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## INDUSTRY PARTNER NEWSLETTER

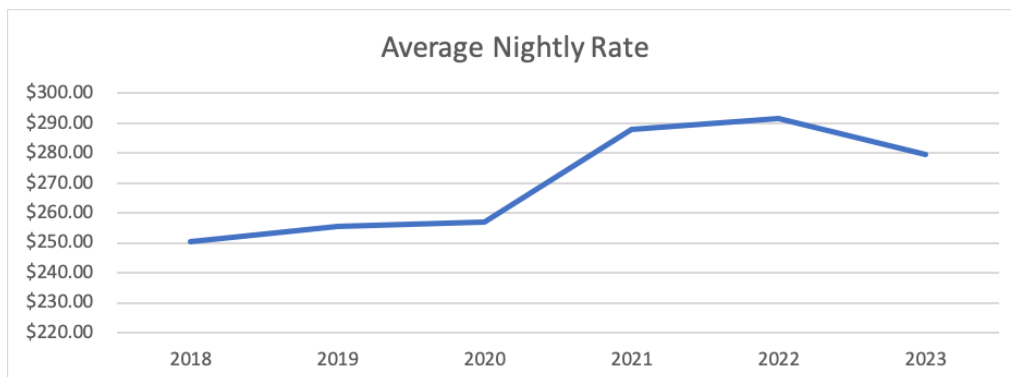
Fall 2023



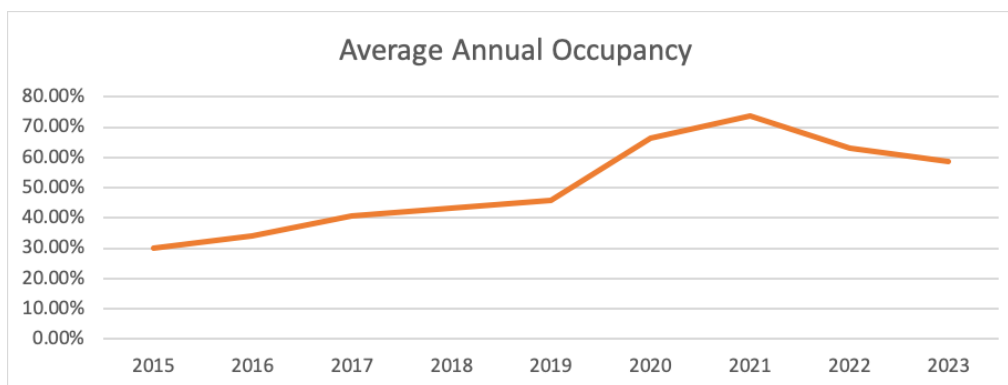
Dear Page County Tourism Partners,

The fall season is here, a government shutdown that could have impacted our peak season was delayed, and Shenandoah National Park is OPEN — Christmas came a little early for all of us in this industry! As we enter the fall and winter seasons, we wanted to share some valuable insights and updates to ensure our collective success in the tourism industry.

During the peak of the pandemic when international travel was limited, many properties increased their pricing. Now that travel is returning to normal, it's an opportune moment to re-evaluate your pricing strategy. Offering competitive rates can be a powerful incentive for visitors, especially as hotels and other lodging options return to full operation. The average property in Page County is still 15% higher than pre-pandemic pricing.



To encourage longer stays and higher profit margins, it's crucial to provide guests with a comprehensive list of activities and attractions in our area. By showcasing the diverse range of experiences available, we can entice visitors to extend their stays and explore more. Collaborations among our partners can create a vibrant atmosphere that draws people in and keeps them engaged. While we did see a dip in our occupancy rates, it is important to note that these variables are still higher than they have historically been.



We firmly believe that collaboration is key to our mutual success. Virginia's Cabin Capital boasts exceptional attractions and lodging options, and by working together, we can amplify our collective appeal. Our office is dedicated to promoting each of you, ensuring that we all rise together. Our newly launched website is a significant asset, but it thrives on your unique content to shine. We encourage you to share your stories, thoughts, and suggestions with us.

Competition in the tourism industry is fierce, and today's tourists are savvy. Relying solely on platforms like Airbnb or VRBO is no longer sufficient. It's crucial to proactively market your property to maximize your business opportunities. While I'm not suggesting that you create an entirely new website, I strongly recommend using our site as a landing page for your business if you don't already have one. In the first quarter of 2024, we will introduce a Book Direct service on our site. Many travelers are now inclined to initially search for accommodations on online booking platforms such as Airbnb or VRBO but prefer to contact the property directly to avoid additional fees imposed by these platforms.

For those of you interested in expanding your marketing efforts beyond these sites, the following chart offers valuable insights into when visitors to Page Valley tend to book their stays. This chart illustrates the "lead time" in days. For instance, bookings made in August 2023 were typically made 47 days before the guests' actual stay dates. This information empowers us to tailor our marketing strategies accordingly.

We are always eager to share our research findings. If you have any questions or need further information, please don't hesitate to reach out to us. Your success is our priority.

15-Jan	15-Feb	15-Mar	15-Apr	15-May	15-Jun	15-Jul	15-Aug	15-Sep	15-Oct	15-Nov	15-Dec
32.6	23.9	25.5	33.4	31.2	23.7	32.5	35.8	32.9	8.7	20.9	24.4
16-Jan	16-Feb	16-Mar	16-Apr	16-May	16-Jun	16-Jul	16-Aug	16-Sep	16-Oct	16-Nov	16-Dec
16.8	21.8	22.9	28.5	41.1	38.7	40.5	38.9	41.2	52.2	42.1	35.9
17-Jan	17-Feb	17-Mar	17-Apr	17-May	17-Jun	17-Jul	17-Aug	17-Sep	17-Oct	17-Nov	17-Dec
23.3	24.4	26.7	41.3	61.2	60.9	62.3	61.2	60.4	65.6	55.3	44.4
18-Jan	18-Feb	18-Mar	18-Apr	18-May	18-Jun	18-Jul	18-Aug	18-Sep	18-Oct	18-Nov	18-Dec
28.6	27.5	29.3	43.6	75.2	69.6	57	62.8	58.5	72.9	56.3	47.1
19-Jan	19-Feb	19-Mar	19-Apr	19-May	19-Jun	19-Jul	19-Aug	19-Sep	19-Oct	19-Nov	19-Dec
30.8	30.5	28.1	45.7	71.4	75.8	69.7	82.4	54.3	76.2	49.6	43.9
20-Jan	20-Feb	20-Mar	20-Apr	20-May	20-Jun	20-Jul	20-Aug	20-Sep	20-Oct	20-Nov	20-Dec
32.8	45.3	22.5	24.5	24.2	31.6	44.6	52.2	56.8	73.9	59.6	55.1
21-Jan	21-Feb	21-Mar	21-Apr	21-May	21-Jun	21-Jul	21-Aug	21-Sep	21-Oct	21-Nov	21-Dec
37.7	45.4	41.4	52.1	53.7	67.7	78	71.2	76.8	86.8	64.9	56.9
22-Jan	22-Feb	22-Mar	22-Apr	22-May	22-Jun	22-Jul	22-Aug	22-Sep	22-Oct	22-Nov	22-Dec
35.3	37.5	40.3	56.1	67.7	68.2	64	61.2	66.8	78.8	57.8	41.5
23-Jan	23-Feb	23-Mar	23-Apr	23-May	23-Jun	23-Jul	23-Aug				
27.2	32.9	31.2	42.9	51.8	56.5	50.1	47				

Our dedicated team members are tirelessly working to support our partners and promote our region.

Rebecca Armstrong, our Marketing and Communication Coordinator, is driving various projects, including blogs, grants, visitor guides, landing pages, and print and digital ads, just to name a few, and she welcomes your input and ideas. Rebecca is an amazing storyteller and will be looking for new stories to share in our upcoming Inspiration Guide.

English, our Economic Development and Tourism Specialist, is diligently updating listings, managing the

photography grant, handling social media, and coordinating annual events. She is also launching an Event Subcommittee to enhance tourist-driven events during the slower seasons. If you're interested in joining the new subcommittee, please reach out to our office.

I want to take this moment to thank our team and Tourism Council members. Your dedication to the growth and direction of our valley is evident, and I deeply appreciate your contributions.

Change can be challenging, but it's essential for growth. Our plans for the future are rooted in balanced development, ensuring that we preserve the essence of our region while progressing forward.

John D. Rockefeller said, "Don't be afraid to give up the good to go for the great." Our office has lived by this sentiment, and our commitment to evolving how we promote our county is evident in the results we've achieved. We're thrilled to share that our unaudited fiscal year 2023 financial reports reflect a remarkable increase of more than 20% in TOT revenue. Together, we're forging a brighter, more prosperous future.

As always, we invite you to join us at the Tourism Council meetings, held at 4 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month in the Board of Supervisors Room at the Page County Government Center in Luray. Your input and participation are highly valued.

Warm regards,



**Nina A. Long Fox**  
*Director of Economic Development & Tourism*



## PAGE VALLEY VISITOR GUIDES

The new Page Valley Visitor Guides, featuring two covers, are now available. The non-dated guides showcase key attractions, highlight opportunities for outdoor recreation and fresh-air relaxation, and showcase experiences that inspire overnight visitation for first-time Page Valley travelers as well as returning guests.

[Learn More](#)



*Cabin Call*

## FREE PHOTO SHOOTS

High-quality photography and videography encourage engagement and enhance a product's or service's appeal. With this in mind the Page Valley team is launching a campaign for high-quality professional lodging photography. Funded by the ARPA Tourism Recovery grant through the Virginia Tourism Corp., the Page County Office of Economic Development and Tourism is offering free professional photography to all cabin and short-term rental owners.

Page Valley will cover the cost of exterior photos for the first 400 cabins/short-term rentals. About 100 have been captured so far. This is first come, first served.

Our professional photographers and videographers have offered the following add-on packages. Lodging owners wishing to receive these services will still receive their exterior photos covered by the Page Valley team.

Aerial photos: \$65

Full set of interior + additional exterior photos: \$130

Interior/exterior photos + aerial photos: \$180

Video information upon request

**WWW.PAGEVALLEY.ORG**

**Sign Me Up**

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### MARKETING RESEARCH

- **AirDNA:** the Page County tourism team utilized [AirDNA](#) throughout fiscal year 2024 to track short-term rental data and offer unique insights in property-level data, helping our team understand local market trends and use the information to inform marketing strategies. These reports are available to our industry partners. Email Rebecca Armstrong at [ramstrong@pagecounty.virginia.gov](mailto:ramstrong@pagecounty.virginia.gov) for more information.
  - **Website SEO:** Page Valley is working monthly with [Simpleview](#) in Search Engine Optimization efforts. Organic optimization activities are customized for Page Valley, including website reporting, constant monitoring, competitive analysis, keyword research and analysis, content review and consultation, meta tag creation and implementation and on-page optimization.
  - **Marketing Consultancy:** Page Valley works quarterly with [The Downtown Creative](#) to analyze the effectiveness of our social media campaigns and story-driven video content.
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## Website Initiative: What's Happening This Week

The Page Valley Tourism Team has created magnets with QR codes that link to a "Happening This Week" page on [pagevalley.org](https://pagevalley.org). The page will feature weekly events, specials, deals and more. The magnets are available for tourism industry partners at no charge. Lodging partners are asked to display the magnet on the refrigerator of their rental (or a well-seen magnetic space). The magnets will be mailed to the businesses that have registered online and extras are available at the Page Valley Tourism Office or the Luray-Page County Visitor Center.



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## FALL 2023 ADVERTISING

- **Shenandoah Valley Travel Association's Email Marketing Cooperative:** quarterly ads in four email deployments are set to collectively reach 1 million travelers interested in traveling to the Shenandoah Valley, with two e-newsletters focused on fall.
- **VisitShenandoah.org:** banner ads targeting overnight travelers.
- **Google Ads:** Working with Page Valley's SEO team and PR consultants, ads are placed in the results of Google's search engine.
- **Virginia Living Magazine:** Full-page ad in the July/August 2023 issue; half-page ad in the September/October 2023 issue; dedicated e-newsletter ads.
- **virginia.org Banner Ads:** mobile footers and hero header placements will run monthly from July 1 to Dec. 31, 2023 and promote [pagevalley.org](https://pagevalley.org) through this campaign, which prominently feature Page Valley on the [Shenandoah Valley home page](https://www.virginia.org/shenandoah-valley) of the state's visitor website, as well as in targeted mobile footer ads promoting Virginia's Cabin Capital.
- **VisitSkylineDrive.org:** banner ads targeting Shenandoah National Park travelers.
- **Northern Virginia Magazine:** two sponsored digital ads — a [travel native ad](#) in the September 2023 issue, when the Shenandoah Valley appeared as a cover feature, and a things to do native ad in the November 2023 issue.







**Virginia Living Magazine, October 2023**

## TOT ALLOCATIONS

- [Luray-Page County Visitor Center](#): **\$138,692**; the Page County Tourism Council in May voted to continue funding annual operations at the visitor center in Downtown Luray, overseen by the [Luray-Page County Chamber of Commerce](#).
- [Town of Luray](#): **\$25,000**
- [Town of Stanley](#): **\$25,000**
- [Town of Shenandoah](#): **\$25,000**
- [Luray Triathlon](#) / [Swim Fest Luray](#) / [Luray Half-Marathon & 5K](#): the events were collectively awarded **\$17,000** in TOT funds to help market the two-day Luray Triathlon (**\$10,000**) at Luray's Lake Arrowhead in August; June's Swim Fest (**\$2,000**) at the lake; and September's Half Marathon and 5K (**\$5,000**) in Downtown Luray.
- [Page Valley Fair Association](#): the local association was awarded **\$12,000** to launch the new fair website [pagevalleyfair.org](#); the new site additionally features video and image content captured by the Page County Office of Economic Development and Tourism during the 2022 fair in Luray.
- [Shenandoah Valley Racket Tars](#): **\$5,000** was awarded to market the group's 10th annual [Mid-Atlantic Pre-War Swap Meet](#), scheduled for May 2024 at the Luray VFW. More than 400 people are expected over a two-day period at the event, resulting in a projection of 260 hotel room nights in Page County, according to the application. The addition of an Model T Tour in Page and the Shenandoah Valley during the days immediately following the swap meet is projected to further increase the number of overnight stays and visitor spending in Page.
- [Creative Community Partnership Grant](#): the [Virginia Commission for the Arts](#) each year matches up to \$4,500, subject to funds available, the tax monies given by independent town, city, county and tribal governments to independent arts organizations. The county in fiscal 2023 matched the \$4,500 requirement using TOT revenue, awarding **\$4,500** to [Center for the Performing Arts Luray](#) (PAL) and **\$4,500** to the [Page Valley Arts Council](#).


[2023 Fair](#)
[Upcoming Events](#)
[Host Your Event](#)
[Contact](#)
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[f](#)
[BUY TICKETS](#)



## WELCOME TO THE 71ST PAGE VALLEY FAIR!

Welcome to the Page Valley Fair in Luray, Virginia, where thrilling rides, delicious treats, and unforgettable experiences await! This unique annual event is a beloved tradition, drawing our community and nearby visitors together to indulge in a world of excitement. Set your sights on the mesmerizing Ferris wheel, standing tall and majestic against the backdrop of the rolling Blue Ridge Mountains. Or immerse yourself into the live music, talented performers, and cultural exhibitions. This fair celebrates the rich heritage of Luray, with a fascinating history and traditions woven into the fabric of this enchanting region. Join us for an extraordinary adventure, creating cherished memories with loved ones that will last a lifetime.

We await your arrival. Have fun everybody!

See the Page Valley Fair's new website, funded with TOT revenue, at [pagevallefair.org](http://pagevallefair.org).



## NEWS RELEASE

### Proposed Page Valley Cultural Center and Business Hub aimed at bolstering local economy, serving businesses, locals, visitors

**LURAY, Oct. 4** — The Page County Office of Economic Development and Tourism is proposing the creation of a new cultural center and business hub aimed at bolstering the local economy while enriching the experience of visitors and enhancing the community for those who call it home.

If approved, said Page County Director of Economic Development and Tourism Nina Fox, the Page Valley Cultural Center and Business Hub would serve as a first stop and gateway to Page Valley's rich heritage, creative and agricultural economies, business services and visitor offerings.

"The potential of this project is boundless," said Fox. "It is an opportunity to showcase the rich culture of Page County, from its artisanal talents and historical significance to the vibrancy of its local businesses. It offers us a chance to entice travelers who previously bypassed our towns to pause, explore and ultimately return for overnight stays, fostering economic growth and prosperity."

#### WHY A CULTURAL CENTER?

"Visitor centers are facing several challenges that have contributed to their decline in recent years," said Fox, adding that a majority of travelers rely on devices such as smartphones, tablets and computers to make travel decisions before and during their stays. "They can easily plan their trips, find directions, read reviews and access real-time updates, reducing the need for physical visitor centers.

"Many regions are adapting to these challenges by abandoning traditional visitor centers, offering more interactive and engaging experiences," she continued. "We plan to further underscore our community by focusing on sustainability, collaborating with local businesses and embracing technology to provide valuable information and services to visitors."

A proposed model of operation is five-part:

- **Artisan Center:** The establishment of an artisan center will celebrate and showcase the rich creative talents of Page County, embracing various art forms such as visual arts, sculpture, crafts and trades. Retail space will help support local artists and artisans.
- **Marketplace:** The creation of a marketplace that exclusively features products made within Page County will spotlight the area's agriculture and locally made goods. While not a full retail location, it will offer a sampling of local goods, encouraging visitors to explore the county's shops, farms, farmers markets, bakeries and more.
- **Restaurant Incubator:** Aimed at easing the challenges of starting a restaurant, a proposed restaurant incubator will provide up-and-coming chefs in the area an opportunity to test their concepts and gain experience.
- **Business Center:** Plans for a centralized resource hub will serve as a consolidated location where entrepreneurs, investors and both existing and potential business owners can access a comprehensive range of services and information needed to start, operate or expand their business.
- **Welcome Center for Page Valley and Parks:** Situated at a high-traffic corridor, the cultural center will incorporate a welcome center, providing essential tourist information and driving more traffic into nearby Downtown Luray, as well as Page Valley and the towns of Stanley and Shenandoah.

Outdoor offerings at the proposed Page Valley Cultural Center and Business Hub are aimed at enhancing the center's appeal for both visitors and residents. Potential components include an amphitheater, splash pad, farmers market, ice skating rink and walking trails that connect to the Luray-Hawksbill Greenway and lead into Downtown Luray.

## AN EMPHASIS ON LOCATION

Plans for the proposed center utilize county-owned land situated at the intersection of Routes 211 and 340 in Luray — "the most-traveled corridor in Page County," said Fox. Studies by the Virginia Department of Transportation indicate that the intersection saw 6.1 million vehicles pass by in 2021, compared to 1.9 million vehicles that passed by the Luray-Page County Visitor Center in Downtown Luray that same year.

"The strategic location of this facility holds the promise of significantly expanding our visitor base, drawing individuals who might otherwise have bypassed our towns entirely," said Fox, adding that the Luray-Page County Visitor Center in 2022 greeted 10,409 walk-ins, down slightly from 10,587 in 2021.

Fox underscored "a missed opportunity" to drive visitors into Downtown Luray and Page Valley who otherwise travel only between Luray Caverns and Shenandoah National Park.

"The strategic placement of this facility seeks to not only capture the attention of day travelers but to encourage their curiosity and beckon them to explore Page County more deeply," she said, adding that Page County welcomes an estimated 1 million visitors or more each year. "By doing so, we anticipate a substantial increase in visitors who not only stop by, but also stay, fostering sustained economic growth and a more vibrant, interconnected community."

## FUNDING AND FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Costs for the proposed Page Valley Cultural Center and Business Hub are estimated to range between \$3.5 million and \$5 million, said Fox, adding that financial plans are rooted in "long-term sustainability without imposing



additional costs on our residents.”

Those plans include utilizing Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) revenue — “lodging tax” collected by the county that is mandated by Virginia to be designated and spent solely for tourism marketing and initiatives — as well as federal loans with low interest rates and grants.

TOT revenue collected by the County of Page each year funds marketing campaigns; collaborative marketing for the towns of Luray, Stanley and Shenandoah; staff; professional development; content creation; services for tourism industry partners; and operations at the visitor center, located at the train depot and Luray-Page County Chamber of Commerce facility in Downtown Luray.

The Page County Tourism Council serves as an advisory group, fielding annual TOT requests and proposals and making allocation recommendations to the Page County Board of Supervisors. In fiscal 2022, the county collected about \$1.6 million in TOT revenue. That total is projected to increase by more than 20% in fiscal 2023.

The tourism council in April voted to unanimously recommend that \$200,000 in TOT revenue be earmarked to go toward the evaluation of creating a cultural center. In May, the council voted to recommend that the Page County Board of Supervisors allocate \$138,692 in TOT revenue requested by the Luray-Page County Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Center for fiscal 2024 operations at the visitor center. The allocation reflects an increase of 37.6% (\$37,878) from fiscal 2023.

Included in fiscal 2024’s allocation is \$91,624 toward the salaries of five staff members at the visitor center; \$7,330 for payroll taxes; \$3,000 for postage and shipping; \$6,000 for rent; \$4,000 for utilities; \$1,500 for office supplies; \$2,700 for communications; \$1,500 for office equipment; \$5,000 for janitorial services; \$600 for insurance; \$1,830 for dues and subscriptions; \$1,000 for education; and \$12,608 for administrative fees, as requested by the Luray-Page County Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Center to represent “inflation.”

Fox is scheduled to present an overview of the proposed Page Valley Cultural Center and Business Hub to the Page County Board of Supervisors during the board’s Nov. 6 work session.

“We stand at the intersection of vision and opportunity,” said Fox. “The funding recommended by the tourism council for the development planning of this facility represents an investment in Page County’s future.

“Together, we can make the Page Valley Cultural Center and Business Hub a reality,” she continued, “ensuring that Page County stands as a beacon of culture, commerce, and community for all to admire and cherish.”



## SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGNS

## #WHYPageCounty

Video series showcasing the stories of local business owners, professionals, community organizations and residents aimed at inspiring community pride and underscoring Page as an ideal place to live and work.

## Visit Page Valley

Video series showcasing Page Valley lodging, attractions, events and visitors' stories in an ongoing effort to encourage overnight and repeat visitation.

Learn more about the campaigns [here](#).



Find, like and follow us on Facebook and Instagram at [@PageValleyVA](#) and [@VirginiasCabinCapital](#). [#PageValley](#) [#PageValleyVA](#) [#WHYPageCounty](#)



## VISITOR NEWSLETTER

Visit Page Valley's fall visitor newsletter featured things to do, places to stay, leaf-peeping locations, seasonal activities and more. Page Valley is still working to grow the newsletter's readership. More than 3,400 people are currently subscribed. Visitors can sign up to receive newsletters [here](#).

## PARTNERSHIPS

- [Virginia Tourism Corporation](#)
- [Virginia Restaurant, Lodging, and Travel Association](#)
- [Virginia Association of Destination Marketing Organizations](#)
- [Shenandoah Valley Travel Association](#)

- [Shenandoah Valley Tourism Partnership](#)
  - [Shenandoah Valley Fields of Gold](#)
  - [Shenandoah Valley Farm2Fork Affair](#)
  - [Shenandoah Valley Partnership](#)
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## LOOKING AHEAD

As we enter the winter season, the Page Valley tourism team is excited to begin work on several new campaigns and projects, beginning with the creation of a new **inspiration guide**. This project, funded in part by a Virginia Tourism Corp. (VTC) grant award, will showcase experiences, itineraries, attractions, activities and “so much more” in Page Valley, and serve as a companion to the recently launched visitor guide. The all-color, magazine-style inspiration guide is set to include more than 50 pages of feature stories, professional imagery and themed itineraries.

Other efforts include digital campaigns, native ads, continued updates and additions on [pagevalley.org](https://pagevalley.org), social media campaigns and grant-funded projects. In addition to ARPA-funded projects totaling \$90,000 that will continue through June 2024, Page Valley was awarded two, \$20,000 grants from VTC last spring.

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Request images or Page Valley logos, submit your event or rental listing, sign up to participate in Page Valley’s ARPA-funded visual branding campaign and more.

[Learn More](#)

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## PAGE COUNTY TOURISM COUNCIL FY2024

**Chair:** Karen Riddle (District 2)

**Vice Chair:** Randy Howan (District 3)

### Members

Brittany Montgomery (District 1)

Bart Price (District 4)

Charlie Jenkins (District 5)

J.D. Cave (At-Large)

Helen Morton (Industry Representative)

***The Page Valley Tourism Council meets at 4 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month, unless otherwise noted, in the Page County Board of Supervisors' Room, located on the second floor of the Page County Government Center in Luray.***

The mission of the Page Valley tourism team, made up of staff members of the Page County Office of Economic Development & Tourism and the Page County Tourism Council, is to promote Page Valley as a premier destination of choice for leisure travel, fresh-air excursions, weddings and domestic/international tour and travel. We are dedicated to our community commitment to maintain a positive quality of life for residents, respect for sustaining a rich heritage and support for Page Valley tourism and hospitality partners, who deliver economic value, vitality and growth to Page County and its three towns.



## **PAGE COUNTY OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM**

### **Director of Economic Development and Tourism:**

Nina Long Fox

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Rebecca Armstrong

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### **Economic Development and Tourism Specialist:**

English Henry

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***The Page County Office of Economic Development and Tourism is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mondays through Fridays and is located on the second floor of the Page County Government Center in Luray. Reach the office at 540.743.1216 to make an appointment.***

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## **ABOUT OUR TEAM**

Page Valley is the lead marketing and promotional Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) for Page County, Virginia and is funded by Transient Occupancy Tax in Page County. The Page County Office of Economic Development & Tourism oversees the Page Valley DMO with assistance from the Page County Tourism Council, a

seven-member advisory group made up of lodging owners in the county's five districts — appointed by the Page County Board of Supervisors — as well as industry partners. Together, Page County staff and council members work to serve our partners in Page Valley, as well as the thousands of visitors who stay with us each year.

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**VIRGINIA IS FOR LO♥ERS™**

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**Page County Office of Economic Development & Tourism**

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