atlantic Commercial Real Estate, Viccellio Goldsmith, ARCI Architects, Andrea's Restaurant, Robinson Engineering, and AMF Bowling Center

25 Years and Counting: Six County Businesses Celebrate Milestone Anniversaries

Topline Horse Center

Topline Horse Center Provides Riders With An Equestrian Home Away From Home

20TH

Snow Companies

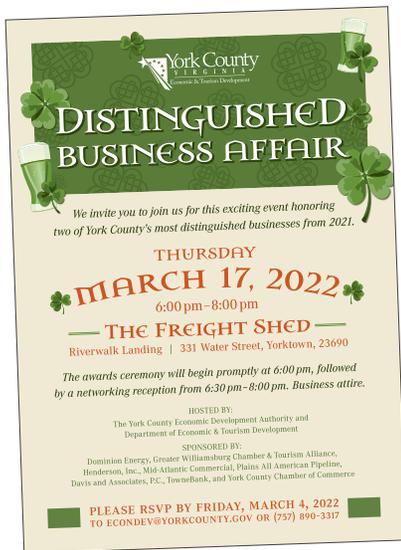
Snow Companies Celebrates Two Decades of Patient Storytelling

15TH

Zilda Brazilian Spa

Zilda Brazilian Spa Makes It Affordable To Relax





Distinguished Business Affair

Each year, the York County EDA awards one deserving business with the William Rogers “Poor Potter” Award. The honor—named after William Rogers, a successful 18th-century entrepreneur who was known as the “poor potter” of Yorktown—is given to growing businesses that make significant investments in York County. At the same event, the York County Chamber of Commerce awards one small business with their Small Business of the Year Award.

Great Wolf Lodge, Blown Away Salon (2021)

[Read Story](#)

- In the midst of a six-month pandemic shutdown, **Great Wolf** completed major renovations to the resort’s rooms, lobby and water park, which not only reinforced its edge as a County tourism destination, but also created work opportunities for a variety of local contracting companies.
- The York County Chamber of Commerce recognized **Blown Away Salon** as the **2021 Small Business of the Year**. Blown Away opened its doors in March 2020 and had to shut down just two weeks later, when the pandemic lockdown began. The team adapted quickly, turning to online classes and technology investments, and preparing for when the salons were finally able to reopen in June.
- While both awards are normally presented at the County’s annual Distinguished Business Affair each February, the event was cancelled due to COVID-19. The awards instead were brought to the two businesses by County and Chamber representatives.

Parkway Printshop &

Paul Clegg Farmers Insurance Agency (2022)

[Read Story](#)

- The EDA chose **Parkway Printshop** for the **2022 Poor Potter Award** because of the company’s capital investment and job creation in the County as well as its commitment to giving back to the community.
- The York County Chamber of Commerce recognized **Farmers Insurance Paul Clegg Agency** as its **2022 Small Business of the Year**. The agency was selected for its support and dedication to the local community.
- This year’s event was held in person again, but moved to March and revamped to a St. Patrick’s Day theme.





GREAT WOLF LODGE



BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION SURVEY

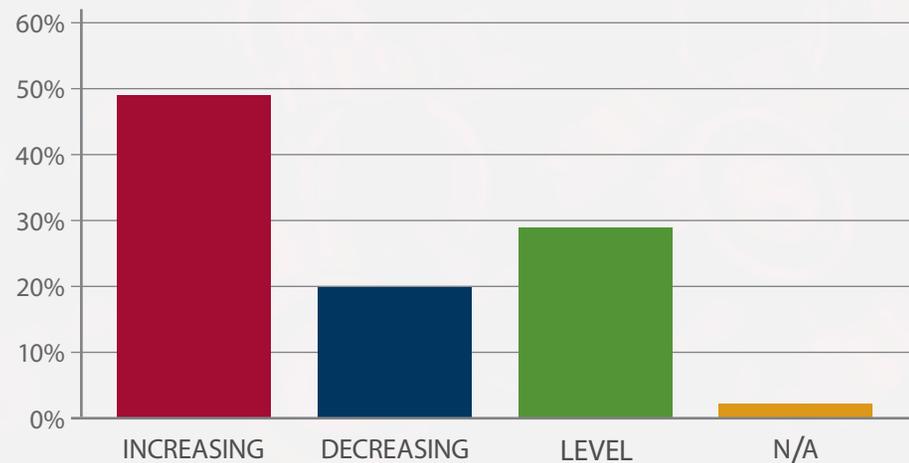
In December 1999, the Economic Development Authority initiated a Business Retention and Expansion Survey program for York County. The goal was to learn about the local business community's perceptions of doing business in York County, to identify concerns or trends negatively impacting local businesses, and to identify "red flag" situations and companies in need of immediate assistance. The survey results enable staff to respond to business needs by providing resources and information and by developing programs to improve the economic environment in York County.

In March 2022, the EDA mailed 1,015 surveys and received 69 responses via mail and the Economic Development website. Survey respondents consisted of 54% corporately-owned businesses and 41% independently-owned enterprises. The following results provide important insight into the business owners' perceptions of doing business in York County.

Sales Over the Past Two Years

Question: *In general, has your company experienced increasing, decreasing, or level sales over the past two years?*

The majority of respondents (**78.27%**) noted that they experienced level or increasing sales over the past two years, which is a positive indicator that the economy is improving.

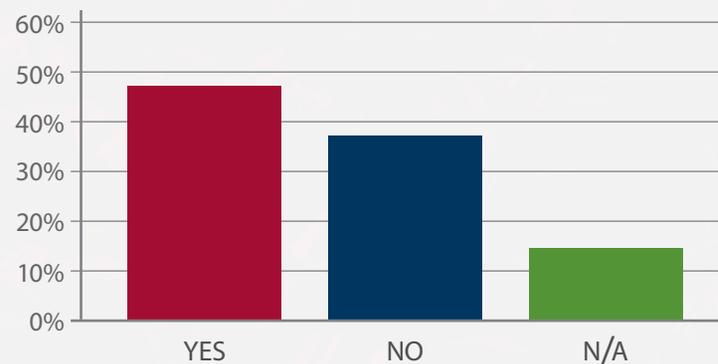


Question 1: *Is your company experiencing difficulty recruiting employees?*

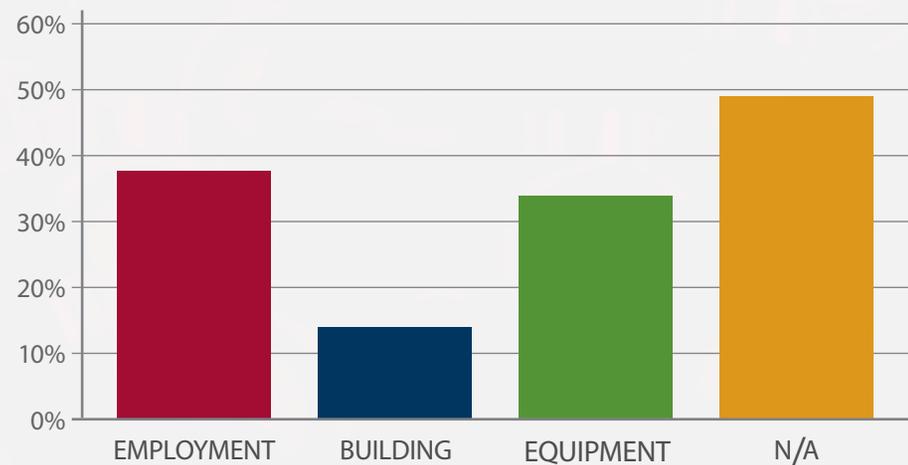
Question 2: *In the next two years is your company planning to expand in any of the following areas?*

Workforce development has once again risen to the top of many business owners' priority lists. Due to the lasting effects of the pandemic, nearly **48%** of respondents said they are **experiencing difficulty recruiting employees**, while at the same time, over **37%** said they plan to **expand their employment** over the next two years.

Employee Recruitment Difficulties



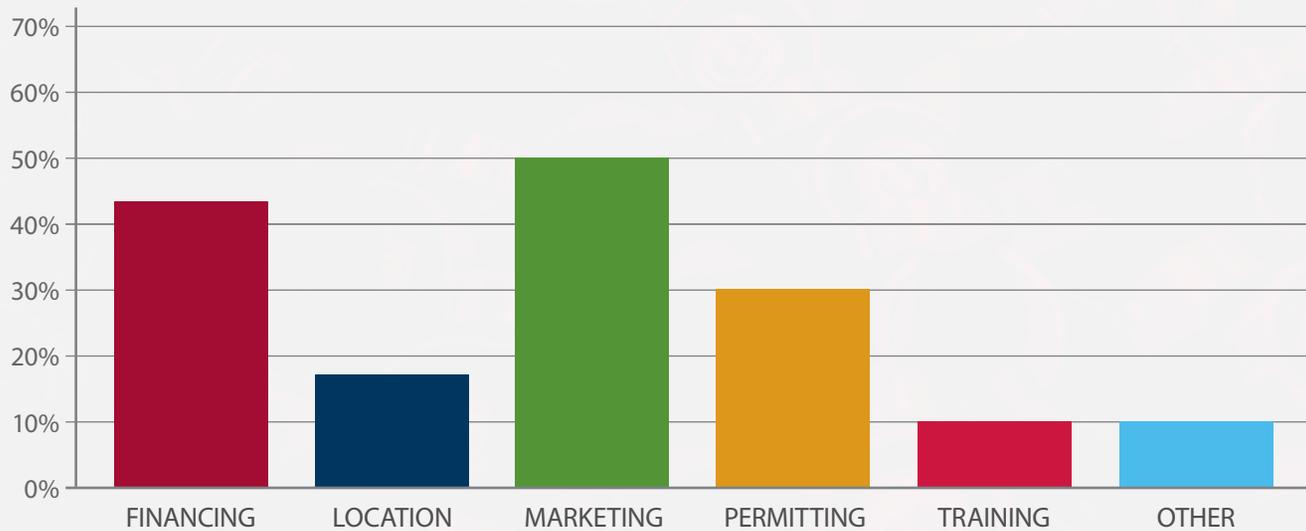
Plans to Expand in the Next Two Years



Question: Can Economic Development assist you with any of the following?

Consistent with responses from 2006 to 2012, marketing is the category for the 2022 survey in which respondents indicated they needed the most help. In response to this, more efforts have been made to help promote new and existing businesses and offer them free marketing classes and assistance. Staff has also increased the focus on featured business stories and social media coverage for our local businesses.

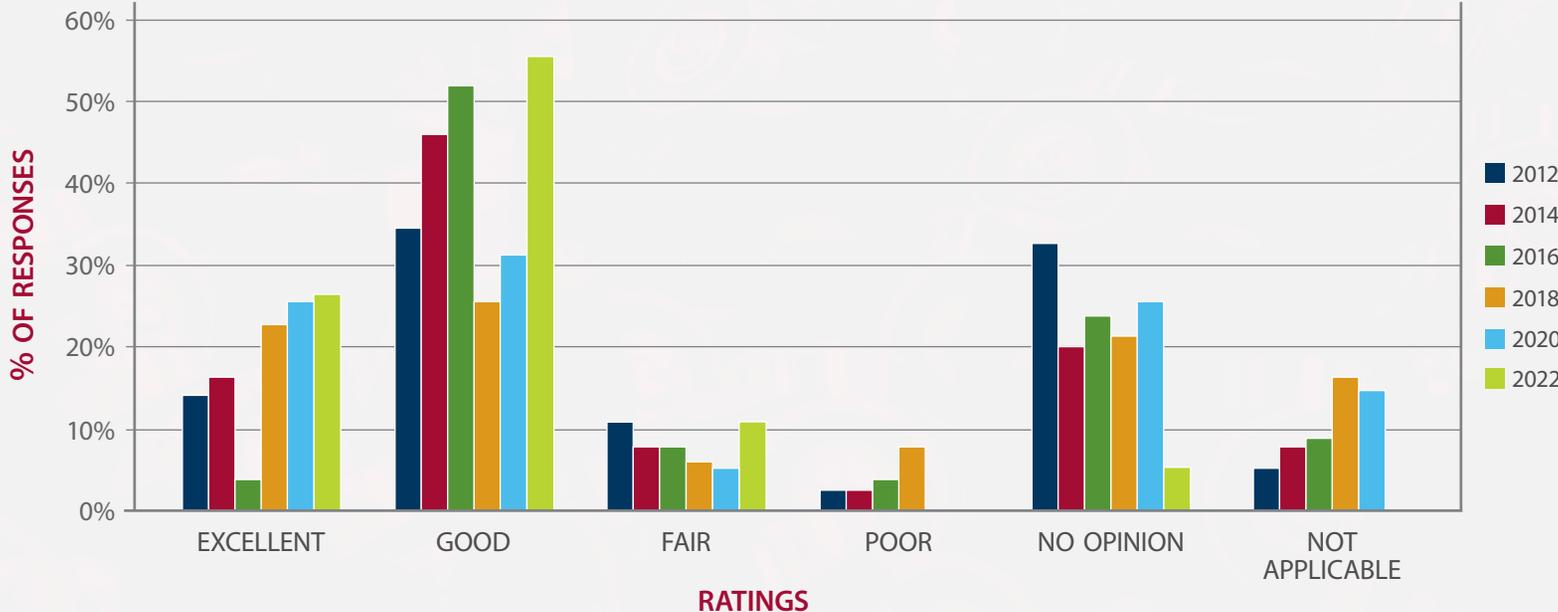
Categories Where Businesses Want OED Help



Question: How do you rate York County's business environment?

Overall, the **majority (82%)** of respondents ranked the County's business environment as **either good or excellent**, up from 75% in 2020.

Rating York County, in General, as a Place to do Business

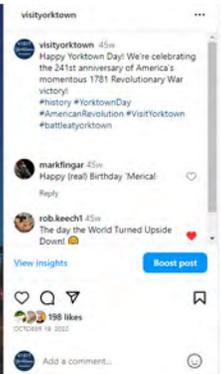
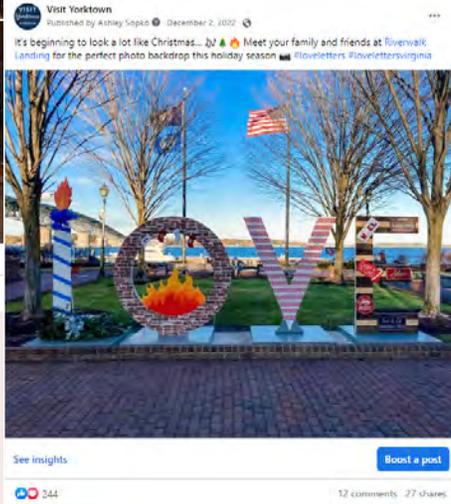


TOURISM INITIATIVE AND PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Visit Yorktown
Published by Ashley Sopko · December 2, 2021 ·

We hope you'll join us this Friday evening as we kick off the Christmas season with our annual Tree Lighting Ceremony. The festivities start up at the Yorktown Victory Monument with live music at 6:30 p.m. A procession led by The Fifes and Drums of York Town will make its way from the Victory Monument, down Ballard Street, and on to Water Street where the tree lighting ceremony will take place at Riverwalk Landing.

This tradition dates back to 1945 when Reverend Claud G. Bar... See more



New Events / Programs

Vintage Market and Car Show (2022)



Fun in the Sun Market (2022)



An Enchanted Evening on Main Street (2022)



Social Media

Facebook

	2021	2022
Followers/Audience	17,700	21,338
Audience Growth	214	3,626
Published Posts	N/A	620
Impressions	469,492	8,395,794
Engagements	20,428	480,536
Reach	403,333	4,042,267

Instagram

	2021	2022
Followers/Audience	N/A	5,983
Audience Growth	N/A	33
Published Posts	173	312
Impressions	522,265	680,846
Engagements	16,424	21,979
Reach	19,915	48,666

Trolley Ridership

Increase from Previous Year



Total Tall Ship Visits

2021

NAO Santa Maria
10,000



2022

US Naval Academy Annapolis
3,500



NAO Trinidad
15,000



Freight Shed Rentals

Usage Increase from Previous Year

2021 **98** | **131** 2022



Event Visitation

2021 **89,776**
2022 **115,255**



Pier Stays

Revenue Increase from Previous Year

2021 **188%**

2022 **130%**



STRATEGIC VISION



In 2022 we completed consolidation of the economic development and tourism development into a single entity. Developing strong alliances supported by a strategic vision is key to providing a full breadth of services and engagement opportunities to the businesses and organizations that make up York County's key economic drivers. This merger has allowed us to maximize our resources and put in place a framework that will set our course for continued success.

The York County EDA strives to protect and maximize the tax base; growing the quality and quantity of the local workforce and enhancing the quality of life for residents and visitors.

Waterfront Operations

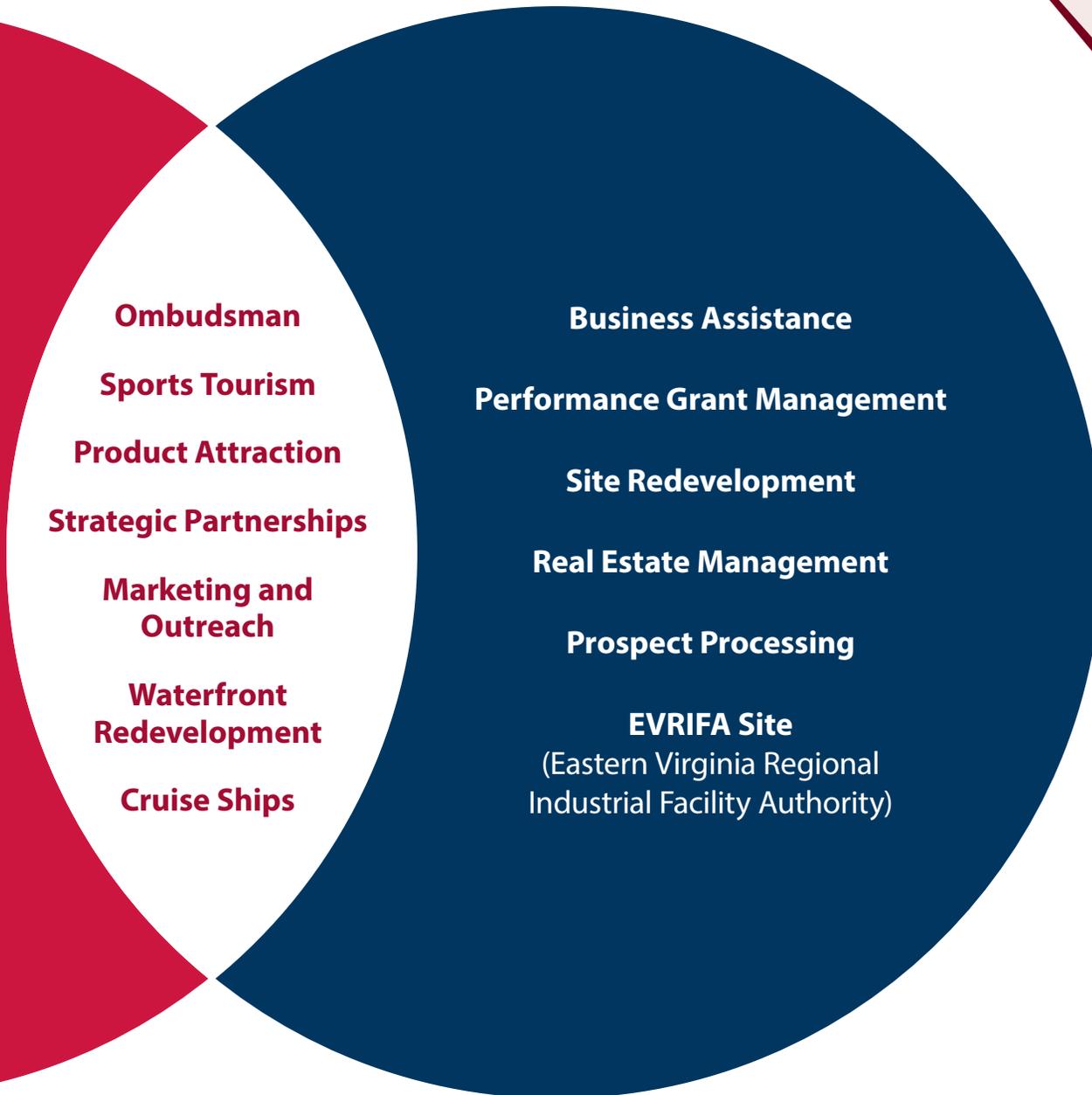
Events and Festivals

DMO Management
(Destination Marketing
Organization)

Facility Enhancements

Visitor Services

Through a variety of dynamic and changing opportunities, we strive to tell the story of **York County as a great place to live, work and play!**





121 Alexander Hamilton Boulevard
PO Box 612 | Yorktown, VA 23690
757.890.3317 | econdev@yorkcounty.gov

YESYORKCOUNTY.COM



Play A Round