



COUNTY OF AMHERST



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Amherst County Receives Virginia Tourism Corporation Grant for Tourism Marketing

Amherst County received a \$5,000.00 grant from the Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC)'s Special Events & Festivals Sponsorship Program (SEF) for the 2026 Amherst County Fair.

Amherst County will supply \$2,500.00 in matching funds for the Amherst County Fair as a beloved local tradition celebrating community, agriculture, and family fun. The Amherst County Fair is an exemplary example of how Amherst County is the "Perfect Slice of Virginia".

Virginia Tourism Corporation will award more than \$885,733 in matching grant funds to 88 special events and festivals during this grant round, ultimately impacting 324 combined partners. The VTC Special Events & Festivals Sponsorship Program is designed to increase visitor spending by maximizing limited marketing and event production dollars to stimulate overnight visitation through new tourism marketing and event expansion partnerships. The program also extends the iconic *Virginia is for Lovers* brand to drive special event and festival visitation. Each GO Virginia region is allocated 20 percent of available funds, creating a diverse portfolio of supported events across the Commonwealth.

In this funding cycle, local partners will commit more than \$4.8 million in public-private funds to match VTC funding, generating more than \$5.68 million in new marketing and event production activity focused on increasing overnight visitation to Virginia in 2026. In total, the awards will support 88 special events and festivals and impact 526 tourism-related partners statewide.

Using the hub-and-spoke tourism model to create multi-day itineraries, four Virginia entities partner financially to apply for funding. Partners may consist of Virginia cities, towns, counties, destination marketing organizations, restaurants, museums, attractions, and other tourism-related businesses. With the special event or festival as the main lure, the program encourages visitors to extend their stays to experience Virginia Main Streets, boutique shopping, distinctive dining, and historic sites, generating significant economic impact beyond the event itself. These partnerships have proven results in driving creativity among applicants and attracting new visitors to a destination.

"Special events and festivals are at the heart of what makes Virginia such a compelling destination," said **Rita McClenny, President and CEO of Virginia Tourism Corporation**. "Through the Special Events & Festivals Sponsorship Program, we're proud to support these experiences that bring communities together, inspire travel, and encourage visitors to stay longer and spend more across the Commonwealth."

VTC will have additional grant and sponsorship rounds opening throughout 2026. Organizations and businesses that are interested in applying may visit vatc.org/grants for more information.

A full list of funding recipients can be found [here](#).

Out-of-state visitors and Virginians alike are encouraged to visit www.virginia.org to start travel planning for these special events and festivals in 2026.

About the Amherst County Fair

The Amherst County Fair continues to stand as a cherished local tradition, bringing together residents, families, and visitors to celebrate the community's rich agricultural heritage and small-town spirit.

After a 40-year hiatus, the Amherst County Fair proudly returned in 2018, marking the revival of a longstanding community event with deep roots in the County's history. Since its return, the Fair has grown steadily each year, evolving into a vibrant, family-friendly celebration enjoyed by thousands.

The Amherst County Fair is a collaborative effort between Amherst County and the Virginia Cooperative Extension and is supported and overseen by the Amherst County Agriculture Committee. Together, these partners work to ensure the Fair remains a meaningful reflection of the County's agricultural foundation while offering entertainment and experiences for all ages.

Over the years, the Fair has expanded to include popular midway rides, engaging family-friendly shows and attractions, and a wide variety of local food and craft vendors. These offerings, combined with traditional agricultural exhibits and competitions, create a dynamic and welcoming environment for the entire community.

Today, the Amherst County Fair has become a local family tradition—one that honors the past, celebrates the present, and continues to grow alongside the community it serves.

For more information about the Amherst County Fair, including dates, schedules, and activities, visit www.amherstcountyfair.com or follow Amherst County Fair updates on social media.

About Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC)

Virginia is for Lovers is one of the most iconic and recognizable travel brands in the world. Using that powerful brand equity, Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC) is charged with promoting the Commonwealth as a premier travel destination by showcasing all there is to love in a Virginia vacation. The dollars spent by travelers fuel the economy, provide jobs for Virginians, and improve communities across the state. Simply put, tourism helps make Virginia a great place to live, work, and vacation. Learn more at virginia.org.



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