



November 2025

As weather cools, development heats up

From expansions to revitalizations, York County's business scene is showing no signs of cooling. This issue of our Commercial Developer Digest highlights the latest growth trends, including a look at our newly released **2023 Annual Report** and **2024 Visitor Spending Update**, which showcase strong gains across the local economy. You'll also find practical insights on how your clients can leverage upcoming **VA250 activities** to drive business traffic, along with inspiring stories of two long-standing companies, **Apples Machine Shop** and **Walsh Electric**, continuing to grow right here in York County.

Also take advantage of smart tools to support your own marketing efforts: the **Façade Improvement Grant**, tips on **using AI to strengthen property flyers** and results from our **Business Retention Survey** showing continued optimism among local companies.

We're also excited to share news of aChick-fil-A coming soon to the Grafton area, a development that's already sparking renewed interest in nearby commercial sites. Be sure to explore our database of nearby available properties to capitalize on the increased exposure coming to the area.

Dive into our latest ***It's Your Business*** magazine for even more stories of progress, partnerships and momentum this season. And keep reading below for the latest updates and opportunities shaping York County's development scene.

DEVELOP LOCAL SHOPPERS

Buy Local Month strengthens community



Each November, York County joins communities across Hampton Roads in celebrating Buy Local Month, culminating in **Small Business Saturday** on Nov. 29. These campaigns are about more than holiday shopping—they represent a year-round commitment to supporting the local businesses that make York County's economy strong.

For developers, "buying local" matters because thriving small businesses fill storefronts, stabilize shopping centers and strengthen demand for commercial space. Every dollar spent locally circulates within the community—supporting jobs, services and reinvestment that make York County an attractive place to live, work and do business.

York County Economic & Tourism Development supports these efforts through a variety of initiatives, including the **Buy Local campaign** at **KeepItInYorkCounty.com**, cooperative marketing opportunities and the **12 Days of Business Support guide**, which highlights resources to help local owners succeed.

As you work with clients on leasing or selling commercial properties, remind them that York County actively invests in local business vitality because a strong local retail and service base benefits every part of the community.

Celebrate Buy Local Month & Shop Small Saturday

This November is Hampton Roads' Buy Local Month, culminating in Small Business Saturday on Nov. 29. Both are powerful opportunities to connect with customers who want to support their community.

- Promote your business through York County's Buy Local campaign—resources and ideas are available at KeepItInYorkCounty.com
- Read about assistance initiatives in our [press release](http://bit.ly/buylocpr). (bit.ly/buylocpr)
- Learn how we support your business in our [12 Days of Business Support guide](http://bit.ly/12day-yc). (bit.ly/12day-yc)

When we all "Keep It in York County," we keep dollars circulating locally, strengthen our community and show customers the impact of their support.



SMALL BUSINESS
SATURDAY
NOV 29

Be the boost that local businesses need.

12/10 @ 11:00AM

Shorty's Diner

6500 George Washington Memorial Highway



greater
williamsburg
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Yes
Williamsburg
Economic Development



Yes
YORK COUNTY
Economic Development



BOOST buy-local program

The Greater Williamsburg Chamber's annual "The Buck Stays Here" holiday program is back—offering a simple, impactful way to support local businesses. Shoppers can purchase restaurant gift certificates at a discount and redeem them at participating establishments across Greater Williamsburg, including York County.



BUY YOURS:

Dec.10 at 11 a.m.

**Shorty's Diner in Grafton
6500 Geo. Wash. Mem. Hwy.**

For the development community, this is a great opportunity to purchase local gift cards as client or employee thank-yous, or to encourage your tenants to participate and attract new customers during the upcoming holiday season. Last year, the campaign sold out, injecting more than \$100,000 into local businesses.

LEARN MORE



NEWS TO LOVE

Tourism is thriving in York County

Fall might be the “shoulder season” elsewhere, but in York County, tourism is in full swing... the upswing! From student field trips and battlefield tours to autumn getaways at **Great Wolf Lodge**, visitors are discovering York County year-round... which is a huge selling point for commercial real estate.

In fact, Virginia visitors spent a record \$35.1 billion in 2024, up 5.4% from the previous year—and local businesses are reaping the benefits.

With the new **Greater Williamsburg Sports and Events Center** under construction, the **Edge District** gaining traction and new attractions opening across the County, now is the perfect time to showcase your clients' businesses. Encourage them to explore York County's many promotional opportunities, like **Restaurant Week**, co-op advertising and our **Shopping & Dining Guide**, to help their businesses reach both locals and visitors this season.

COUNTY TOURISM STATS

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Façade Improvement Grant helps properties sell or lease faster



Grant recipient Henderson Family LLC

FACADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT

Helping your business make exterior improvements to enhance the overall appearance of the County.

PURPOSE: Attractive commercial properties contribute positively to the character of York County and studies show that businesses can generate more customer interest and, therefore, potentially be more profitable when the exterior of their business structure is visually appealing and attractive. The Facade Improvement Grant program is intended to assist business owners who are committed to making the investment necessary to enhance and improve the exterior features of their property or building.

WHAT IT COVERS

50% matching grants of up to \$15,000 can be used for installation of visually impactful exterior improvements. Improvements must represent new and enhanced features of the property building, such as upgraded architectural features, windows, awnings, lighting, landscaping, and similar items. Replacement of an existing pole sign with a new monument sign may be considered under this program, when paired with other qualifying improvements.

QUALIFICATIONS

- Must have current York County business license and must be in operation in a commercially zoned (C2R, I2R or E2R) area. License must remain paid and active for a minimum of one year after receiving grant funds. (Exceptions to the business license requirement may be considered for property owners who are not also the business owner.)
- Work cannot be started before the application is approved.
- Property owner and business owner must not be in default or non-compliance with any county programs, ordinances, or taxes.
- Renters must show proof of owner's permission for proposed renovations.
- Must sign up for our e-news, which provides business resource information including educational opportunities.
- Work on approved projects must be started within six (6) months of grant approval and all projects must be completed within one year.
- Grant funds may be used as a match for state grant funds.

DETAILS & EXCLUSIONS

- Recurring expenses do not qualify (e.g. building painting, power washing, or landscape mowing or pruning).
- Funds may not be used for improvements to vacant lots or payment of past due bills or expenses.
- Lifetime maximum grant of \$15,000 per property/business site.
- Sweat equity provided by the grantee does not qualify as a matching expenditure.
- Home-based businesses, residential properties/uses, industrial properties, properties zoned YVA, and non-profit entities are not eligible.

HOW TO APPLY

1. Complete, sign and submit the grant application. Include all quotes for described improvements, the signed owner agreement, a signed IRS Form W-9 and a copy of your current business license (or ownership documentation).
2. Ensure application is submitted by the first Tuesday of the month, for consideration at that month's committee meeting, and send it via either:
 - Email: façade@yorkcountygov
 - Mail: York County Economic & Tourism Development, P.O. Box 612, Yorktown, VA 23090
 - In Person: 122 Alexander Hamilton Blvd
3. Receive our decision via email, along with an agreement to sign, if approved.
4. Begin the work once you return the signed agreement.



Curb appeal sells—and York County's **Facade Improvement Grant Program** can help your clients boost theirs at half the cost. The program provides **matching grants up to \$15,000** to property owners and businesses located within the County's designated commercial corridors. That means York County will cover 50% of eligible exterior improvement costs, making it easier to transform an aging façade into a fresh, market-ready asset.

This is a powerful tool to help your clients **position their buildings more competitively**, whether they're preparing to sell, attracting new tenants or simply refreshing a storefront for better visibility. Improvements such as these can dramatically improve a property's first impressions and strengthen interest from buyers and lessees:

- New doors and windows
- Upgraded lighting
- Railings & awnings

Now is the ideal time to take advantage of this program. Contractors often have better availability before spring, and mild fall weather provides the perfect

window for exterior work.

How to apply
Get details and application
guidelines at:
bit.ly/facade-grant

- Exterior concrete work

The result? Stronger listings, quicker transactions and revitalized commercial corridors that benefit everyone doing business in York County.

LEARN MORE & APPLY

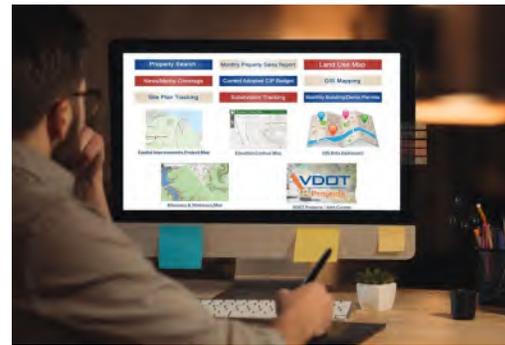
BUSINESS DEBUTS



Stay in the know

Each month, new businesses open up in York County. Be the first to know when you check out our New In Town:

- **Business list**
- **Video series**
- **Ribbon-cutting images**



What's up with THAT?

Want to know what's coming to the County? Wondering what's going on at that site next door? Check out the **Development Dashboard** for details on recent property sales, assessments, building permits, site plans and much more!

CHEERS FOR LONGSTANDING BUSINESSES



Walsh Electric wired for success

For more than three decades, **Walsh Electric** has powered some of the region's largest grocery chains and landmark projects, from airports to zoos. Founded by brothers Pat and David Walsh and now run alongside several other family members, the Yorktown-based company has grown into a team of nearly 100 employees. Known for its skilled workforce, long-term client partnerships and commitment to training the next generation, Walsh Electric continues to shine bright as it celebrates 35 years in business.

[READ ARTICLE](#)



Apples Machine Shop still trucking for almost 60 years

For nearly six decades, **Apples Machine Shop** has been keeping engines—and York County's legacy of craftsmanship—running strong. Founded in 1968 and now operated by second-generation owner Chad Williams, the family business continues to specialize in everything from classic car engine restorations to high-performance hot rods. Known for its precision work, loyal customers and deep community roots, Apples Machine Shop stands as one of York County's longest-running businesses.

[READ ARTICLE](#)

Why does this matter for developers?

These two examples demonstrate that York County provides a business environment where companies want to stay. It means your clients' clients get to patronize businesses that don't vanish the next day. And it means York County goes out of our way to spotlight on long-standing businesses and celebrate their continued success. Encourage your clients to take advantage of the same opportunities and establish their businesses in our thriving locality.

DID YOU KNOW?
York County has a development facilitator to
help you and your clients



One contact. One goal: Helping your project succeed.

Navigating large projects can be complex, but York County makes it easier. The County's **development facilitator**, housed within the **Planning and Development Services Department**, serves as a single point of contact for developers, property owners and businesses undertaking major projects, such as additions, renovations or new construction.

From site plans and inspections to zoning, utilities and traffic management, this dedicated planner helps coordinate the process across multiple departments, so you and your clients can move projects forward efficiently and with confidence.

[CONTACT DEVELOPMENT FACILITATOR](#)

FOR YOUR CLIENTS
New-business resources

If one of your clients is opening a business in York County, **WELCOME!** We're glad they're here.

One of the first things they should do is check out our many **resources for new businesses and entrepreneurs**, as well as our **grant programs**. Our new **Grand Opening Guide** and **Starting a Business** brochure provide the information they need to get off on the right foot.



VA250 CELEBRATION



Key Yorktown anniversary events

June 12–14, 2026

Sail Yorktown Festival – Tall ships, Parade of Sail, living history, performances and more

July 4, 2026

America250 – Patriotic parade, concerts, family activities, Declaration of Independence reading, and fireworks over the York River

October 2031

America's 250th Victory Celebration – Commemorative reenactments, artillery, music and interactive military programs for Yorktown's decisive Revolutionary War victory

Historic celebration means big opportunities

As we gear up for America's 250th anniversary, the region is preparing to welcome a significant wave of new and returning visitors eager to experience our rich Revolutionary War heritage. That's great news for your clients.

More tourists means more potential customers, more foot traffic and more visitor spending in local shops, restaurants, attractions and service-based businesses.

On Sept. 20, the Yorktown Battlefield transformed into a history lover's dream as thousands of guests attended a special screening of Ken Burns's highly anticipated documentary, *The American Revolution*, featuring never-before-seen excerpts filmed right here in York County. The free event marked one of the first major celebrations of Virginia's 250th Commemoration (VA250). And this is only the beginning!

Encourage your clients to explore **Yorktown's upcoming VA250 events** and consider becoming a **VA250 Commemorative Partner**, which offers free tools and resources to help local businesses make the most of this once-in-a-generation moment.

Momentum is already building, and businesses that act now will be best positioned to benefit from the heightened attention and energy these celebrations bring.



Over the next several years, Yorktown will take center stage in a series of large-scale national anniversary events that promise to bring significant visitor traffic and spending to the region. Upcoming highlights include the **Sail Yorktown Festival** in June 2026, when tall ships from around the world will dock at the waterfront for a Parade of Sail and immersive maritime experiences, followed by the America's 250th Victory Celebration in 2031—an anniversary so momentous that past observances have drawn U.S. presidents.

For the real estate and development community, these events represent more than historic milestones... they're an economic catalyst. **Past anniversary years have generated sharp upticks in foot traffic, overnight stays and retail activity, all of which increase visibility and demand for commercial spaces.** Property owners and brokers can help clients position their sites for success by encouraging tenants to plan themed offerings, expanded hours or event tie-ins that capture this influx of visitors.

Whether it's a restaurant introducing a limited-time "Founding Flavors" menu, a boutique offering commemorative merchandise or a service business preparing for higher visitor volume, the opportunity to connect with new customers has never been greater. Increased activity around VA250 also presents a compelling narrative for marketing available storefronts and investment properties in York County.

Tips to capitalize on VA250

Help your clients capitalize on this opportunity and provide added value by passing along these tips.

Plan ahead. Look at the event calendar now and align your promotions with key weekends (June–July 2026, July 2031).

Get creative with themes. Tie specials, displays or events to Revolutionary history. Red, white and blue sells!

Collaborate. Partner with neighboring businesses for cross-promotions or packages.

Extend your reach. Use hashtags, social media and email to market to visitors before they arrive.

Be welcoming. Train staff on local history highlights so they can answer questions and connect with guests.

Think long-term. These anniversaries aren't just one-off events. They'll bring momentum for years. Position your business to be part of it.

REPORTS TO REVISIT

Explore data as the leaves (and numbers) change

Stay up to date on the latest publications and resources from York County Economic & Tourism Development. From annual reports to business survey summaries, here are three key documents you'll want to explore.



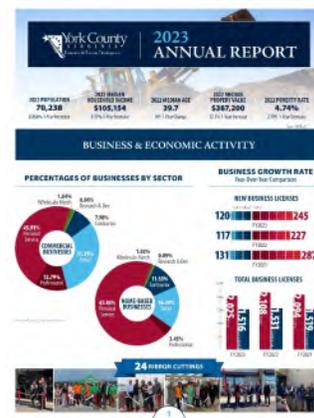
FALL MAGAZINE

From cybersecurity tips to holiday marketing strategies, our fall issue of *It's Your Business* magazine is packed with timely advice and inspiring local success stories. You'll also find fall-themed articles on



SURVEY RESULTS

Wonder what local business leaders are saying? Check out our one-page summary of this year's surveys: (1) Business Retention & Expansion and (2) Home-Based Business, featuring insights from York County



ANNUAL REPORT

See how York County's economy continues to thrive, with highlights from key business expansions, workforce initiatives and tourism growth. The 2023 report also celebrates milestones in business

resetting, refocusing and preparing your business for the busy holiday season ahead.

business owners on trends, challenges and opportunities for growth.

retention, innovation and community investment.

[VIEW MAGAZINE](#)

[VIEW SUMMARY](#)

[VIEW REPORT](#)

SMARTER MARKETING

Tips for using AI on your property flyer

In today's fast-moving real estate market, first impressions matter... and often, that first impression comes from a property flyer. A clear, compelling flyer can make the difference between a listing that's overlooked and one that sparks immediate interest. If you or your colleagues are creating marketing materials for available properties, AI tools can be an easy, affordable way to sharpen the message and save time.

Whether you're using ChatGPT or another platform, here are a few quick ways to get better results:

□ 1. Be specific about what you need

Instead of asking AI to "write a property flyer," give it direction:

"Write a short, persuasive flyer for a 5,000-square-foot retail space on Route 17 in York County, Virginia, that highlights visibility, parking and nearby traffic generators."

The more context you include—property size, location, zoning, amenities and target tenants—the more accurate and polished the results will be.

□ 2. Provide context and goals

Tell AI who you're marketing to. For example:

"Target small business owners seeking high-visibility locations near restaurants and residential neighborhoods."

This helps it adjust tone, phrasing and focus points automatically.

□ 3. Use AI for polishing and proofreading

Typos, inconsistent formatting and unclear details can distract potential buyers. Paste your draft flyer text into AI and ask it to check grammar, ensure consistency or tighten your wording for clarity.

□ 4. Ask for variations and ideas

Need a fresh headline or property description? Try prompting AI for three versions of a tagline or opening sentence and choose your favorite.

⚠️ 5. Protect confidential and proprietary details

While AI can be a powerful assistant, it's important to use it responsibly. Avoid entering private client information, financial details or proprietary data into public tools.

Used wisely, AI can help real estate professionals create more polished and engaging marketing materials that truly showcase a property's potential, helping you and your clients stand out in a competitive market.

DEVELOPMENT NEWS

Grafton is growing



Development activity is picking up along Route 17 in Grafton, with exciting new projects bringing fresh energy—and traffic—to this highly visible corridor. Leading the way is **Chick-fil-A**, which recently announced plans to open a **new location at 5600 George Washington Memorial Hwy.** near Dairy Queen. The popular chain is known for its steady customer flow, and its arrival is expected to significantly increase daily traffic and retail activity throughout the area.

Adding to the momentum, **Persnickety Crane Café**, a well-loved local favorite, **has relocated to Grafton by MD Express.** The combination of a nationally recognized restaurant and a locally rooted café will strengthen the mix of offerings along this busy stretch of Route 17, drawing both residents and visitors alike.

For brokers, developers and property owners, this growth signals a prime opportunity. Several **available properties in the Grafton corridor** stand to benefit from the increased visibility, vehicle counts and customer traffic that come with new anchor tenants like Chick-fil-A. Now is the time to position listings in this area as part of a thriving retail and dining destination with even greater potential on the horizon.

FEATURED AVAILABLE PROPERTY

Grafton Shopping Center



Don't let your clients overlook this highly visible retail and outparcel opportunity in the heart of York County's growing Grafton corridor.

Located along busy Route 17 at **5734 George Washington Memorial Highway**, this site offers both a 1,750-square-foot retail suite for lease within the Grafton Shopping Center and an approximately 1.08-acre outparcel available for sale or lease. The outparcel, zoned General Business (GB), sits directly adjacent to the Chick-fil-A coming soon, offering prime visibility and outstanding potential for a build-to-suit or redevelopment project.

With average daily traffic counts of more than 34,000 vehicles, the site benefits from strong co-tenancy and steady customer flow generated by neighboring businesses including Dairy Queen, AutoZone and Wolf Martial Arts. Ample parking, easy access and proximity to several residential neighborhoods make this location an ideal choice for retailers, service providers and restaurant operators looking to establish or expand their presence in this market.

For pricing and leasing details, contact **Waltz Commercial Real Estate**

How can we help you?



Have a client looking to lease, buy or develop commercial property in York County?

Reach out to us. We're here to help you close the deal. Our experienced staff offers free, personalized support to help businesses locate or expand in the County. From **incentives** and permitting assistance to connections with state-level partners, we're a resource you can count on. Plus, our online **Development Guide** and **Starting a Business Guide** make it even easier for your clients to navigate the process and access available programs.



Ribbon-cutting support for your clients

Did you know that York County's ETD office held 23 ribbon-cutting events last year? Let us help your clients, too!

Our office is pleased to offer new businesses a range of grand-opening and ribbon-cutting services, including:

- **Planning assistance**
- **Scheduling speakers**
- **Providing ribbon and large**

Want to share your available properties or stay up to date on what's available?

Add econdev@yorkcounty.gov to your e-news and property update email lists so we can find your listings and promote them for you for free. We feature available commercial properties on our [Facebook page](#), monthly [business e-news](#), [website](#) and our own [interactive property database](#).

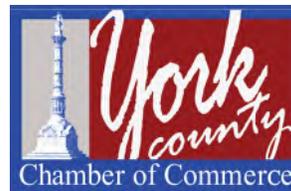
ceremonial scissors

- Taking event photos/video
- Distributing a media release (upon request)
- Providing exposure in YCETD online publications.

If you have a client that's recently opened a business in the county, please [reach out](#) to us for help.



Thanks to our partner organizations:



York County Economic & Tourism Development | 121 Alexander Hamilton Blvd. | Yorktown, VA
23690 US



Try email marketing for free today!