

FALL REV UP 2026

FINDING, TELLING, AMPLIFYING YOUR STORY



VIRGINIA
Main Street

Letterpress
Communications

WELCOME!

TELL ME...

Who are you?

What do you do?

What is your favorite place on
your Main Street?

THE LETTERPRESS TEAM





MARKETING MOMENT

“ —

Tell me the facts and I'll learn.
Tell me the truth and I'll
believe. But tell me a story and
it will live in my heart forever."

Native American Proverb

FINDING YOUR STORY

THREE WORDS



Finding Your Story

What's the REAL story?

- *What story do we tell ourselves?*
- *What story do visitors tell?*
- *What story do new residents tell?*

Progress vs Preservation

- *What are you preserving?*
- *Where are you progressing?*

YOUR TURN!
FIND YOUR STORY



BRAIN BREAK

TELLING YOUR STORY



Telling Your Story

Who are your storytellers?

- *Internal vs External*

How will you tell your story?

- *Written, Visual, Data*

Where will you share your story?

- *Owned, Earned & Paid Channels*

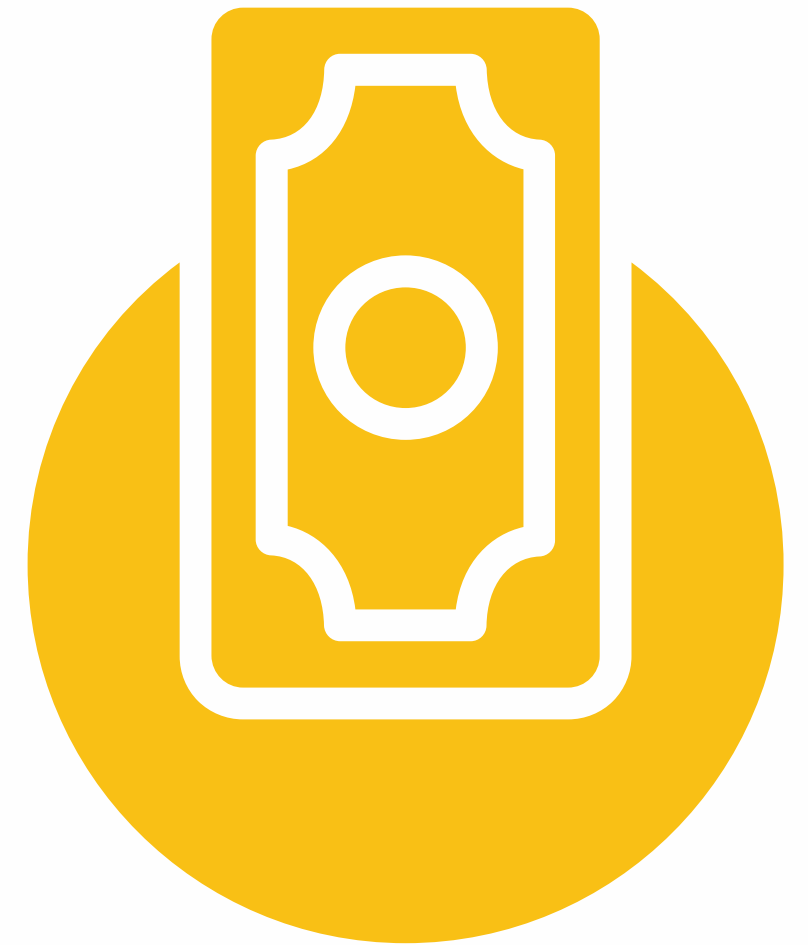
COMMUNICATIONS CHANNELS



Owned



Earned



Paid



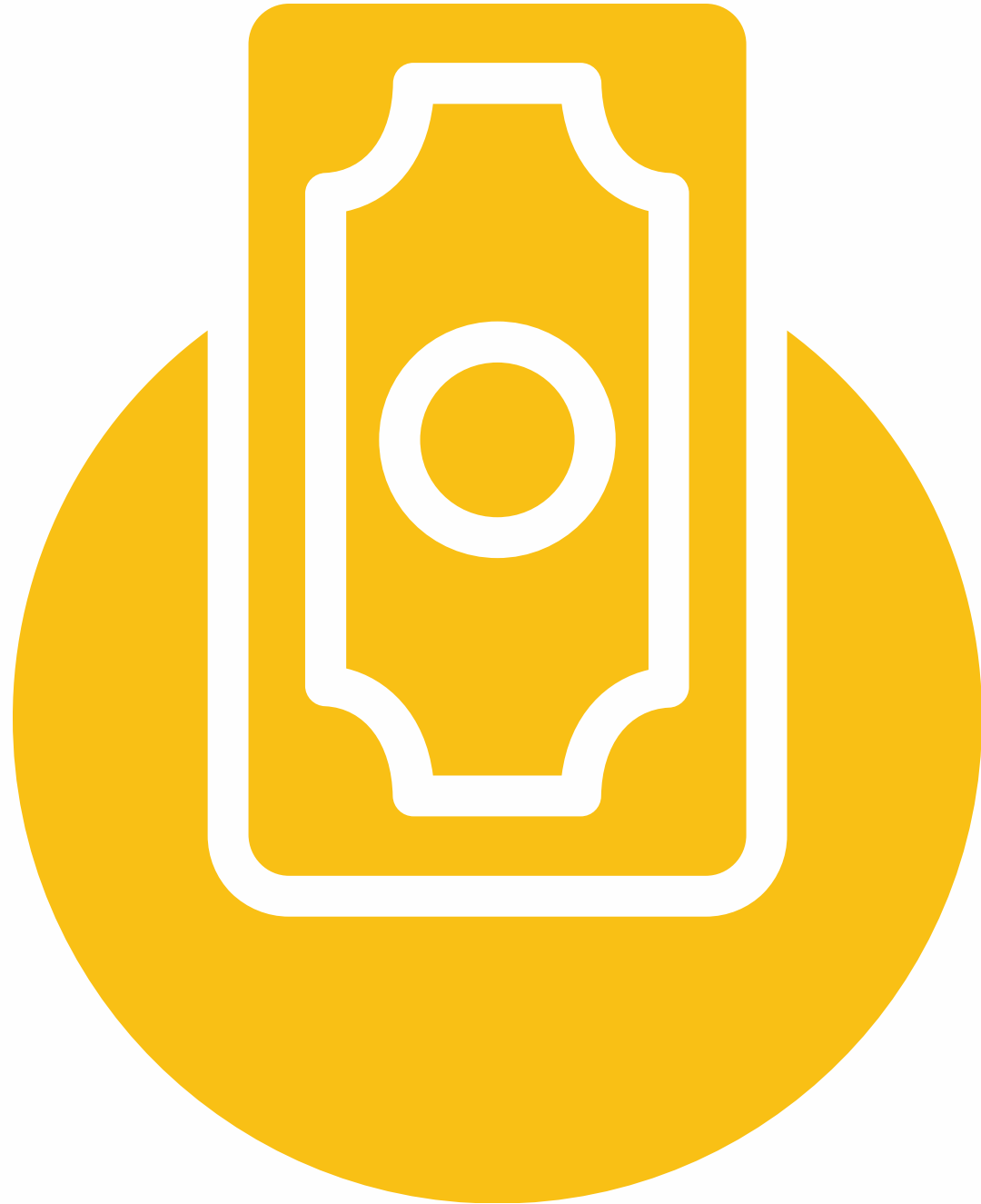
OWNED CHANNELS

- Website
- Newsletter
- Contacts
- Google Business
- Social Media (Rented)
 - Facebook
 - Instagram
 - LinkedIn



EARNED CHANNELS

- Word of Mouth
- Reviews (Digital Word of Mouth)
- Media/Press coverage
- Social Media
 - Likes
 - Shares
 - Comments



PAID CHANNELS

- Digital Ads
- Social Media Ads
- Print Ads
- Radio/TV
- Community Sponsorships



Add Data to Your Story

Numbers Really Matter

- *Data gives your story credibility*

Meaningful Metrics

- *Choose the right numbers.*

Avoid Data Overload

All you need is one solid stat.

YOUR TURN!
TELL YOUR STORY



LUNCH!

**TAKE BETTER PHOTOS,
TELL BETTER STORIES,**



Visual Storytelling

Showing your mission in action—one real moment at a time.



People don't connect to programs.

They connect to people, moments, and impact. Your photos are often the first—and most lasting—impression of your work.

The 5 Photos Every Nonprofit Needs

Cover shot – one powerful, emotional image

Action shots – people doing the work (not posing)

Impact shots – the result (before/after, outcome)

Detail shots – hands, tools, small moments

Context shots – wide shots showing place/community



What makes a photo work in your annual report?

- Emotion > perfection
- Real moments > posed moments
- Specific stories > generic smiles

Strong storytelling photos often come from candid, imperfect moments that capture feeling, not just faces

**YOU HAVE A CAMERA
IN YOUR POCKET!**



Three Simple Rules for Fantastic Photography

- Rule of thirds
- Get closer
- Change your angle

Let's explore these some more...

Rule of Thirds



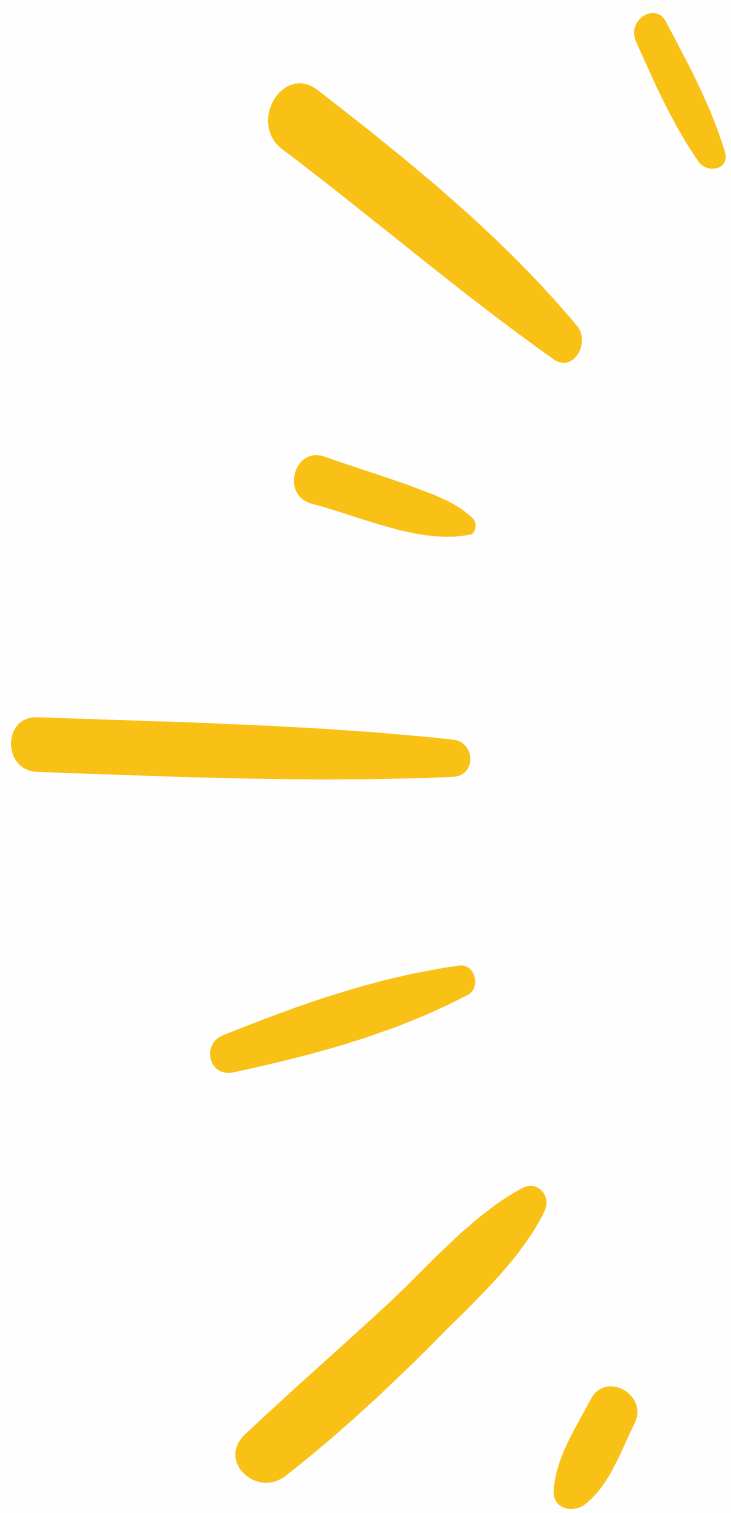
gina yeo

Get closer



New Angle

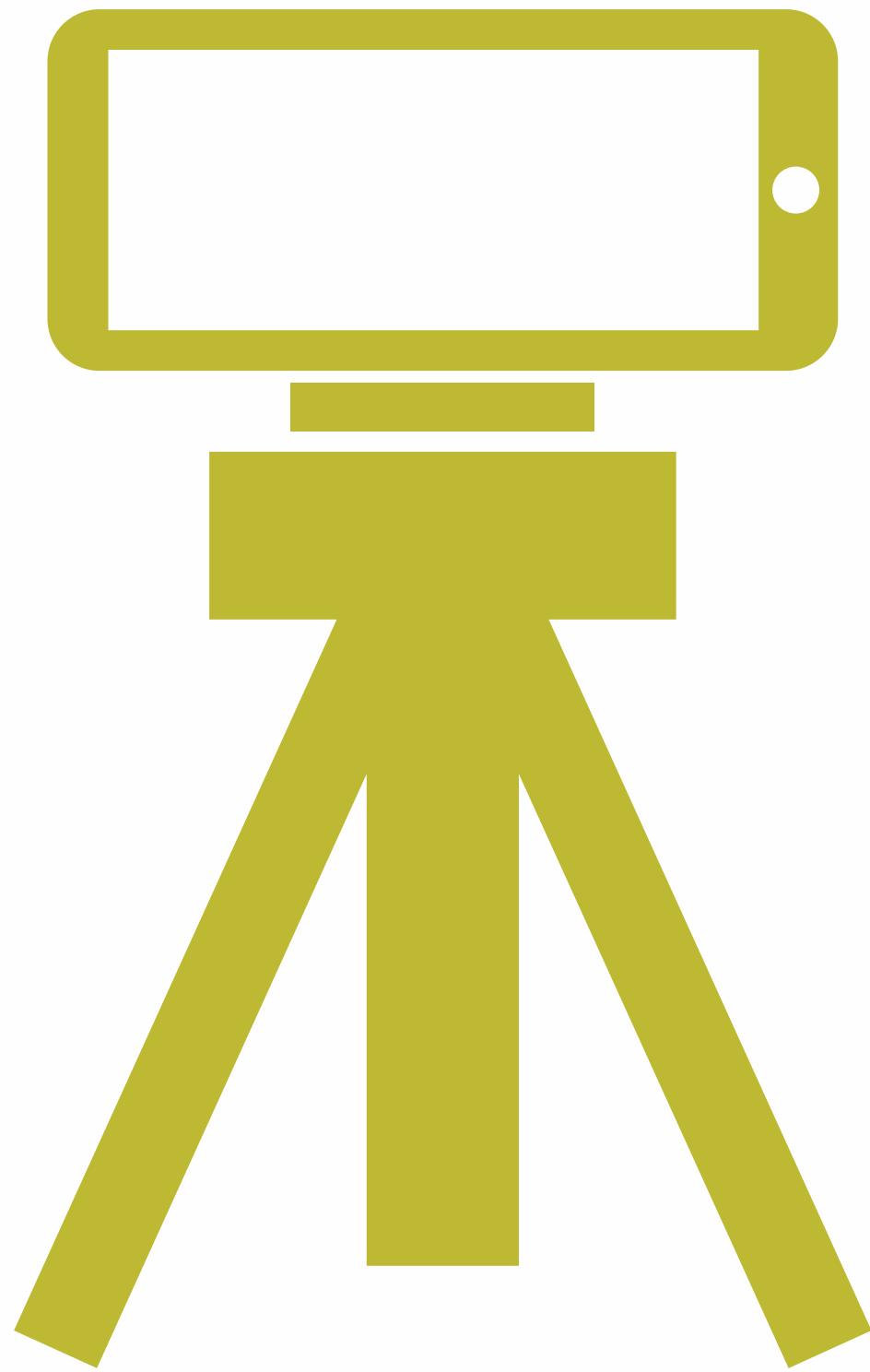




Lighting Cheat Code

- Face your subject toward light
- Avoid overhead/yellow light
- Step into shade outdoors

Natural, soft light consistently produces more flattering and usable images



TIPS & TRICKS

- Frame each photo/video as you are shooting — don't rely on editing in your post.
- Take more than one shot!
 - Don't forget to shoot what's around you. You may need that b-roll.
- Take your photos from a different perspective.
- Get close — don't rely on zoom.
- Play with your shutter speeds.
- Stabilize your phone.
- Casual is okay.

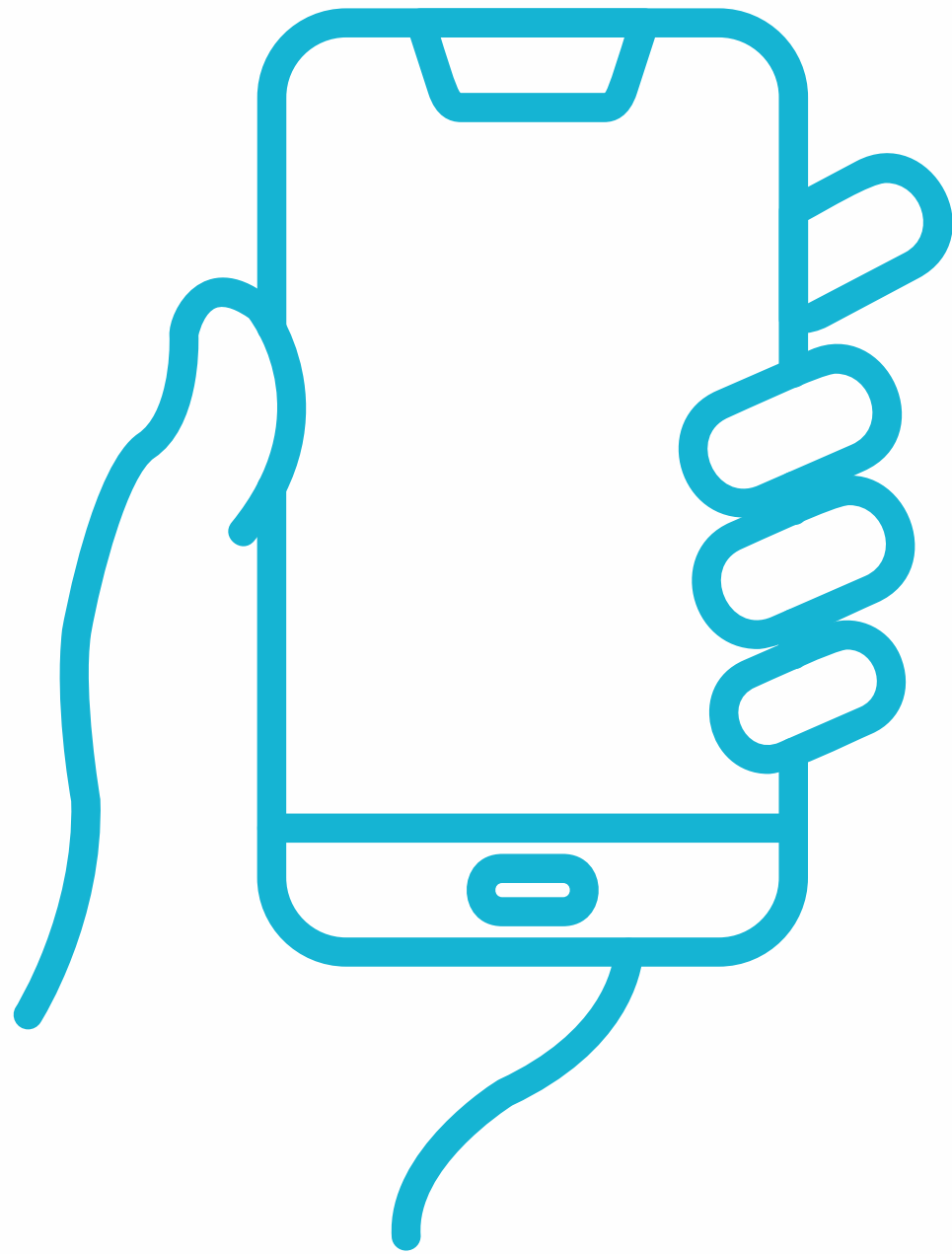


Photo Ethics & Consent

- Ask permission when appropriate
- Avoid exploitative imagery
- Show dignity, not just need
- Represent people accurately

LET'S PRACTICE!



Group Photo Challenge

- An Action Shot
- A Detail Shot
- An Emotion Shot

Split up into groups and explore inside and outside to practice the principles.

*Rocky Mount Businesses
Open on Mondays*

DUST & GRACE

USCT MONUMENT

MARY ELIZABETH PARK

THE WHOLE BEAN

ANGLE HARDWARE

FRANKLIN CO LIBRARY

HAYWOOD JEWELERS

CROOKED ROAD & CO

FARMERS MARKET

YOU
ARE
HERE

SUGAR SHACK

RM BURGER CO

TO UPTOWN



Five Minute “Fixes”

- Crop
- Brightness
- Contrast
- Straighten

**Editing will enhance your photo,
but can't fix a bad one.**



BRAIN BREAK & EDITING

AMPLIFYING YOUR STORY



Amplify Your Story

Foundational Communications

- *Content Pillars*
- *Consistent Data & Visual Collection*

Your Content

- *Start slow. Build your capacity.*

Earned & Paid Communication

- *Get a little help from your friends.*

CONTENT MARKETING

Content marketing is a strategic marketing approach focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly-defined audience — and, ultimately, to drive profitable customer action.

CONTENT PILLARS

PROMOTIONAL

EDUCATIONAL

INSPIRATIONAL

ENTERTAINING

Don't forget about community!

WHAT IS A DESIGNATED OUTDOOR REFRESHMENT AREA (DORA)?



DORA ZONES



DORA PROCESS

- Talk to ABC
- Get Stakeholders on Board (Elected officials, Police Department, downtown group, businesses)
- Application Requirements
 - ABC Retail Application
 - List and map of zones
 - Safety plan with patrol routes
 - Financial Statement
 - IRS Letter verifying IRS status
 - SCC Letter (Ours was a document saying it does not apply)
 - Charter
 - Org Chart
 - List of Elected officials
 - Lead applicant (Elected official)
 - Driving record
 - License

DORA EVENT REQUIREMENTS

- PD Staffing
- ABC Approval
- Social Media Post
(Not required, but encouraged)
- Signage
- Post License, Maps, ABC Managers

DORA RULES

- All drinks must be in the clear, plastic cup with the business logo
- No re-using cups
- Drinks must stay in DORA Boundaries
- Drinks may not go from one business to another
- No outside alcohol of any kind!

What is allowed?

- An open container within the DORA Zone
- Only alcohol purchased at the establishment is allowed
- Drinking Responsibly

What is not allowed?

- Outside alcohol of any kind
- Alcohol outside of the DORA boundaries
- Leaving the DORA to get alcohol
- Alcohol in a non-DORA cup
- Public intoxication



DORA EVENT REQUIREMENTS



Discover Rocky Mount

October 12, 2024 · 🌐



DORA Reminders for Blocktoberfest!

Be sure to drink responsibly for a fun, safe event.

What is DORA?

DORA stands for Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area. It's an ABC license that allows the Town to define an area within Town limits where you can consume a legally purchased alcoholic beverage during a specific time or event.



DORA: What is allowed?

- Bringing an open container outside an ABC establishment in the approved, disposable cup
- Only alcohol purchased from an ABC-licensed establishment is allowed
- Staying within the designated boundaries
- Drinking responsibly



DORA: What is NOT allowed?



Costs/Return

- \$195 Application Fee
- \$300 License Fee (Annual fee)
- Police Department Staffing
- Signage
- Event Staff (as applicable)
- Consultant (if applicable)



DORA SUCCESS



Anastasia's Speakeasy
October 1, 2023 · 🌐

DUE TO THE
OVERWHELMINGLY
SUCCESSFUL 150 FEST
IN ROCKY MOUNT
YESTERDAY
WE WILL BE
CLOSED TODAY.



Rocky Mount Burger Company
October 1, 2023 · 🌐

Thank you [Discover Rocky Mount](#), @sandra_aranegui and everyone who came out for the 150 Fest. It was an amazing day/night at [Rocky Mount Burger Company](#)! So much so, that you, yeah you, ate and drank us out of stock. Yesterday was far and away our best day ev-ah and we are so very grateful. But, we have a lot of cleaning to do. Unfortunately, that means we will not be open today. We will re-open Tuesday at 11:30am. Again, thank you for a great day and congratulations [Town of Rocky Mount, Virginia](#) on the first 150 years. If yesterday was an indication the next 150 should be a blast! [#GreatFoodDrinkAndMusicLivesInDowntownRockyMount](#) See less



369



24



12



DORA SUCCESS



St. Patrick's Day Pub Crawl

4 YEARS OF GROWTH

- 133% increase in visitors
- increased from 3 participating businesses to 14
- 87% more visitors than a typical Saturday
- Nearly 3 hours spent in our Historic Distric



Town of Rocky Mount St Patrick's Day Pub Crawl Data				
	2023	2024	2025	2026
Event Date	3/18/2026	3/16/2026	3/15/2026	3/14/2026
# of Visitors	1800	3300	3600	4200
% Increase YoY		83.30%	9.10%	16.70%
Time Spent in Area	146	174	202	177
Peak Time	1:00 - 3:00p	3:00 - 6:00p	3:00 - 6:00p	3:00 - 7:00p
Average Saturday Visitors	1850	1725	2325	2250
Weather	Cloudy H50/L34 W13	Overcast H67/L48 W7	Rain Early .5" H60/L45 W13	Partly Cloudy H60/L46 W10
Notes	Burger Company, Living Proof, Twin Creeks (No DORA)	Alley Cat, Anastasias, Living Proof, Burger Co, Twin Creeks, Olde Towne (DORA)	Added Crooked Road and Voodoo Lounge (DORA)	14 Participating Resturants & Retailers (9 Restaurants & 5 Retailers) (DORA)
Proxi Details Started in '26				-487 Individual Registrations -3,313 Individual Check-Ins -13,618 Map Visits -73 people from 50+ miles



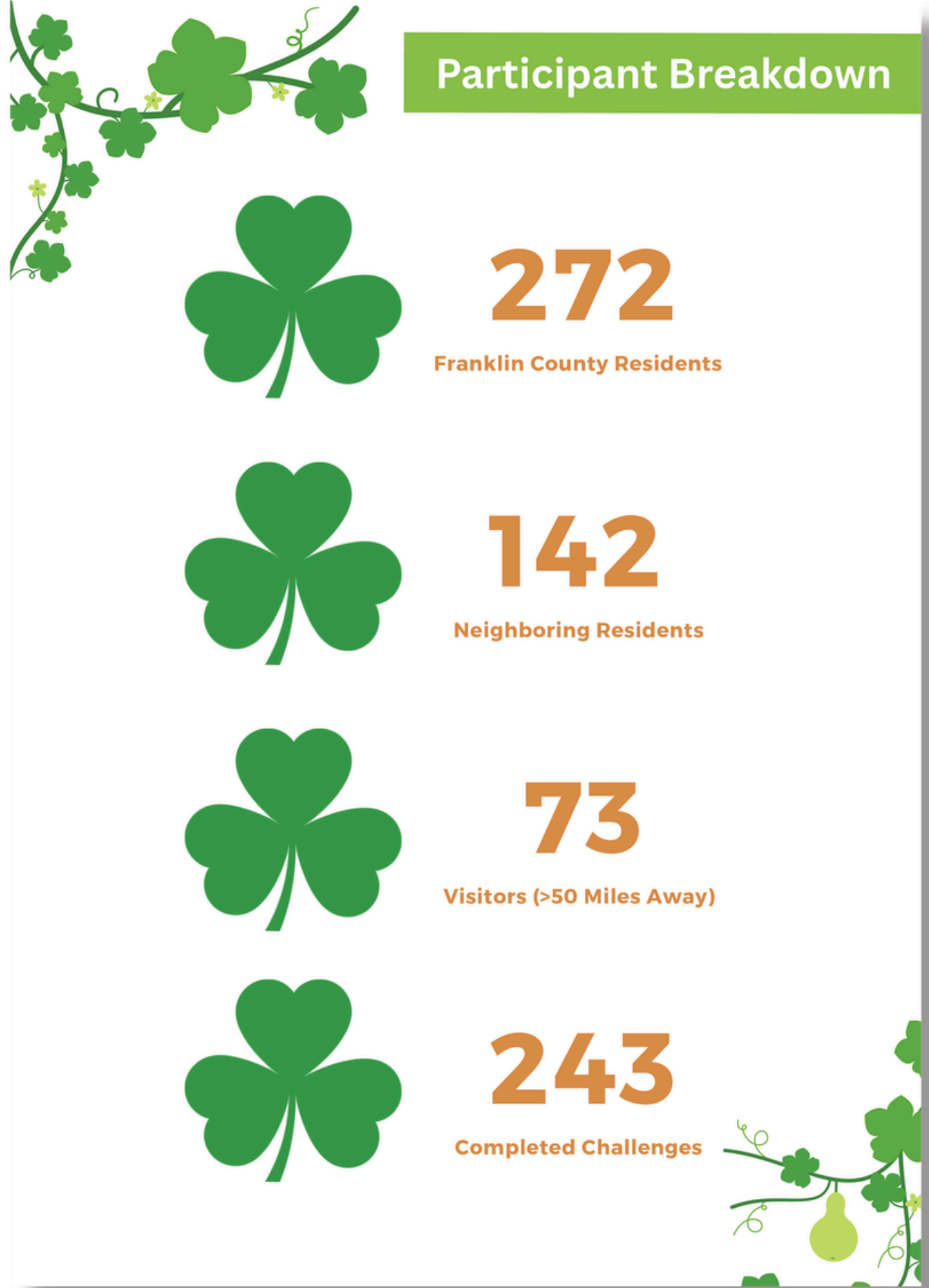
**13,618**
Map Views

**487**
Participants

**3,313**
Unique Visits

Check-In Location	# of Check-In's
The Alley Cat	364
Olde Towne Social House	356
The Porch	312
Anastasia's	317
Rocky Mount Burger Company	293
Twin Creeks Distillery	244
Living Proof Beer Co.	183
Old's Cool	254
Magnolia's Closet	163
The Crooked Road & Co	316
Haywood's Jewelers	275
The Painted Trunk	196
Tink's Decor & Boutique	155
Sugar Shack Sweets and Treats	255

Participant Breakdown



More Than an Event: Building a Collaborative Main Street

Rocky Mount's Sip & Stroll Series shows how a simple event tool can grow into a broader Main Street strategy. What began as occasional use of the Town's DORA license evolved as more businesses joined in, events became more intentional, and tools like interactive maps, QR-code check-ins and gamification helped encourage visitors to explore the entire Historic District.

Over time, that momentum led to more consistent branding, an annual event calendar and a formal merchant group that now meets regularly to plan and learn together. Today, the series brings restaurants, retailers and service businesses into one coordinated effort to cross-promote, drive foot traffic and strengthen collaboration throughout downtown.



EVENTS 2026

UPCOMING

MAR 14	ST. PATTY'S DAY PUB CRAWL	AUG 29	THE WORLD SHOWCASE
APR 18	THE GREAT MOONSHINE JUBILEE	SEP 19	ROCKY MOUNT FEST *NO SIP & STROLL 'GAME'
MAY 9	MOTHER'S DAY OUT - BOUQUET HOP	OCT 10	BLOCKTOBER- FEST
JUN 20	FATHER'S DAY OUT - PUTT & POUR	NOV 28	SMALL BUSINESS SATURDAY *NO SIP & STROLL 'GAME'
JUL 4	CHEERS TO THE FOURTH		

*SCHEDULE IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE





Sip & Stroll Series



YOUR TURN!
AMPLIFY YOUR STORY



Resources + Tips

Brand & Messaging Guide Outline
VMS Press Release Kit

Tips & Tricks

- Get organized now!
- Prioritize foundational collateral.
- Plan for 30+ years.



Brand & Messaging Guide
DOWNLOAD THE TEMPLATE

VIRGINIA MAIN STREET
PRESS RELEASE KIT

A MAIN STREET COMMUNITY
GUIDE TO EARNED MEDIA

Letterpress
Communications

VIRGINIA
MAIN
STREET
VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT
OF HOUSING AND
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Earned Media Resource
DOWNLOAD THE GUIDE



Questions + Discoveries

ALEXANDRA VEATCH

alexandra@letterpresscommunications.com

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