

RIVER DISTRICT ASSOCIATION NEW BUSINESS WELCOME PACKET

2023

JOIN US!

Whether You are 5, 55, or 105 your **CREATIVE BUSINESS IDEAS** are worth hearing!

THE ART-UP SLAM!
RIVER DISTRICT ASSOCIATION

Share **YOUR** idea
Support **THEIR** idea
Meet **NEW FRIENDS**
The idea the audience loves the most gets the \$ taken at the door!

136 S. RIDGE STREET
February 23rd, 2023
6pm-8pm

MORE INFO → 
SCAN ME

Registration is required. **\$10 (cash only at the door, under 5 are free)** gets you a meal, and the chance to enjoy hearing or presenting a new creative idea!
To register call 434-791-0210 or email alyssa@riverdistrictassociation.com
More info: www.riverdistrictassociation.com



DANVILLE ARTS AND CULTURE MASTER PLAN & RIVERFRONT PARK UPDATE



**SPECIAL GUEST: DANVILLE PARKS AND RECREATION
DIRECTOR, BILL SGRINIA**



WELCOME TO THE RIVER DISTRICT

Welcome to the River District! We are glad you have chosen to do business in our wonderful downtown Danville, Va.

This guide is meant to help navigate being a business in the River District, but may not list everything needed. Be sure to contact appropriate city and state departments regarding business licenses, inspections etc.

This welcome packet is designed to be a reference for resources you may need for your business to thrive in the River District from River District Association (RDA) programs and promotions, to important contacts at the City of Danville.

If you have questions about being a business in the River District, don't hesitate to contact us and if we can't help you directly, we can point you in the right direction.

ABOUT THE RIVER DISTRICT ASSOCIATION

208 N. Union Street, Danville, VA 24541 ~ 434-791-0210 ~ www.riverdistrictassociation.com

The River District Association (RDA), formerly Downtown Danville Association, was formed in 1999 to coordinate efforts to revitalize the downtown Danville, Virginia community, now called the River District. RDA is comprised of a volunteer Board of Directors which includes representatives from River District businesses and property owners, the City of Danville, and other community stakeholders.

Our city enjoys accredited status under the Virginia Main Street Program. The program is over 20 years old and is recognized nationally as the most successful formula for downtown revitalization. We are committed to the Main Street Four-Point Approach™ of organization, promotion, design, and economic vitality.

RDA follows the Main Street model to coordinate the public-private partnerships required to revive Danville's River District. We work with the City of Danville, area businesses, and institutions to develop programs and events to get the community working together; to market the area's unique assets; to get the district in top physical shape; and to attract and retain businesses.



A VIBRANT RIVER DISTRICT



Board Officers

Rachel Covington, President
Hawthorne & Jade

Stuart Smith, Vice-President
FCS, Inc.

Kunal Patel, Treasurer
Ceasar's Virginia

William Crumpton, Secretary
Compassion Healthcare

Kelvin Perry, Immediate Past President
City of Danville Office of Economic
Development

Board Members

Steven Osborne
International Mission Board

Christy Harper
Danville Pittsylvania Chamber of Commerce

Drew Herring
West Main Baptist Church

Emma Sellers
Averett University

Shani Gaylord-Hunter
Goodwill Industries of Central North
Carolina, Inc.

Dr. Andrew Hessler
Danville Dental Associates

Irving Perez
American National Bank and Trust

Rachel Timm
Smokestack Theatre Company

Sandra Chinn-Gilstrap
Clement - Wheatley

Mission

The River District Association will continue moving forward in the transformation of Danville's River District as a welcoming and lively place for all, while inspiring and influencing social and economic development for the great Dan River Region.

RDA carries out this mission through activities to attract and retain businesses, residents and visitors while promoting Danville's high quality of life, preserving its historic and cultural assets, and capitalizing on its unique location along the Dan River. RDA works in partnership with the City of Danville and other stakeholders to reexamine this vision as the area changes and achieves important milestones.

Vision

The River District Association's innovative approach strengthens the regional economy, allowing all to experience Danville's high quality of life.

Staff

Diana Schwartz: CEO
Lashawn Farmer: Programs and Services Director
Will Mackaman: Programs and Services Manager
Kirsten Aherron: Communications and Events Manager
Alyssa Turner: Office Manager





RIVER DISTRICT ASSOCIATION START-UP TOOLKIT

RDA Economic Vitality Programs 2019-Present

Ideation

Business
Planning

Concept
Testing

Start-Up
Grants

Existing
Business Grants



Business Resources

Business Planning

Access to Capital



\$701,640 in Impact

- 578 Dream Launch Bootcamp Participants
- 276 Dream Launch Certifications
- 21 IGNITE Pitch Awards totaling \$427K
- 2 New Business Catalyst Awards totaling \$17.5K
- 18 GET Boosted Awards, totaling \$81K
- 35 IGNITE Pitch Participants
- 110 Start-up Slam attendees, and \$1140 awarded



Pitch Programs in Partnership
with Dream Launch: Rev-Up
(2021-2023)

16 Rev-Up Awards totaling \$175K



ECONOMIC VITALITY AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Start - Up Slam



The River District Association (RDA) is excited to be hosting another session of "Start-Up Slam." Modeled after a poetry slam, it is a fun community-oriented event where people share a meal, share creative business ideas, make new friends, and network with both creative people and people who support creative people!

Dream Launch Bootcamp



The RDA Dream Launch Bootcamp is a free program for anyone seeking to learn how to open, run or expand their business. The "Entrepreneur Bootcamp," an intensive workshop that will meet for 6 weeks beginning in January (with an additional week for food and beverage businesses) to teach participants a full slate of skills and information that business owners need. Participants that complete all 6 bootcamp classes may then elect to participate in the RDA IGNITE Business Pitch (For businesses planning to open brick and mortar locations in the River District) to compete for cash and other incentives.

Catalyst Grant



This grant is for businesses who aren't quite ready to open a brick and mortar business in the River District, but are ready to test their concept. Grants are up to \$5,000.

IGNITE Business Pitch



The River District Association (RDA) is excited to be hosting another session of "Start-Up Slam." Modeled after a poetry slam, it is a fun community-oriented event where people share a meal, share creative business ideas, make new friends, and network with both creative people and people who support creative people!

GET Boosted



GET Boosted grants are for up to \$5,000 (no match required) to implement a new, different, or creative project that will meet at least one of the following objectives: Increase your business's revenue OR add cost savings OR increase foot traffic/customers.

RIVER DISTRICT ASSOCIATION PROGRAMS AND PROMOTIONS

FAÇADE ASSISTANCE

Façade Improvement Grant



The River District Façade Improvement Grant Program is designed to assist property and business owners in rehabilitating facades for commercial buildings and businesses in the River District. Positive visual impact stimulates private investment, and complements other community development efforts. We want to provide you with the resources to improve the exterior appearance of your business. A total of \$5,000 is available to be awarded in matching grant funding. Grants are required to have a 1:1 match (50% up to \$5,000).

Façade Renderings

River District Association can help you get free façade renderings from Frazier Associates. Contact RDA for more information.

MARKETING AND EVENTS

Mornings on Main



River District Association launched this monthly event in order to help build relationships between businesses, provide a space for idea and news sharing, keep businesses up to date on what's happening in the River District, and create a stronger relationship with our city partners. River District Businesses and partners can attend in person, or via Zoom. Meetings are the fourth Monday of each month at 10:00 a.m. Registration encouraged.

Monthly Newsletters and Social Media



RDA sends out two regular newsletters per month. On the first of the month one is sent to the general public. It covers events and news in the River District and goes out to approximately 1300 subscribers and is shared on all RDA social media channels. The second newsletter is sent to River District businesses to let them know about networking, grant, or educational opportunities that could help enhance business.

Ribbon Cuttings



If you are opening a business in the River District, RDA can help you organize a ribbon cutting ceremony to promote your opening. If you'd like to organize a ribbon cutting contact RDA at 434-791-0210.

Distrx App and Business Directory



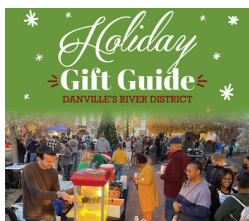
Come explore all that Danville, Virginia's River District has to offer! Download the River District Distrx app to find restaurants, retail, and experiences. You can also use the app to find parking, find events, and even take informative, narrated walking tours on your own time. To have your business listed in the River District Distrx App visit www.distrx.com and click on "sign-up." If you need assistance getting listed contact RDA at 434-791-0210.

River District Spotlight



River District Spotlight is a monthly video series that celebrates the River District's businesses, events, arts and culture, and history. The video is shared monthly on our YouTube Channel, River City TV, and in the River District Monthly Newsletter.

Holiday Gift Guide and Shop Small Saturday



RDA produces a Holiday Gift Guide each year. This highlights all retail and service gift options in the River District, as well as holiday events. 20,000 copies of the gift guide are distributed in the Sunday before Thanksgiving edition of the Danville Register and Bee. RDA begins to contact businesses about holiday promotions in early August.

River District Dollars



The River District Dollars Digital Gift Card is a way to encourage people to shop locally. People purchase the cards online and email, text or print them for use in your shops and restaurants. To accept the River District Dollars Cards you need to be able to process a key-entry (like a phone order) Mastercard, and you are paid through your credit card bank in your normal settlement, with your normal Mastercard CNP processing fee.

Christmas on the Plaza



Christmas on the Plaza takes place on the downtown plaza each year during the first week of December. It is a community celebration to kick off the holiday season. Community groups and local musicians perform. There are event sponsorship opportunities.

Holiday Window Decorating Contest



Every year River District businesses compete to win either the People's Choice or Judge's Choice awards for their holiday window decorations. Winners receive a \$100 River District Dollars gift card and a traveling trophy.

Vibrant Windows Program



RDA works with local artists and businesses to fill vacant downtown windows with art, or holiday displays.

Community Shine-up



The River District Association has started to conduct regular community shine-up events to pick up trash and make our downtown shine.

WHO TO CALL AT THE CITY

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (434-799-5260): The City of Danville's Department of Community Development is responsible for coordinating and administering many community improvement projects throughout the City; and is also responsible for administering the Zoning and Building Code for the City. The department is comprised of three divisions: Housing and Development, Inspections and Planning and Zoning.

- For façade or sign changes to River District businesses contact The River District Design Commission. <https://www.danville-va.gov/1712/River-District-Design-Commission>

CUSTOMER ACCOUNTS (434-799-5125): Located at 311 Memorial Drive, the Customer Accounts Division provides customer service for Danville Utilities and accepts payments for city services, fees, and taxes.

DANVILLE UTILITIES (434-799-5155): The City of Danville has been in the utility business since 1876. Danville is the only municipality in Virginia to operate all four essential utilities - electricity, natural gas, water, and wastewater - plus telecommunications services. Danville Utilities serves the City and adjoining residential neighborhoods with water and gas service. Electricity is distributed to 42,000 customer locations in a 500-square mile service area that includes Danville, most of Pittsylvania County's households, and small portions of Henry and Halifax Counties. Water, wastewater, and natural gas services are provided to customers within a 50-square mile area consisting of the city adjacent suburban areas.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM (434-793-1753): The primary mission of the Office of Economic Development is to create an environment conducive for job creation, wealth creation, and quality of life improvement in the City of Danville. The Office of Economic Development achieves these goals through new business recruitment, business retention and expansion, and the facilitation of entrepreneurial endeavors, which all come together to enhance the economic well-being of the community.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS (434-799-6535): Planning ahead and being prepared for all types of situations is important for all citizens. The Emergency Management division of the Danville Fire Department provides information on how residents can prepare and be ready for emergency situations.

FIRE DEPARTMENT (434-799-5226): The Danville Fire Department strives to protect life, property, and environment through prevention, mitigation, response, recovery, education and communication in order to promote the entire community's health, safety, and well-being.

MASS TRANSIT (434-799-5144): Danville's Mass Transit System offers flexible, convenient and economical service options: operating hours for the transit system are 4 am to 12:30 am, Monday through Saturday, door to door Reserve A Ride service for the general public, half-fare discount is available from 6 am until noon on fixed-route service for seniors, persons with disabilities and Medicare cardholders, and easy-to-use demand-response Handivan service for persons with disabilities.

PARKS & RECREATION (434-799-5200): The City of Danville Parks and Recreation Department's primary objective is "Engaging Community and Enhancing Lives through People, Places and Services". The department strives to communicate and educate our citizens on the importance and the availability of services; to provide a wide range of programs that engage citizens with a variety of interests; strive to be efficient in our delivery of service; actively engage in community partnerships; and maintain, protect and conserve open spaces.

POLICE DEPARTMENT (434-799-6510): The mission of the Danville Police Department is to provide quality service to the community through a process of continuous improvement. We will maintain a safe environment for all by protecting life, liberty and property through partnerships with citizens and businesses.

PUBLIC WORKS (434-799-5245): The Public Works Department consists of five divisions: Administration, Buildings and Grounds Maintenance, Engineering, Sanitation, and Street Maintenance. These divisions cover a wide range of services, including street repair, cemeteries, trash/recycling, code enforcement, traffic signals/signs, and landscaping.

REAL ESTATE (434-799-5120): Real Estate provides mass appraisal services of real property for tax purposes. Real Estate discovers, lists, and appraises all real property in the City; maintains current ownership and mailing address information; maintains current tax parcel maps; and provides special assessments for land use.

RUBY B. ARCHIE PUBLIC LIBRARY (434-799-5195): Featuring over 64,000 titles including new releases, best sellers, graphic novels, old favorites, DVDs, books on CD, and more. Services include children and adult programming, reference, genealogy and newspaper databases, and online streaming or downloadable content.

OTHER REGIONAL BUSINESS RESOURCES

Longwood Small Business Development Center

Longwood SBDC offers services for aspiring, new, and experienced business owners. We provide free classes, consulting, and personal consultations to help you get a new business idea off to a great start or revitalize an existing business.

Danville Pittsylvania County Chamber of Commerce

150 Slayton Ave, Danville, VA 24540 ~ (434) 836-6990

The Danville Pittsylvania County Chamber of Commerce will enhance and energize the region with an innovative, profitable business community. The Danville Pittsylvania County Chamber of Commerce accelerates business growth by connecting its members to dynamic resources and networks.

Dan River Region Entrepreneur Ecosystem

Virginia Small Business Administration

Our office provides help with SBA services including funding programs, counseling, federal contracting certifications, and disaster recovery. We can also connect you to our partner organizations, lenders, and other community groups that help small businesses succeed.

Center for Community Engagement and Career Competitiveness

Averett University, 204 Woodland Drive ~ 434-791-7214

The Center for Community Engagement & Career Competitiveness (CCECC) connects students, faculty, and staff from Averett University, Danville Community College, and Piedmont Community College to community partners in the Dan River Region to foster a mutually-beneficial relationship. The CCECC also houses Career Development for Averett University students.

The Institute for Advanced Learning and Research

150 Slayton Avenue ~ 434-791-7214

The Institute for Advanced Learning and Research serves as a regional catalyst for economic transformation. The mission will be accomplished through applied research, advanced learning, economic development, advanced manufacturing, and conference services.

The Launch Place

527 Bridge Street Suite 200 , Danville, VA 24541 ~ 434-799-5491

The Launch Place offers free mentoring services and training activities with our highly skilled international staff and with assistance from one of our many partners. We do our best to help you cultivate relationships that can further your professional and business development.



River District Association

Ribbon Cutting Guide

The River District Association is pleased to offer ribbon cutting ceremonies for new or expanding businesses in the River District. RDA can organize ribbon cuttings M-F, preferably at 12pm or 5 pm (when the most people can attend).



tinyurl.com/RibbonCuttingRequestRDA



Business Responsibilities:

- Fill out the ribbon cutting request form online **at least 2 weeks** before desired ribbon cutting date.
- Provide 3 possible dates and times for the ribbon cutting. (Remember, it doesn't necessarily have to be on the GRAND OPENING date!)
- Provide refreshments (Only if the business wants to!)
- Provide tours of the new business
- Take photos of the ceremony

RDA provides:

- Assistance scheduling public officials to speak
- Assistance scheduling River City TV to live stream the event
- Ribbon and scissors
- Ceremony MC
- Speaker and podium (if needed)
- Invitation design (If needed)
- RSVP list management (if needed)
- Facebook event creation
- E-blast and other activities to spread the word