



FY 2024-2025 Annual Report

# THE IMPACT OF TOURISM

*NAPA Kitchen and Wine*

# BUILDING PRIDE, DRIVING GROWTH: TOURISM'S IMPACT ON THE RICHMOND REGION

## Dear Stakeholders,

A little over a year into my role as President and CEO of Richmond Region Tourism, I am proud to share how our collective work is fueling real momentum for the Richmond Region.

**Tourism as a Force for Good** remains our guiding principle. Tourism strengthens our economy, supports the places that make living here special, and builds pride in our community. Our award-winning leisure marketing campaigns celebrated the Richmond Region's arts, culture, history, and vibrant neighborhoods—reaching more than 157 million people. Whether through the Speaks for Itself campaign, spotlighting Black-owned restaurants, or showcasing our events at World Pride in D.C. and the WNBA All-Star Weekend, we connected RVA's unique stories to audiences across the country and inspired travel.



BLK RVA Campaign Display Ad

## We're also **Leveling Up Our Impact.**

Major developments like City Center, the Diamond District, and expanded sports facilities are reshaping our tourism landscape. With the continued success of the Tourism Improvement District (TID), we are more competitively resourced and able to stay “always on” in our sales and marketing—winning more events, driving visitation year-round, and supporting local businesses from restaurants to attractions.



RRT Marketing Summit

Finally, we are committed to **Striving for Excellence.** The inaugural Marketing Summit brought 150+ tourism professionals together to share tools and strategies that amplify our reach—at no cost to attendees. These collaborations strengthen our tourism ecosystem and position us to lead the nation in destination marketing.

Tourism is about people—nearly 30,000 hospitality workers who create memorable experiences every day. I'm honored to work alongside them, and all of you, as we continue championing RVA as a premier travel destination.

With gratitude,

**Katherine O'Donnell**  
President and CEO

# TOURISM STIMULATES OUR ECONOMY

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

In 2024, the Richmond Region hosted

**18.3 million visitors<sup>1</sup>**

WHO SPENT

**\$3.9 billion<sup>2</sup>**

▲ 4.7% INCREASE

**OR \$10.8 million PER DAY**

TOURISM SUPPORTS

**29,630<sup>2</sup>**

JOBS

WITH WAGES AND SALARIES TOTALING:

**\$1.3 billion<sup>2</sup>**



LOCAL TAXES COLLECTED:

**\$183.9 million<sup>2</sup>**

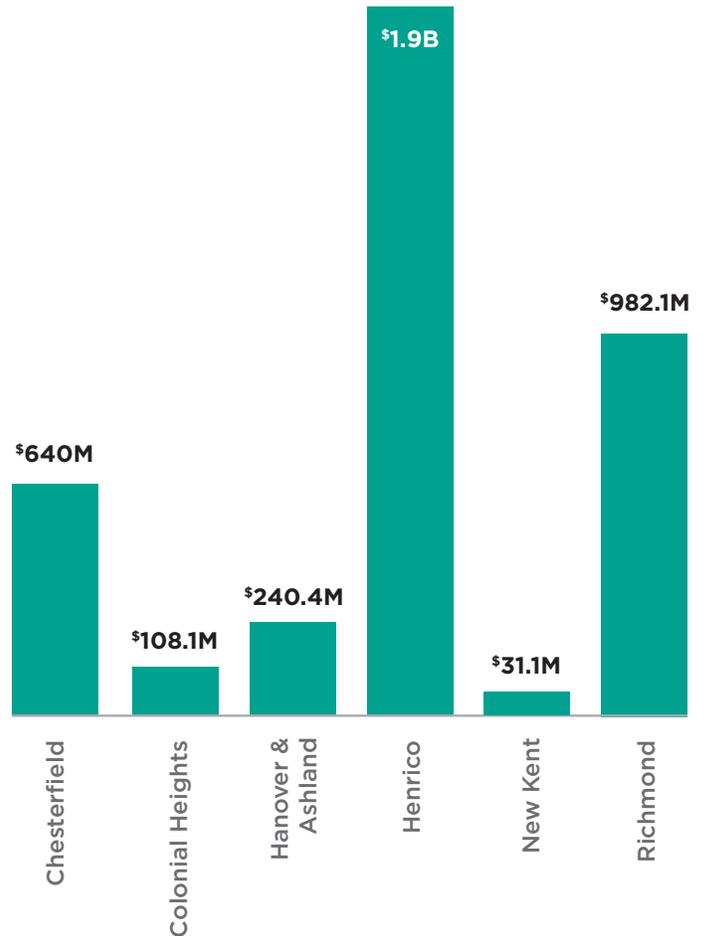


HOTEL SALES & OCCUPANCY REVENUE:

**\$634.8 million<sup>2</sup>**

▲ 5.4% INCREASE

## 2024 VISITOR SPENDING<sup>2</sup> in Millions



<sup>1</sup>Source: Longwoods International, calendar year 2024

<sup>2</sup>Tourism Economics, calendar year 2024

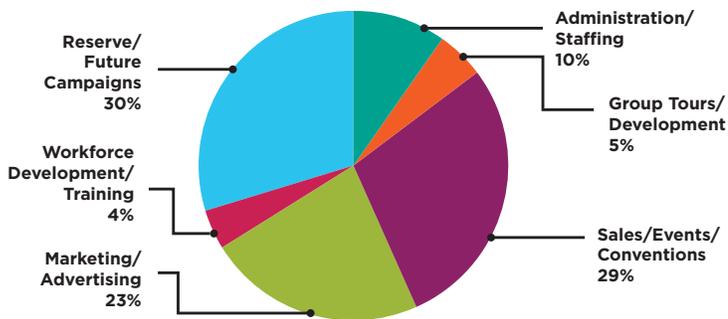
Number of visitors includes overnight and day trip visitors



Keystone Truck & Tractor Museum

# TID DRIVES RECORD RESULTS IN YEAR TWO

## FY 24-25 TID WORKPLAN EXPENSES

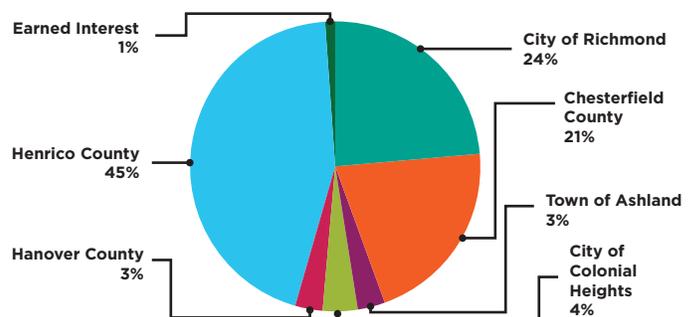


Now in its second year, the Richmond Region Tourism Improvement District (TID) continues to be a game changer by strengthening our destination’s visibility and competitiveness. The partnership between our hotel community, localities, and Richmond Region Tourism continues to fuel year-round sales, marketing, and incentive programs that bring more meetings, conventions, tournaments, and visitors to our region. In FY25, the TID Governance Committee approved an \$8.5 million budget and workplan and meets monthly with RRT staff to guide decisions, budgeting, KPIs, and future direction. The charts show fund allocation by department and revenue by jurisdiction.

## HIGHLIGHTS:

- Of the events booked in FY25 as part of our overall event recruitment, 57 were made possible through TID-approved incentives (25 meetings and 32 sports events), generating an estimated \$85.75 million in economic impact and 110,452 estimated room nights
- 53,507 trackable TID campaign room nights booked region-wide (+76% over last year)
- 11 new tradeshow attended plus expanded presence at 4 others, with 15 partners joining us across 8 events
- 11 Impactful FAM tours engaging housing bureaus, meeting planners, tour operators, and media
- 12 targeted leisure campaigns driving bookings and midweek business, with Expedia campaigns alone delivering 26,835 room nights and a 35:1 ROI

## TID WORKPLAN INCOME



# EVENT RECRUITMENT

## MEETINGS, CONVENTIONS, & SPORTS EVENTS HELD\*

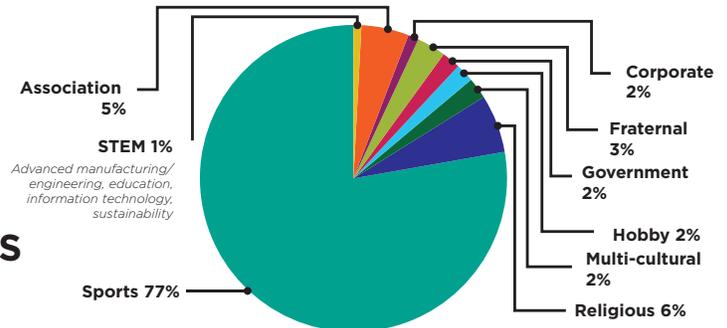
<b>\$182,042,685</b>	ESTIMATED ECONOMIC IMPACT	▲ 2%
<b>527,211</b>	ESTIMATED ATTENDEES	▲ 20%
<b>243,530</b>	ESTIMATED HOTEL ROOM NIGHTS	▲ 5%

\* percentage change based on adjusted FY 23-24 figures

## MEETINGS, CONVENTIONS, & SPORTS EVENTS BOOKED

<b>\$193,504,257</b>	ESTIMATED ECONOMIC IMPACT	▲ 12%
<b>522,916</b>	ESTIMATED ATTENDEES	▲ 28%
<b>231,953</b>	ESTIMATED HOTEL ROOM NIGHTS	▲ 16%

## HOTEL ROOM NIGHTS BOOKED BY MARKET SEGMENT



“*Richmond Region Tourism helped the RVA XC Festival, host of the 2023 & 2024 USATF National Cross-Country Championships, secure Wahoo Sports & Entertainment’s extra-large LED video boards to enhance the experience of the athletes and spectators.*”

- Steve Taylor,  
RVA XC Festival

## 5 TOP MEETINGS & CONVENTIONS HELD\*

- Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. 2025 Mid-Atlantic Regional Conference
- Jalsa Salana USA Ahmadiyya Muslim Community 75th Convention 2025
- Association of Kannada Kootas of America 2024 Convention
- Galaxy Con Richmond LLC-Galaxy Con Richmond 2025
- Virginia Theatre Association 2024 Annual Conference

## 5 TOP MEETINGS & CONVENTIONS BOOKED\*

- Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ of Apostolic Faith, Inc. International Holy Convocation 2026
- Council on Undergraduate Research 2026 National Conference on Undergraduate Research
- Christian Community Development Association 2026 National Conference
- American Orff-Schulwerk Association 2026 Professional Development Conference
- International Conference on Missions 2027 Annual Convention

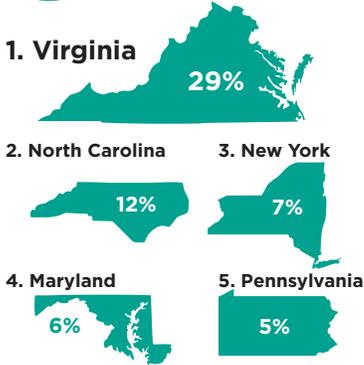
\* based on contracted room nights

## 5 TOP SPORT TYPES HOSTED\*

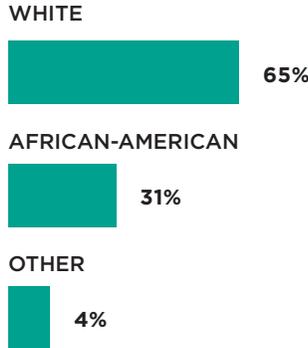


# VISITOR INSIGHTS

## 5 TOP ORIENTATION MARKETS<sup>1</sup>



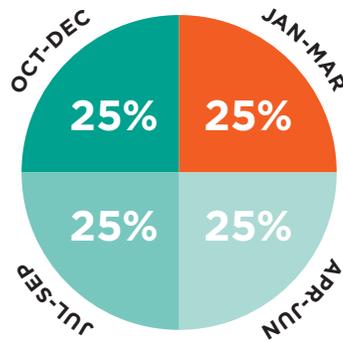
## VISITOR DEMOGRAPHICS<sup>2</sup>



## LENGTH OF STAY<sup>1</sup>



## SEASON OF TRIP<sup>1</sup>



## HIGHLIGHTS



**4.6 million**  
WEBSITE PAGEVIEWS<sup>1</sup>



**161,197**  
referrals to  
PARTNER WEBSITES<sup>1</sup>



**\$113,024,611**  
CREDIT CARD EXPENDITURE<sup>3</sup>

Source: <sup>1</sup>Arrivalist, <sup>2</sup>Longwoods, <sup>3</sup>Adara

Note: Arrivalist data is enriched data numbers consistent to what we've used in the past.

Note: Adara data only consists of the first six months of the FY.

# SOCIAL MEDIA

**201,998** ▲ 1,228%

TOTAL NEW FOLLOWERS

**6,673,729** ▼ 30%

TOTAL ACCOUNTS REACHED

**212,397** ▲ 38%

TOTAL INTERACTIONS

## TOP CONTENT OVERALL

### Black-owned Restaurants pt. 3

221,064 VIEWS    148,491 REACH    21,681 ENGAGEMENTS

### Ukrop's Market Hall

97,882 VIEWS    73,668 REACH    7,178 ENGAGEMENTS

### Garden Glow

83,619 VIEWS    62,817 REACH    6,491 ENGAGEMENTS



# CAMPAIGN SPOTLIGHTS

## BLK RVA AND CULTURE TRAVELS FAN LINKUP

BLK RVA sponsored an All-Star Fan Linkup, hosted by Culture Travels during WNBA All-Star Weekend in July in Indianapolis, IN, featuring SOUL: The Richmond Experience as the official event magazine. This partnership showcased the Richmond Region's culture to thousands of attendees including celebrity guests and influencers from across the country, as well as a digital audience, connecting with the \$145B Black travel market.

## D.C. World Pride ACTIVATION

For 6 weeks starting at World Pride in D.C., 11 Richmond Region branded cars traveled through the D.C. area including stops at several major events including both Beyonce concerts. Results for fleet of cars (first 4 weeks of campaign):

**1,424,664**  
impressions

**7,578**  
miles driven



World Pride Car Wrap

# INSPIRATION CAMPAIGN

The Inspiration Campaign, in its second full year, delivered strong results. Originally funded by ARPA, it was supported this year by RRT and TID funds and earned top honors for Integrated Communications Campaign at the 2025 Virginia PR Awards.

### BRAND LIFT SURVEY

**27%**

RECALL SEEING ADS FOR THE RICHMOND REGION

**42%**

INCREASE IN "VERY LIKELY" TRAVEL CONSIDERATION

**157M**

TOTAL IMPRESSIONS

**26.3M**

CTV IMPRESSIONS

**48.9M**

SOCIAL MEDIA IMPRESSIONS

**4.5M**

ONLINE VIDEO IMPRESSIONS

**64.8M**

RICH MEDIA IMPRESSIONS

**12.5M**

DIGITAL OUT-OF-HOME IMPRESSIONS

# WHAT THEY'RE SAYING

ACCOLADES | IN THE NEWS | LOCAL AWARENESS



15 Emerging  
LGBT+ Travel  
Hotspots

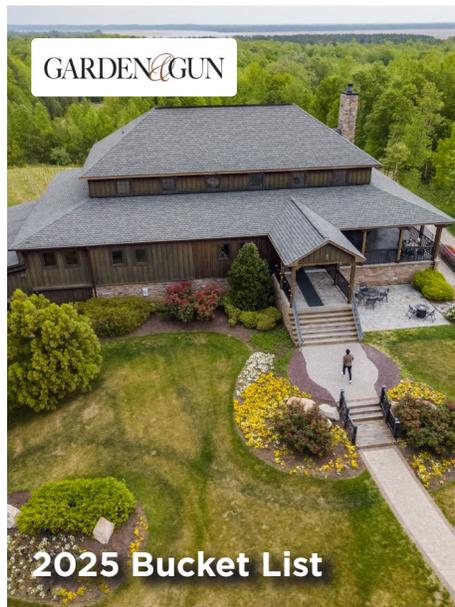
Pizza & Beer of Richmond

***"[The Richmond Region's] diverse array of attractions ensures that every visit is filled with discovery and excitement."***



***"Richmond is no ordinary city; it's a place where the vibrant culture and deep history of Black Americans come alive with every step you take and every bite you savor."***

**culture travels**



2025 Bucket List

New Kent Winery

***"Richmond has hit its stride in recent years, embracing street art, African-American culture, culinary talent, and local pride. ...From their hundreds of murals to the class IV rapids running right through downtown, it's a city that earns its stripes!"***

HoneyTrek



Best Places to  
Visit in the South  
in 2025

Secretariat Monument

***"What makes Richmond so special? It's not trying to be trendy. It just is. A city with grit, grace, and a whole lot of heart - where queer folk are woven into the cultural fabric, not just pinned to the party flyers."***

THE INDEPENDENT



America's Top 15  
Cities for Quality  
of Life

Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden

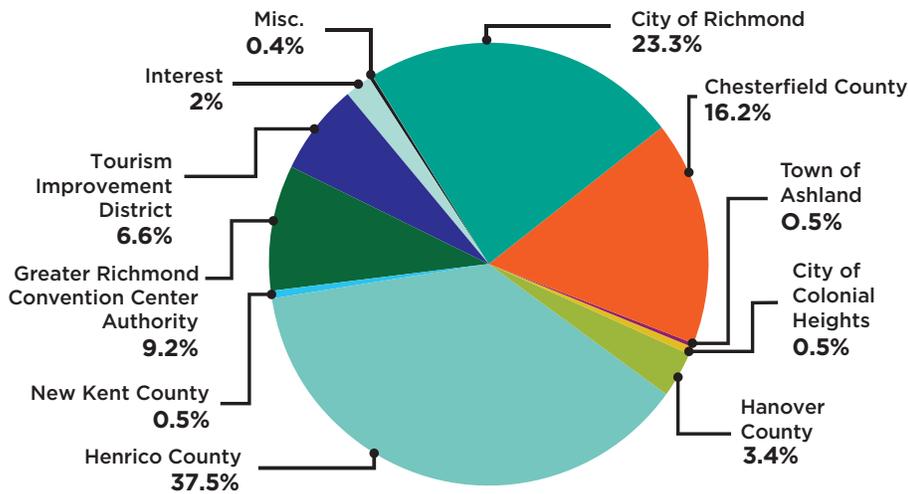


The Most Underrated  
Foodie Destinations  
in America

Napa Kitchen & Wine

# TOURISM IS A REGIONAL EFFORT

## RICHMOND REGION TOURISM INVESTORS



**Jurisdictional Support:**  
\$8.9 million

**Total Support:** \$10.9 million

**Investment sources:** Chesterfield County, Hanover County, Henrico County, New Kent County, City of Richmond, City of Colonial Heights, Town of Ashland, Greater Richmond Convention Center Authority, Tourism Improvement District and various sponsorships.



*Rapterra @ Kings Dominion*

# RICHMOND REGION TOURISM FOUNDATION

## ABOUT THE FOUNDATION

The Richmond Region Tourism Foundation supports workforce development, diversity and inclusion, and sports tourism through programs, scholarships, and community events, helping ensure Richmond thrives as a premier visitor destination.



**DONATE TODAY**

## I AM TOURISM

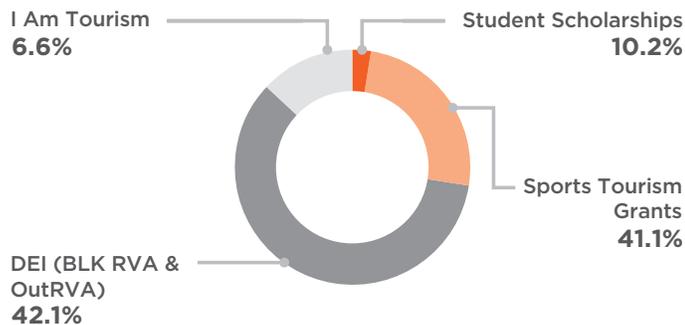
The I Am Tourism (IAT) Ambassador and Hotel Edition programs continued to strengthen regional pride in FY25 by giving participants a visitor's perspective, deepening their knowledge of local attractions, and preparing them to represent the Richmond Region at events and in daily community interactions.



**547**

**FY25 graduates**

## PROGRAMMING EXPENSES



## BLK RVA COMMUNITY AWARDS

235 guests attended the inaugural BLK RVA Community awards in 2024. The BLK RVA Community Awards are a true celebration of the history, resilience, innovation, and economic impact of the Black community in the Richmond Region. This event is a powerful testament to Black excellence, showcasing the achievements and contributions that continue to shape our vibrant cultural landscape.

## OUTRVA

In FY25, the OutRVA initiative advanced the Richmond Region's reputation as an inclusive destination through training led by Side by Side, business sponsorships with the LGBTQ Chamber, support for VA Pridefest, and visibility for 50 partners during a World Pride activation.

## VSU SCHOLARSHIPS

Three scholarships were awarded to VSU students in the Hospitality Management Program.

## RVA SPORTS AWARDS HIGHLIGHTS



RVA Sports Awards @ Altria Theater



**5.2 million**  
media impressions



**18,000**  
households reached



**29,000**  
broadcast viewers



**\$40,000**  
in grants contributed

# VISITOR EXPERIENCE HIGHLIGHTS

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Tourism is more than visits—it's a force for good, fueling our economy, enriching community life, and showcasing the Richmond Region's spirit.



**40,008**  
visitor center  
touchpoints



**151**  
meetings  
serviced



**21**  
overnight bus group  
meet and greets



**61.5%**  
planner survey  
response rate



**658 metric tons**  
carbon offset

## NET ZERO CERTIFIED CONFERENCES

Richmond Region Tourism helps associations host sustainable meetings by offsetting carbon emissions through the Net Zero Emission Conference Certification.

*Belle Isle*

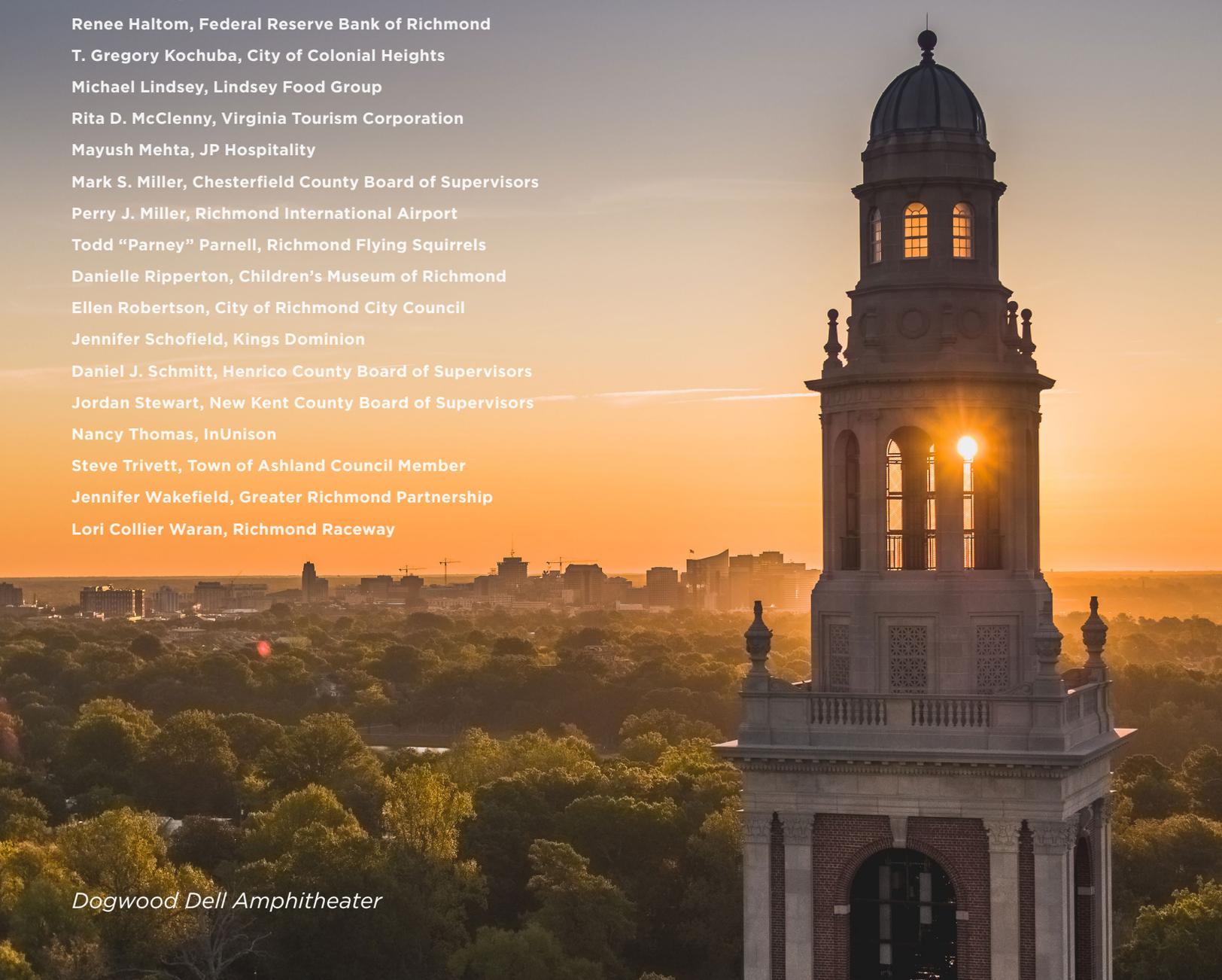


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  - Paulin Cheatham, Dominion Energy
  - Susan Dibble, Hanover County Board of Supervisors
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  - Lori Collier Waran, Richmond Raceway



*Dogwood Dell Amphitheater*