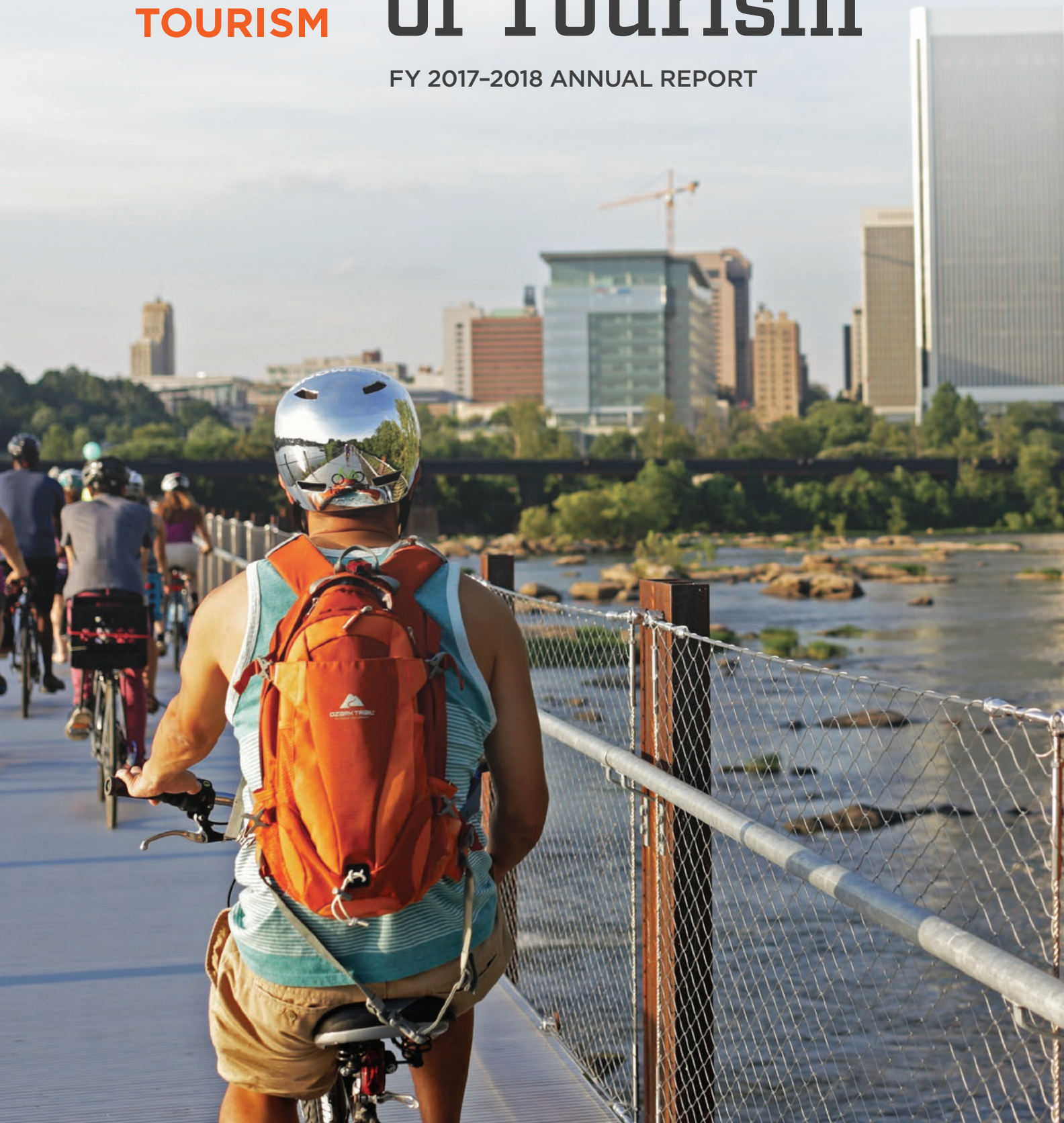




# The Impact of Tourism

FY 2017-2018 ANNUAL REPORT





"A Virginia city full of superlatives, with noted architecture, natural wonders (white water inside its confines!) and thriving scenes involving food and the arts."

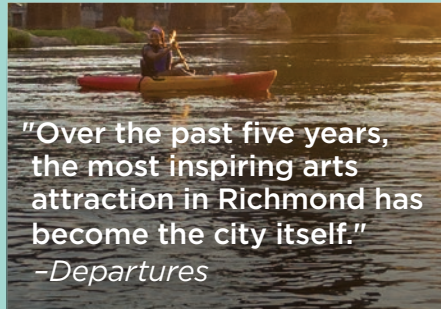
-The Washington Post

"Experience the South's best-kept culinary secret."

-Garden & Gun



"A haven for beer lovers." -Men's Journal



"Over the past five years, the most inspiring arts attraction in Richmond has become the city itself." -Departures

## A Year of Exciting Travel Accolades

# RICHMOND REGION

Articles and accolades in trusted travel and lifestyle media outlets greatly influence travel plans. By hosting media visits, pitching news, conducting editorial meetings, hosting media events, and responding to inquiries, Richmond Region Tourism garnered record-setting coverage of the area.

### PR by the numbers:

- 60 journalists, writers and influencers hosted
- 150 articles produced about the Richmond Region as a travel destination
- 350 million earned media impressions

## The Richmond Region is one of...

*Lonely Planet's*  
"Best in the U.S. 2018"

*Forbes' "10 Coolest U.S. Cities to Visit in 2018"*

*TripAdvisor's*  
"Top Destinations on the Rise"

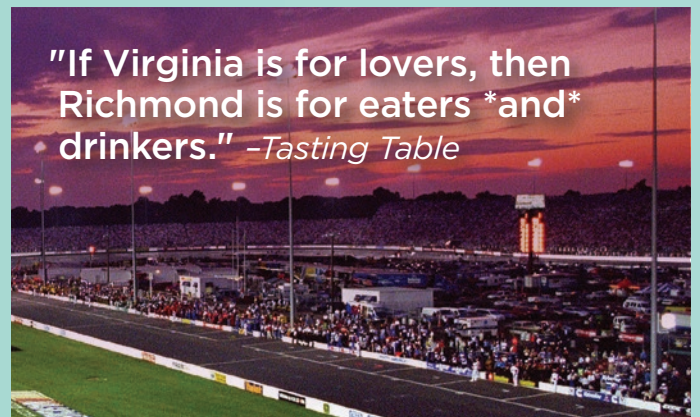
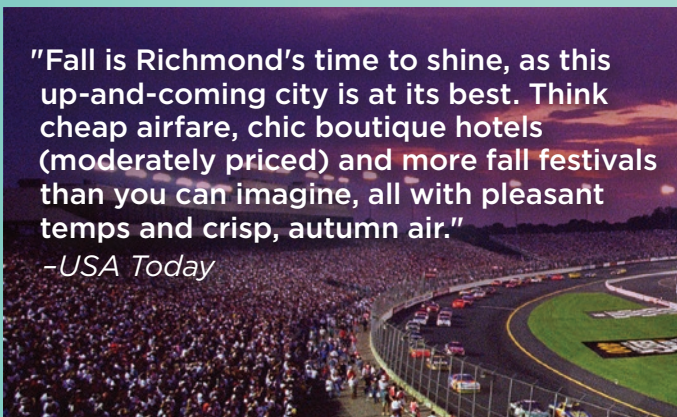
*Southern Living's*  
"10 Best Places to Travel in the South in 2018"

*Expedia's "18 Cities That Must Be Seen in 2018"*

"Fall is Richmond's time to shine, as this up-and-coming city is at its best. Think cheap airfare, chic boutique hotels (moderately priced) and more fall festivals than you can imagine, all with pleasant temps and crisp, autumn air."

-USA Today

"If Virginia is for lovers, then Richmond is for eaters \*and\* drinkers." -Tasting Table





# 35 1983-2018 years OF REGIONAL TOURISM COLLABORATION

## From the CEO

Tourism regional collaboration is 35 years strong. In 1983, the counties of Chesterfield, Hanover and Henrico and the City of Richmond partnered to invest in a regional tourism organization to leverage resources to drive visitation through leading-edge travel promotion.

Since then, Richmond Region Tourism has grown the economy in our community by enhancing its public image as a dynamic place and attracting leisure travelers, meetings, conventions and tournaments. Today, tourism in our region is stronger than ever, supporting the livelihoods of more than 23,000 hardworking citizens.

Our regional footprint has also grown. We are proud to welcome the Town of Ashland and Powhatan County into Richmond Region Tourism this year.

Take a look at the impact of tourism on our community. And remember, a thriving tourism community takes all of us. Thank you for your continued support!

**Jack Berry**  
PRESIDENT AND CEO

## New Footprint



## Tourism stimulates our economy.

Destination promotion is an engine of economic development in our community.

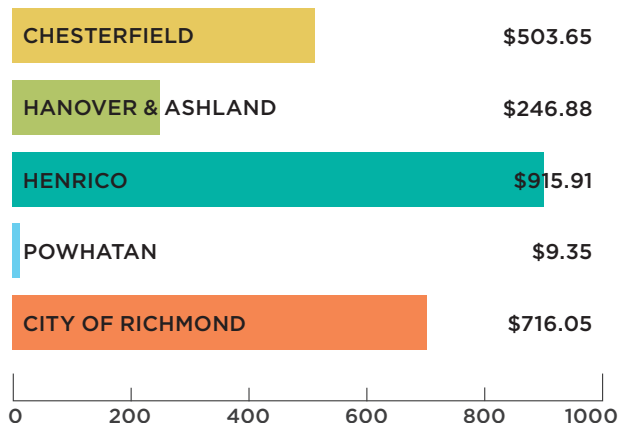
This year, the Richmond Region hosted  
**7 MILLION VISITORS**

who spent

**\$2.4 BILLION**

or **\$6.7 MILLION PER DAY<sup>1</sup>**

### VISITOR SPENDING (IN MILLIONS)



Tourism supports

**23,715 JOBS**

with wages and salaries totaling

**\$561 MILLION**



**\$71M**  
local taxes  
collected



**\$367M**  
hotel sales &  
occupancy revenue



# Attracting Leisure Travelers

## DIGITAL STATS

VisitRichmondVA.com



**486,154**  
clicks to partners'  
listings and events,  
which represents  
40K per month



**1,822,647**  
video views



**915,911**  
unique website visitors



**2,733,536**  
webpages viewed

## Top 5 Origination Markets

(based on total room  
nights booked)

1. Northern Virginia
2. North Carolina
3. New Jersey
4. Maryland
5. Pennsylvania

**4 | 5 | 1** MILES

**average distance  
traveled by  
visitors exposed  
to our marketing**

## Marketing ROI

**16.35 to 1**  
Website

**13.7 to 1**  
Paid Advertising



2017 RVA FALL FESTIVAL & EVENT GUIDE

## SOCIAL MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

The top blog post (pictured above) earned 8,120 page views; 7,268 unique views; and reached 11,826 people on Facebook.

**RVAblog.org** garnered more than 89,600 views; 79,300 unique views; with users spending an average of 2:37 minutes on the site.

### followers



43,800



47,900



38,300



Top Instagram post generated more than 3,250 likes. Plus, we gained 5,500 new followers.

Top Tweet garnered more than 29,600 impressions and 550 engagements.

Facebook videos received a total of 1.69M views, a 92% increase from last year.

Videos on YouTube were viewed more than 411,700 times. The top video was "Craft Beer in the Richmond Region" with 104,310 views.





## Exclusive Google Content Initiative

Richmond Region Tourism was selected as one of the first 14 destination marketing organizations to partner with Google on a new initiative to improve our Region's visibility and user engagement in Google's search and travel exploration products.

RRT's Marketing team conducted a two-part education program for tourism industry partners to learn how to expand their exposure and improve engagement and conversion with customers.

### Results so far:

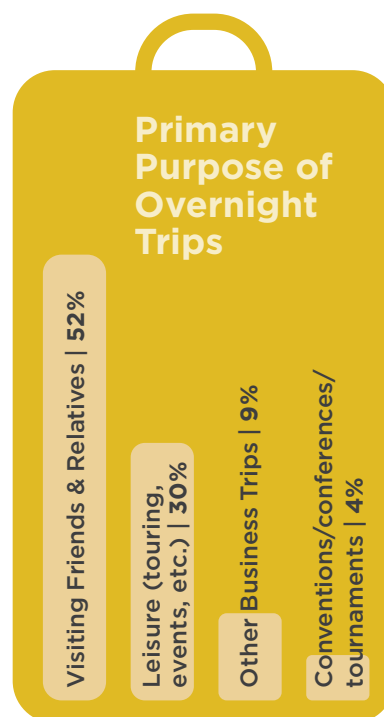
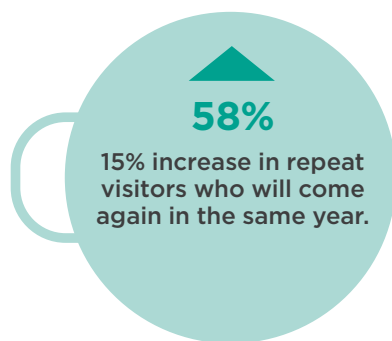
- Generated 700,000 views of RRT-owned content in seven months
- Increased visibility of RRT-owned video assets within Google Travel Guides
- Revised incorrect and missing data for local, travel-related businesses
- Captured and posted hundreds of new 360-degree and static images of local attractions and tourism sites
- Among first DMOs to earn exclusive, "Level 6 Local Guide" status
- RRT's Google Posts program featured in global webinar with exposure to hundreds of attendees in the U.S. and abroad
- Examples of highly viewed RRT Google posts over seven day periods include "family fun" with more than 100,000 views, and "Bachelorette" with nearly 70,000 views



## Tourism enhances our quality of life.

Tourism supports the places that make living in the Richmond Region wonderful. Visitor spending supports local businesses including restaurants, retail, breweries, transportation and attractions.

### VISITOR PROFILE<sup>2</sup>



## Recruiting Events

### MEETINGS, CONVENTIONS, AND TOURNAMENTS BOOKED BY RRT

Economic Impact (estimated)	\$102,081,058	\$65,102,557
Associated Attendees	330,886	142,357
Associated Hotel Room Nights	189,502	103,485
	Held in the Region FY 2017-2018	Future Events



### HOTEL ROOM NIGHTS BOOKED IN FY 2017-2018 BY MARKET SEGMENT

Sports 54%	Religious 20%	Association 11%	Gov't. 9%		
	Amway 3%	Corporate 2%	Specialty 1%		



## Services Drive Satisfaction

In the meeting, convention and tournament business, service is critical to retaining clients. With unmatched expertise, the RRT Convention and Sports Services team facilitates the best event experience for customers. The team drives business locally by serving as a community liaison. RRT adds value to the customer by providing an array of complimentary services including: access to knowledge base and innovation, cost savings, attendance driving tools and delivering unique experiences.

**"This conference was made possible due to the services provided by the Richmond Region Tourism office. It saved me time working on a conference location."** -Brittany Baily  
Virginia Statewide Neighborhood Conference

Groups Serviced: 196

## Tourism Careers Pay Off

The tourism industry develops workers providing career paths for tens of thousands of people in RVA every year. Across the nation, travel is one of the most potent job creators of any industry. Workers who start in travel and tourism achieve higher peak salary than most industries.<sup>4</sup>

- Americans whose first job was in a travel-related industry earn an average career salary of \$81,900—significantly higher than those whose first jobs were in manufacturing, construction, healthcare and most other U.S. industries.
- Nearly 40% of workers who began their career in travel reached an annual career salary in excess of \$100,000.
- The travel industry offers a better career starting point for Americans with less education: workers with a high school degree or less whose first jobs were in travel reached an average career salary of \$69,500, 5% greater than in other industries.





## Tourism Trailblazer

In a recent DestinationNext assessment, community leaders, tourism stakeholders, government leaders and customers ranked the Richmond Region's destination strength and community support and engagement in tourism. All sectors were in alignment and ranked the Region in the top destination category of Trailblazer. Trailblazer destinations realize the benefits of their tourism vision and work to keep engagement fresh and relevant.

### Top Destination Strengths

- Destination Performance
- Attractions & Entertainment
- Events
- Brand
- Convention & Meeting Facilities

### Top Areas of Community Support & Engagement

- Economic Development
- Industry Support
- Partner Strength & Support
- Hospitality Culture
- Regional Cooperation

## Tourism fosters community pride.

More than ever, our citizens are proud to live in the Richmond Region. In a recent Resident Sentiment Survey<sup>3</sup>, respondents said that the Region's history and diversity make it stand out from other places.



The majority of residents are **satisfied with the Region as a travel destination.**



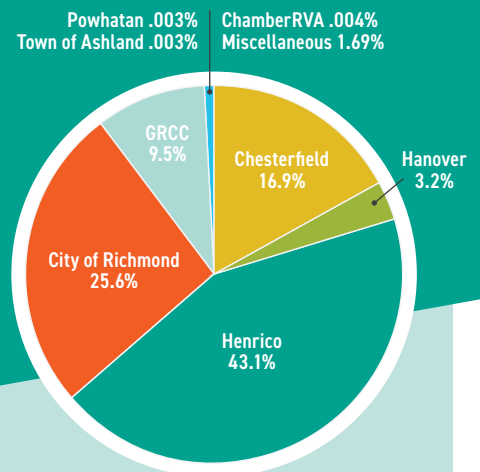
75% feel it is a **great place to play.**

## TOURISM IS A REGIONAL EFFORT.

Regional investment in travel promotion leverages resources for great impact. Tourism is a leader in regional collaboration.

### Richmond Region Tourism Investors:

- Budget: \$6.8 million
- Investment sources: Counties of Chesterfield, Hanover, Henrico and Powhatan, City of Richmond, and the Town of Ashland, ChamberRVA and various sponsorships
- Sponsorships: cash and in-kind- up 15%



### RVA Champions

The RVA Champions program recognizes citizens who help RRT recruit their meeting, convention or tournament.

- 15 RVA Champions
- Collective economic impact \$7,049,629

### I Am Tourism Ambassador Academy

- 13 I Am Tourism Ambassador workshops
- 545 Ambassadors trained—up 24%. 1,500+ total Ambassadors
- Launched new Ambassador Academy five-week program with 20 participants

### Community Awareness

- 46 articles in local media featuring tourism
- 33 presentations to various stakeholders
- 15 Tourism Awards presented during National Travel & Tourism Week

### Richmond Region Tourism Foundation

- Awarded two \$2,000 scholarships to VSU Hospitality Management students, bringing total scholarships awarded to VSU students to \$10,000 since 2012
- Funded I Am Tourism programs





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## Top 10 Attraction Attendance

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. James River Park<br>1,714,559           | 6. Science Museum of Virginia<br>454,139          |
| 2. Virginia Capital Trail<br>891,947       | 7. Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden<br>403,295       |
| 3. Virginia Museum of Fine Arts<br>693,718 | 8. Children's Museum of Richmond<br>343,623       |
| 4. Maymont<br>657,337                      | 9. Three Lakes Park & Nature Center<br>328,060    |
| 5. Henricus Historical Park<br>493,743     | 10. Richmond National Battlefield Park<br>320,892 |

All stats are Fiscal Year 2017-18 (July 2017 to June 2018) unless otherwise noted.

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Travel Association, calendar year 2017

<sup>2</sup> Longwoods International, calendar year 2015

<sup>3</sup> SIR: *The Capital Region Collaborative 2017 Quality Place Resident Survey*

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Travel: *Travel: America's Unsung Hero of Job Creation 2017*

### SOURCES