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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

VIRGINIA BEER CO.'S NEW BREWPUB OFFICIALLY OPENS IN YORK COUNTY

(YORKTOWN, VA, Feb. 9, 2026) — After much anticipation, planning and partnership, The Kitchen brewpub from The Virginia Beer Company officially opened in York County last week. A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held Jan. 29, followed by a public grand opening the next day, marking a major milestone for both The Virginia Beer Company and the County.



The project reflects strong coordination across planning, design and construction to bring a long-awaited community destination to life along Route 17.

“I’m thrilled to see the results of this shared journey,” said Kristi Olsen-Hayes, director of York County’s Department of Economic and Tourism Development. “From early visioning to the completion of the project, the County worked hand in hand with The Virginia Beer Company to move this project forward. We’re proud of what this partnership represents for our residents and visitors and excited for the energy it brings to our community.”

Founded in 2016 by William & Mary classmates Chris Smith and Robby Willey, The Virginia Beer Company has grown from its original microbrewery in The Edge District into one of the region's most respected and decorated craft breweries. Now celebrating its 10th year, the opening of The Kitchen brewpub marks the company's first full-service brewpub and a homegrown expansion within York County.



“York County is home,” said Willey, co-founder of The Virginia Beer Company. “Our brewery on Second Street is here, our roots are here and growing at home felt authentic to who we are. The Kitchen allows us to reach new audiences while staying true to our mantra: Beer · People · Purpose.”

“On behalf of the York County Board of Supervisors, I was proud to celebrate the opening of The Kitchen from the Virginia Beer Co.,” said Chairman Douglas Holroyd. “For more than a decade, Chris, Robby, Jonathan, and the ‘VBC’ team have been an integral part of the Greater Williamsburg community—not just as a small business, but as generous partners to local charities and nonprofits. Their expansion into Yorktown with a kitchen and microbrewery is an exciting addition, and we couldn’t imagine a better team to bring this facility to life.”



The Kitchen location features an in-house brewing program, a full-service kitchen, a taproom and expansive indoor-outdoor gathering spaces. The food menu blends local and pub fare staples with international influences that reflect the brewery's global brewing endeavors. The goal, Willey said, is that “just as there is a story to tell with every beer brewed, there's a story to tell with every bite.”

“We’ve never been so happy for a place to sit a spell,” Willey added. “A place to enjoy a beer. A place to enjoy a bite. A place to enjoy good company.”

York County is producing a [video series](#) spotlighting the new brewpub, featuring behind-the-scenes looks at the space and insights from the location’s team — which includes Brewmaster Jonathan Newman, General Manager Jayson Neault, Hospitality Director Lee Peltier, and Assistant Kitchen Manager Jay Carnevale. During the ribbon-cutting, Willey recognized these leaders as well as the company’s original local investors, whose early support helped make both a decade of success and this new chapter possible.

The new location is expected to employ 35 to 40 new staff members, most of whom have already been hired, complementing the 20 to 25 employees who regularly work at the Williamsburg brewery.

Significant attention was given to creating a welcoming, community-centered space. Local neighbors TSP Lawns and Landscapes Inc. completed plantings and greenspaces in the fall, while final exterior touches include a retaining wall, fencing, fire pits, a deck and other features designed to encourage gathering and connection.

Interior furnishings were completed by Shapespace, led by longtime Virginia Beer Co. graphic designer Matt Leech, whose team “did a wonderful job working to match the soul of the space with the VBC vibe,” said Willey.



Co-founders Robby Willey and Chris Smith, with brewmaster Jonathan Newman

The opening of The Kitchen brewpub also represents the successful conclusion of a project that began with development by Beale's/Waukeshaw and later stalled due to unforeseen circumstances. York County Economic & Tourism Development worked closely with Waukeshaw to identify a tenant aligned with the original vision for the site.



With strong community support, award-winning beers and a brand built on authenticity and inclusion, The Virginia Beer Company's newest venture is poised to become a cornerstone gathering place for York County residents and visitors from across the region, on par with its existing reputation for excellence locally, statewide and internationally. The business has earned recognition for both its business success and beer quality. Recent honors include:



Business and community awards

- 2024 Small Business of the Year Award, Greater Williamsburg Chamber of Commerce
- 2023 Virginia Leaders in Export Trade Program graduation, Virginia Economic Development Partnership
- 2022 Excellence in Retail Award (food/beverage – Peninsula), Retail Alliance

European Beer Star Awards

- 2024 Bronze, Borrowed Time (wood and barrel-aged strong beer)
- 2023 Bronze, Cool Inside (beer with alternative cereals)

International Beer Cup

- 2024 Gold, Community Over Competition (contemporary gose)
- 2024 Silver, Saving Daylight (American wheat beer)

Brussels Beer Challenge

- 2024 Gold, Oktoberfest (German-style märzen)

Australian International Beer Awards

- 2025 Silver, Cold Drinking Beer (golden/blonde ale)
- 2025 Silver, Espresso Waypost (coffee beer)
- 2025 Bronze, Easy Peasy (American-style fruit beer)

Virginia Craft Beer Cup

- 2025 Silver, Party Guy (brown ale)
- 2024 Gold, Insider Trading (hazy IPA)

These accolades reflect the brewery's commitment to quality and innovation, while highlighting the appeal of its beer across diverse judging panels and consumers alike. Visitors to the new lower-County location will have the chance to enjoy these same brews closer to home.

"We've felt the excitement at every step," Willey said. "From neighbors stopping by during construction to fans cheering us on online, it's been incredibly affirming. We're grateful for 10 years of support from this community, and we're excited to double down as we open the doors and taps at The Kitchen."

For more information, visit VirginiaBeerCo.com.

About York County Economic & Tourism Development

York County seeks to create a diverse economic base through continually recruiting, growing and retaining business across a variety of industries. The **Department of Economic & Tourism Development** is dedicated to expanding York County's tax base through capital investment in the County; promoting tourism; supporting large, small, and home-based businesses; and providing new employment opportunities for County residents. Its efforts result in improved quality of life throughout York County, including charitable giving, volunteerism, and job creation.

The Department of Economic and Tourism Development works in cooperation with many regional and state agencies to pursue its mission. Key among these allies are the Virginia Economic Development Partnership, Hampton Roads Alliance, Hampton Roads Small Business Development Center, and local Chambers of Commerce. Its strongest ally is the **York County Economic Development Authority (EDA)**. Established in 1972, the EDA is a political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Virginia and has unique powers established in the Code of Virginia. The EDA is a conduit for non-taxable industrial revenue bonds, and can legally own, develop, and sell/lease commercial real estate. It also can provide incentives necessary to close deals within targeted industry sectors.

Learn more at: www.YesYorkCounty.com

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