Richmond Region Tourism Improvement District FY 25-26 Year-End Report

Three years into the Richmond Region Tourism Improvement District (TID), the impact of this collective investment continues to grow. FY26 was a year of strong results, expanded reach, and strategic investments that are driving overnight visitation today while positioning the Richmond Region for continued success in the years ahead.

Across leisure marketing, meetings, conventions, sports tourism, and group tour, TID resources helped turn opportunity into measurable results. Leisure campaigns generated **58,557 measured room nights, a 21% increase year over year**, while expanding the Richmond Region's presence across digital, broadcast, travel media, social, and out-of-home channels. The Richmond Region also welcomed TBEX North America, leveraging TID investment to showcase all seven jurisdictions to hundreds of travel content creators through immersive tours, events, and destination experiences that generated more than $1.27 million in earned social media content value. At the same time, approved event incentives grew to **64 events representing 133,054 estimated room nights and $161.2 million** in estimated economic impact—an 88% year-over-year increase in economic impact. Investments in group tour, workforce development, and new events further strengthened the pipeline for future visitation and supported the people and partners who make our hospitality industry successful.

Just as important, much of the impact of this year's work is still ahead of us. More than half of the event incentives approved in FY26 are expected to actualize in FY27 and FY28, demonstrating how today's investments are building future demand for our hotels and our region.

These results are possible because of the continued collaboration of our hotel community, localities, Richmond Region Tourism, and industry partners. Thank you for your partnership, your leadership, and your continued commitment to strengthening tourism throughout the Richmond Region.

Neil Amin
TID Governance Committee Chair
CEO, Shamin Hotels

Mayush Mehta
TID Governance Committee Vice Chair
Regional Vice President, JP Hospitality

Governance Committee

The TID Governance Committee meets monthly to work closely with RRT staff on programmatic decisions, approval processes, budgeting, KPIs and direction for the future.

- Neil Amin, Shamin Hotels, Chair
- Mayush Mehta, JP Hospitality, Vice Chair
- Kelly Klocke, Apple REIT
- Nirav Mehta, S-Z Management
- Nick Patel, Kalyan Hospitality
- Ravi Patel, SINA Hospitality
- Robert Reed, SMI Hotel Group
- Vishal Savani, Savara Hospitality
- Mark Yardis, Shamin Hotels
- Lisa Sims, RRT Board Chair*
- Katherine O'Donnell, RRT President & CEO*

*Non-voting members

Leisure Marketing

OVERVIEW

Leisure Marketing continued to build awareness, visitation, and positive perception of the Richmond Region through a strategic mix of proven and new marketing initiatives.

- **Executed 15+ campaigns and initiatives** across digital, social, broadcast, audio, out-of-home, travel media, and partner platforms.
- **Maintained a strong mix of year-round and seasonal campaigns**, including I-95 billboard visibility and targeted midweek and need-period promotions designed to support visitation and room nights.
- **Reached key audiences and hotel segments** through dedicated strategies focused on Black travelers and economy and smaller hotels.
- **Tested two new advertising platforms** to evaluate performance, diversify our media mix, and identify additional opportunities to maximize ROI.
- **Activated the Always Revolutionary Richmond Region 250 initiative** through integrated digital and social campaigns highlighting the roots, voices, ideas, and experiences that have shaped the Richmond Region and continue to influence its story today.

Collectively, these efforts expanded our reach among priority audiences, supported TID hotels, drove demand, and kept the Richmond Region competitive and top of mind as a leisure destination.

TOTAL MEASURED AD CAMPAIGN RESULTS

Combined results from Sojern, Epsilon, and Expedia		
58,557 +21%	**115,992** +194%	**17,080** +286%
Room Nights	Travelers	Flights

Measurement methodologies and reported metrics vary by campaign partner. Epsilon was added as a new campaign partner in FY26, so year-over-year results reflect both campaign performance and expanded measurement across our marketing partners.

Campaigns also generated significant economic value for the Richmond Region. Because each partner measures economic contribution differently, results are reported separately rather than combined:

- **Sojern** — $6.66M Estimated Economic Impact
- **Epsilon** — $12.3M Measured Visitor Spend
- **Expedia** — $6.8M Booking Revenue

Sojern Campaign Results

The following recurring campaigns generated an approximately 32% year-over-year increase in confirmed room nights.

Black Travelers Campaign		
Room Nights	13,267	+58% YOY
Travelers	8,962	+68% YOY
Flights	1,402	-2% YOY
Economic Impact	$2.04M	+76% YOY

(July 1, 2025-June 30, 2026)

Drive December		
Room Nights	3,730	+75% YOY
Travelers	2,412	+53% YOY
Flights	192	+10% YOY
Economic Impact	$549,936	+53% YOY

(October 15, 2025 – December 15, 2025)

All Travel		
Room Nights	11,256	+20% YOY
Travelers	7,691	+32% YOY
Flights	1,237	-20% YOY
Economic Impact	$1.7M	+38% YOY

(July 1, 2025 – May 18, 2026)

Mid-Week Travel		
Room Nights	6,778	-25% YOY
Travelers	5,249	-11% YOY
Flights	833	-44% YOY
Economic Impact	$1.2M	-7% YOY

(July 1, 2025 – April 30, 2026)
**Note, the spend on this campaign was $60,000 less than previous year.*

The following new campaigns, along with campaigns run through Richmond Region Tourism's marketing budget, produced 83% more room nights with Sojern over FY25.

World Cup	
Room Nights	148
Travelers	419
Flights	22
Economic Impact	$214,242

(February 16, 2026 – May 31, 2026)

Always Revolutionary Richmond Region 250	
Room Nights	5,846
Travelers	4,196
Flights	582
Economic Impact	$956,688

(February 1, 2026 – June 30, 2026)

Epsilon Campaign Results

Epsilon was introduced as a new digital media partner to drive awareness and visitation through cross-device and custom display advertising. The campaign targeted key feeder markets including New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Atlanta, Washington, D.C., Hampton Roads, Raleigh, Charlotte, Charleston, and Savannah.

Campaign Metrics	
Individuals Reached	1.1M
Total Visitors	57.8K
Measured Visitor Spend	$12.3M
Average Visitor Spend	$213

(September 1, 2025 – April 30, 2026)

Expedia Campaign Results

Expedia delivered 5.5% increase in bookings YOY and 10% growth in searches. Weekday room nights fell -3.5% while hotel revenue still rose. Weekend stays are growing, and weekdays continue to be a growth lever for us.

Campaign Metrics	
Travelers	29,263
Room Nights	17,862
Flights	12,812
Revenue	$6.8M

(August 15, 2025 – June 30, 2026)

SOCIAL MEDIA

TBEX North America

Richmond Region Tourism leveraged Tourism Improvement District (TID) funding to host TBEX North America in June 2026, transforming the Richmond Region into a global stage for travel content creators and generating unprecedented destination exposure. In addition to hosting conference programming, Richmond Region Tourism developed Pre-BEX tours spanning all seven jurisdictions and signature evening events that immersed attendees in the region's history, attractions, culinary scene, and hospitality. The TID social media investment further elevated the experience through immersive, highly shareable activations—including an Always Revolutionary timeline, a Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden lounge, and Richmond Region Mimosa Trail ice cream flights—that inspired hundreds of creators to produce authentic content showcasing the destination. Together, these efforts generated extensive organic content that amplified the Richmond Region's story well beyond the conference while delivering content value that far exceeded the initial TID investment.

TBEX by the Numbers

- **TID Investment: $211,870.60**
- **Estimated Creator Content Value: $1.27 million** ($1 million on Instagram and $272,500 on TikTok)
- **Creator Output: 400 Instagram posts** and **109 TikTok posts** using **#TBEXRichmondVA**
- **Pre-BEX Experiences**: 17 curated creator tours showcasing attractions, communities, and experiences across **all seven Richmond Region jurisdictions**
- **Evening Events**: Signature networking events highlighting the Richmond Region's culinary scene, culture, and hospitality for attending creators and industry partners
- **Instagram Performance:** 984,428 views, 81,332 accounts reached, 52,693 engagements, 6,944 profile visits, with **56.74% of views coming from non-followers**
- **Facebook Performance:** 189,398 views, 113,550 accounts reached, 2,201 engagements, 641 link clicks, and 3,127 page visits
- **TikTok Performance:** 68,760 views, 2,593 engagements, and 7,978 new viewers

ADDITIONAL MARKETING INITIATIVES

Additional FY26 initiatives expanded the Richmond Region's visibility through broadcast, travel media, out-of-home and other awareness-focused channels.

- **Television Marketing**: Fox 5 in D.C. delivered 9.9M+ impressions, along with significant added-value placements across premium programming, including NFL, MLB and college football. The CBS 6 campaign reached 97% of households in the Richmond DMA—approximately 459,000 households—and generated 3.8M household impressions.
- **AFAR Travel Media:** A new partnership with AFAR extended the Richmond Region's reach to highly engaged travel audiences through social, email, digital display and editorial content. Social content reached 214,000+ people, while targeted emails generated 1.3M+ opens. The partnership also included a feature highlighting mountain biking in the Richmond Region in AFAR Magazine.
- **I-95 and I-64 Out-of-Home**: Billboard placements maintained visibility for the Richmond Region among travelers along two of Virginia's most heavily traveled corridors.

Destination Sales & Sports Development

OVERVIEW

In FY26, TID investment helped Destination Sales & Sports Development grow group business and strengthen the Richmond Region's future pipeline. Incentive approvals, estimated room nights, economic impact, and conversion all increased, with more than half of approved events scheduled to actualize in FY27 and FY28.

BOOKING INCENTIVES

Single Property Booking Promotion: Your Event, Your Extras

Flexible incentive options aimed to attract new midweek business in 2026 and 2027

11 events booked | **2,283** contracted room nights | **$1.4M** estimated economic impact

Booking Incentives

Number of Events Incentives Approved	**64 Events** (37 Meetings, 27 Sports) **+12%**
Estimated EIC	$161.2M **+88%**
Estimated Room Nights	133,054 **+20%**
Close Conversion Rate	79.3% **+24 percentage points**

INCENTIVES APPROVED BY FY	MEETINGS	SPORTS
FY26	1	4
FY27	6	13
FY28	12	4
FY29	6	3
FY30	6	2
FY31	3	1
FY32	3	0
TOTAL	**37**	**27**

FY26 HOTEL TRENDS

Richmond Region hotel performance strengthened in FY26, with demand growth outpacing the increase in available supply. Demand increased 7.2% year over year compared with a 3.6% increase in supply, while occupancy, ADR, RevPAR and overall hotel revenue also increased.

	FY25	FY26	YOY Change
Occupancy	63%	65%	+3.2%
Avg. Daily Rate	$114	$116	+1.8%
RevPar	$71	$75	+5.6%
Supply	8.38M	8.69M	+3.6%
Demand	5.24M	5.62M	+7.2%
Revenue	$595.7M	$650.3M	+9.2%

Several of FY26's strongest revenue periods aligned with significant meetings and sports business across the Richmond Region. July opened the fiscal year with 70% occupancy and a 20.1% YOY increase in hotel revenue, supported by TID-incentivized sports business, including two weekends of NXT Pro Hoops, Big Shots Basketball and Copa Talento Soccer.

April revenue increased 12.9% YOY, supported by strong event demand throughout the month. The Council on Undergraduate Research citywide rolled into the Virginia Music Educators Association Annual Event, which overlapped with the Sports Backers Monument Avenue 10K weekend, while the TID-incentivized USA Fencing NAC drove additional demand later in the month. While not RRT-booked, the Monument Avenue 10K is a significant annual tourism driver for the region.

June closed the fiscal year with revenue up 12.5% YOY, as the region hosted the National Speech & Debate Association and TID-incentivized TBEX back-to-back.

HOTEL BENEFITS

Beyond driving future group business, TID investment provided direct benefits and resources to hotels and industry partners throughout the Richmond Region.

- Through **sports event hotel rebates**, TID provided **$197,596** in direct support to **82** hotels across the Richmond Region for actualized room nights generated by new sports events secured with TID-approved incentives.
- Panoramic video of **96 hotels** has been published on the Threshold360 platform.
- **Virginia Restaurant, Lodging & Travel Association** membership continues to be provided to all TID hotels.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

TID investment expanded business development through increased tradeshow presence, partner participation, and a new scalable booth, creating more opportunities to connect with qualified planners and decision-makers.

TRADESHOWS BY THE NUMBERS

In addition to tradeshow opportunities with Richmond Region Tourism budget, the TID supported: **12** tradeshows | **194** scheduled 1:1 appointments | **30** immediate RFP opportunities

Meetings & Conventions

- **10** tradeshows supported by the TID
- **8** hotel & venue partners participated*
- **75** scheduled 1:1 appointments
- **608** booth scans captured
- **15** immediate RFP opportunities generated

Sports Tourism

- **2** tradeshows supported by the TID
- **5** sports tourism partners & venue partners participated*
- **119** scheduled 1:1 appointments
- **15** immediate RFP opportunities generated

SALES MARKETING HIGHLIGHTS

Sales Marketing efforts kept the Richmond Region visible among meeting professionals and decision-makers through targeted industry media, digital advertising, social media, and content partnerships.

BUILDING ON EFFORTS HIGHLIGHTED IN THE MID-YEAR REPORT

- **ASAE:** Sponsored editorial and digital advertising positioned the Richmond Region with association meeting planners, including the *Second to None* feature, which ranked as the **4th most-viewed article** during part of its campaign run.
- **LinkedIn:** The fall awareness campaign generated **668,000+ impressions and 9,400+ clicks** across key meetings markets
- **PCMA and RCMA:** Industry partnerships expanded visibility among association and faith-based meeting planners through digital, social, email, and content placements.

NEW SALES MARKETING OPPORTUNITIES

- **Connect Meetings:** Expanded to Connected TV and event-targeting advertising, with the CTV campaign delivering **51,000+ impressions** and a **98.7% video completion rate.**
- **Cvent:** Expanded visibility through targeted digital and video advertising in Savannah, Raleigh, and Washington, D.C., along with prime placement on the Cvent RFP Dashboard resulting in over 270,000 impressions over 5 ad placements increasing RFP volume 32% over previous year.
- **Smart Meetings:** Introduced a multi-channel partnership reaching meeting professionals through print, digital advertising, social media, native content, email marketing, and webinar sponsorship.
- **USAE-MAIL:** 10 newsletter advertising placements delivered **340,000+ emails and 58,000+ unique opens**, while a dedicated email generated an additional **33,000+ deliveries and 6,300+ unique opens.**
- Together, these efforts broadened the Richmond Region's presence across trusted meetings-industry channels while supporting the sales team's direct outreach to planners and decision-makers.

Group Tour

OVERVIEW

In FY26, Richmond Region Tourism implemented a coordinated group tour strategy designed to turn sales activity into measurable overnight business. The strategy combined targeted trade show participation, marketing and product development, familiarization tours, and a performance-based incentive program centered on generating room nights.

GROUP TOUR SALES: BY THE NUMBERS

Targeted outreach generated measurable interest among tour operators, group travel buyers, and industry partners. During FY26, the Group Tour team:

- Participated in **16** TID-supported trade shows
- Engaged **5** association partners
- Conducted more than **400** scheduled one-on-one appointments
- Generated **20** immediate business development opportunities

MARKETING AND PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

Group tour marketing supported the group tour sales strategy with an integrated campaign designed to inspire new Richmond Region itineraries, equip tour operators with practical planning resources and create opportunities for deeper sales engagement.

Audience Engagement	Webinar Engagement
36,327 survey email recipients	**130** webinar registrations
36.64% survey email open rate	**66** live webinar attendees
5.56% survey email click-through rate	More than **650** webinar page visits
175 survey responses	

Continued engagement: Post-event HCI email achieved a 32% open rate and 5% CTR, while the standalone HCI email achieved a 29% open rate and 4% CTR.

BUILDING BOOKABLE EXPERIENCES

Starr Tours launched the first-of-its-kind Richmond Holiday Escape, an overnight Heritage and Pride bus tour to Richmond, Virginia. The itinerary demonstrated how the Richmond Region's history, culture, attractions, and seasonal experiences can be packaged into a distinctive group travel product.

INCENTIVE PROGRAM

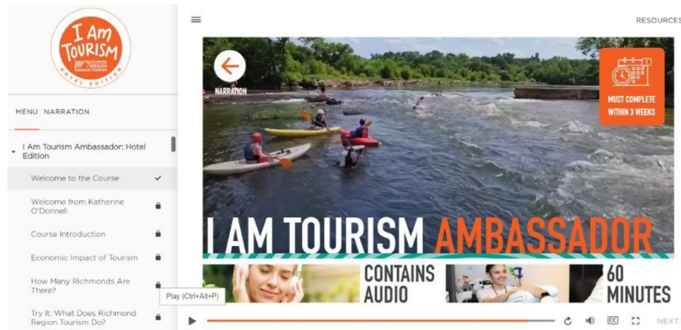
The FY26 incentive program encouraged participating tour operators to generate overnight stays in the Richmond Region. Incentives were connected to measurable production and included support such as tour-leader bonuses, additional bonuses tied to hotel-room performance, and complimentary group receptions.

Performance Metric	FY25	FY26
Operators earning incentives	8	28
Room nights generated	280	980

Workforce Development

DIGITAL I AM TOURISM

925 hours of digital IAT training were completed.



Special Events Grant-Sampling of Grantees

- No Headroom
- Virginia Hip Hop History
- Farm and Fields Tour
- Tudorcon
- Virginia Antiques Expo
- Red Carpet Reframes
- Elite Prep Championships
- The Cultured Table
- VA Black Expo
- East Coast Live
- CGB Juco Prep
- Robius Landing Triathlon
- Richmond Invitational
- We Influence Summit
- Prototype, Structure and Blueprint

EIC **$3,613,040** |Room Nights **8,659** | Total Grant **$72,000**

TID YTD

Income		YTD 6/30/2026
Hoteliers/Jurisdiction Support	$	9,361,679
Net Banking Interest/Income	$	280,976
Grant Income and Program Offsets	$	67,769
Total Income	**$**	**9,710,424**

Expense		YTD
Administration: *Professional Fees, Admin Mgmt, Bank Fees and Investments*	$	953,165
Group Tours: *Tradeshows, FAMs, Incentives*	$	328,478
Sales: *Client Events, FAMs, Tradeshows, Sponsorship, Sales Marketing, Booking incentives, Sports Hotel Rebates*	$	3,098,755
Marketing: *Advertising, Production, Social Media, Sponsorships*	$	2,041,102
TID Training/Memberships/Too: *Visitable Training, IAT Hotel Edition, VRLTA Dues, Workforce Development, Event Incubation Grants*	$	270,339
Expenses (ex-Reserve)	**$**	**6,691,838**
Reserve	**$**	**2,892,797**
Expenses Total	**$**	**9,584,635**