



Good things are happening in Smithfield & Isle of Wight County...

The Sky Is Not Falling!

Facts:

Despite the economy, people are still traveling. They are not going as far, staying as long or spending as much but they are looking for an inexpensive way to reduce stress/recreate. Smithfield & Isle of Wight County offers something unique...free attractions, one-tank trip from many major metro areas...lovely, affordable overnight accommodations.

Best year yet at the Visitor Center...14% increase in visitation over last year. These are our best numbers in the last 5 years. We also saw a 38% increase in Visitor Guide requests. Local accommodations are reporting that although business travel is down, tourism business has increased, so that occupancy rates are holding steady.

Although we have vacancies on Main Street, retail opportunities have actually increased in the Historic District with the addition of 5 Boardwalk Shops at the Smithfield Station.

We also remain the number one daytrip destination from Williamsburg!

What's new?

In March we will hold the Grand Opening of our new Visitor Center at 319B Main Street in Historic Downtown Smithfield. Aside from affording more visibility to tourists, we will be sharing space with the Art Center @ 319 (formerly Smithfield Cultural Arts Center) making 319 a one-of-a-kind space, combining the Visitor Center with an art gallery featuring working artist's studios.

The Isle of Wight Museum has reopened and has hosted 2,055 visitors from mid-November through the end of January.

Our newest attractions, Historic Fort Huger (which, along with Fort Boykins, will be involved in the Sesquicentennial Anniversary commemoration of the Civil War) and the Schoolhouse Museum are unique offerings in the Tidewater area.

Along with our wonderful selection of quality and varied accommodations, Smithfield now hosts the brand new Hampton Inn, an 82 room facility.

What makes us special?

- FREE historic attractions! Historic St. Luke's Church, Boykin's Tavern, the Old Courthouse of 1750, the Schoolhouse Museum, Fort Huger and Fort Boykins,
- "Arts" destination! Peruse art galleries, hear lively local and regional musicians, attend a local production of a play, or one of our exciting cultural arts events.
- Recreational opportunities abound! With our gorgeous natural setting, visitors and residents alike can enjoy fishing, boating, hunting, golf, camping - even roller skating or skateboarding! The addition of a park at Windsor Castle will add to the lure of Smithfield's beautiful historic district.
- Successful events! Smithfield & Isle of Wight are quickly becoming a hot spot for fabulous events such as Olden Days, Mike Aiken & Friends Fest, Chocolate Lovers, our annual Christmas Parade and our newest, monthly event SmARTs (Smithfield Monthly Arts Stroll).

Good News!

Smithfield & Isle of Wight was chosen by Virginia Tourism Corporation as one of 40 destination prizes in the 40th Anniversary Sweepstakes for the "Virginia Is For Lovers" slogan.

Smithfield will participate as a destination for the Virginia Hospitality Corporation's "2009 Grand Motorcycle Tour of Virginia" kicking off in March.

Smithfield & Isle of Wight County CVB and the Arts Center @ Smithfield were recipients of the \$5,000 "Tourism & The Arts Program Grant" from the Virginia Commission for the Arts and the Virginia Tourism Corporation for use in promoting its cultural arts partnership. We have also applied for several additional grants.

Tourism is the second largest revenue producing industry in Smithfield (behind the meat packing plants). We are a vital economic driver for our local economy, generating over \$701,000 in tax revenue in 2007. According to Sean McCartney (VTC Research Department) the local impact is an increase of \$49 per person, per day.

Help us spread the news! Smithfield and Isle of Wight County are Hampton Road's home for "Hams, History, Hospitality and HeART."

For further information contact the Smithfield & Isle of Wight Convention & Visitors Bureau at (757) 357-5182.