



# 2020

ISLE OF WIGHT COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

# ANNUAL REPORT

LOCAL ROOTS, GLOBAL REACH

# MISSIONS AND MESSAGES FROM OUR COUNTY OFFICIALS

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT MISSION

To attract, retain and expand new business investment in Isle of Wight County and to provide quality employment opportunities for County citizens. Department staff assists the Economic Development Authority (EDA), administers the Enterprise Zone Program and provides funding to the Hampton Roads Alliance and the Hampton Roads Small Business Development Center (HRSBDC). The department also assists the local farming and agricultural community.

Isle of Wight County is home to over 37,000 residents and has long been known for its Local Roots and Global Reach. Located in the heart of Hampton Roads, the County has striven over many years to maintain its excellent quality of life by balancing rural tranquility with easy access to an array of shopping and dining options. As Chairman of the Board of Supervisors during 2020, I and my fellow Supervisors were extremely proud of our business community's resiliency against so many challenges and burdens brought by the unexpected pandemic. Our pride continues as we renew our commitments going forward to providing world-class educational opportunities and vocational resources focused on preparing a sustainable workforce for the future, an enduring complement to our business attraction and retention efforts. The pandemic has not diminished our offerings of natural beauty found at our many waterfronts, our rural vistas and our tourism attractions. The County is eager to re-welcome visitors from all over the world. We invite you to make your plans to visit us and enjoy our community as we do. You will find that we are indeed a Community of CHOICE that CARES.



**JOEL C. ACREE**

2020 Chairman, Isle of Wight County Board of Supervisors



**CHRISTOPHER A. MORELLO**

Director, Isle of Wight County Economic Development

The County's business owners and their employees met 2020's remarkable and unexpected economic challenges with resolve and resiliency, buoyed by determination to regroup, rethink and rebound. Although our 2020 Annual Report documents certain economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on our local and regional economy, the Economic Development Department is privileged to take this opportunity to reflect on so many strong and positive aspects of Isle of Wight's unique economic performance in the face of the global downturn. Consider especially that 2020 data and anecdotal evidence from numerous sources suggest that the County's particular mix of agriculture, industrial, general commercial, retail and restaurants contributed to a unique resistance to the scale of unemployment and business closures seen regionally and across the nation. Transcending all such data, the Economic Development Department witnessed — and supported however possible — the sheer will and determination of citizens and business owners, individually and collectively, to keep moving forward, despite fiscal losses and even grief. The PEOPLE behind our businesses inspire us daily to do our work as well as we can. We wish them, and everyone reading this, increasing prosperity and similar inspiration in the years ahead!

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY MISSION

The Economic Development Authority, formerly the Industrial Development Authority, was created in 1968 to promote industrial growth in the County. As a support organization for the County's Department of Economic Development, it may authorize the issuance of tax-exempt industrial bonds to industries locating or expanding their operations in Isle of Wight.



**RONALD H. PACK**  
Chairman  
Isle of Wight County Economic  
Development Authority

This is my final message as Chairman of the Isle of Wight County Economic Development Authority (EDA). As many of you know, I retired from the EDA Board on December 31, 2020. I have been around economic activity in the County for a long time and pioneered using Industrial Revenue Bonds to finance business projects, one of the many capabilities of Development Authorities like the County's. Subsequently, I was appointed to the Industrial Development Authority Board, now the EDA, in the mid-1980s.

2020 was a busy year. The EDA Board gained a new Carrsville District member. It issued an Invitation for Bid for farm leases on three tracts of EDA-controlled land and awarded contracts to local farmers. The EDA Board also issued an Invitation for Bid for a hunting lease and awarded a contract to Marshall Hunt Club. Very importantly from a regional perspective, the EDA contributed funding toward membership in a new regional economic development entity, the Eastern Virginia Regional Industrial Facility Authority (EVRIFA). It also joined other jurisdictions in funding participation for its first project, sited in York County.

It has been my pleasure during good times and challenging times to serve on the EDA. It is now time to bring in different thoughts, energy and ideas to continue advancing our community. I look forward to spending my time enjoying this remarkable community in which we live, work and play.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Chris Morello**  
Director

**Kristi Sutphin**  
Economic Development Coordinator

**Nicole Talton**  
Economic Development Coordinator

**Gloria Spratley**  
Administrative Assistant

## 2020 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

**Ronald H. Pack**  
Chairman (Smithfield District)

**Carroll Keen Jr.**  
Vice-Chairman (Newport District)

**Tony Ambrose**  
(Town of Windsor)

**James Ford**  
(Hardy District)

**Tim Hillegass**  
(Town of Smithfield)

**Sharon Corey Stallings**  
(Windsor District)

**Amber Wells**  
(Carrsville District)

## 2020 ISLE OF WIGHT COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

**Joel C. Acree**  
Chairman (Windsor District)

**Richard L. "Dick" Grice**  
Vice-Chairman (Smithfield District)

**Rudolph Jefferson**  
(Hardy District)

**William M. McCarty**  
(Newport District)

**Don Rosie**  
(Carrsville District)

## COUNTY ADMINISTRATION

**Randy R. Keaton**  
County Administrator

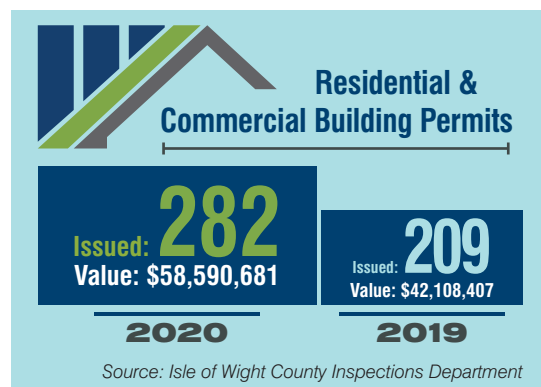
**Donald T. "Don" Robertson**  
Assistant County Administrator

## CONTACT US

ISLE OF WIGHT COUNTY  
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT  
P.O. Box 80, Isle of Wight, VA 23397  
(757) 356-1962  
InsideTheIsle.com  
iwced@iwus.net

# ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE TRENDS

## Population Estimates



## Income



**\$37,126**  
AVERAGE PER CAPITA

**+5.0%**  
OVER 2019



**\$73,991**  
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD

**+3.7%**  
OVER 2019

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 Estimates

## Home Value and Sale Prices

**\$266,800**  
2019 MEDIAN HOME VALUE

**\$319,866**  
2020 AVERAGE SALE PRICE/EXISTING HOMES

**+7.9%**  
OVER 2019

**\$372,104**  
2020 AVERAGE SALE PRICE/NEW CONSTRUCTION HOMES

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; Rein MLS, Residential Databank

## Isle of Wight Farm Characteristics 2017

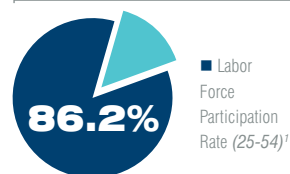
Number of Farms	237
Land in Farms (acres)	80,672
Average Size of Farm (acres)	340
Market Value of Products Sold	\$64,223,000

Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture 2017

## Prime-Age Population & Labor Force

Prime-Age Population (25-54)<sup>1</sup> **13,474**

Civilian Labor Force<sup>2</sup> **19,570**



Sources: <sup>1</sup>U.S. Census Bureau 2015-2019 5-Year Estimates <sup>2</sup>U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2019 Annual Average, Updated Apr. 29, 2020



## Major Private Sector Employers

1. Smithfield Foods & related entities
2. Keurig Dr Pepper
3. International Paper
4. Food Lion
5. CR England
6. Cost Plus World Market
7. Packers Sanitation Service
8. ST Tissue
9. Kroger
10. Riverside Health System
11. Isle of Wight Academy
12. Peninsula Metropolitan YMCA
13. AmeriCare Plus
14. Franklin Lumber
15. Consulate Health Care of Windsor

Source: Virginia Employment Commission, 2Q 2020



## NEW BUSINESS LICENSES

	2020	2019
ISLE OF WIGHT COUNTY	165	180
TOWN OF SMITHFIELD	29	61
TOWN OF WINDSOR	48	25
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>266</b>

SOURCES: ISLE OF WIGHT COUNTY, TOWN OF SMITHFIELD, TOWN OF WINDSOR

Description	Employees		%	Employees		%
Private Sector	2019			2020		
Manufacturing (Incl. food processing & packaging; processing of paper, wood & agricultural products)	3,121	27.2%		2,918	25.9%	
Retail Trade	953	8.3%		970	8.6%	
Accommodation & Food Services	942	8.2%		903	8.0%	
Health Care & Social Assistance	687	6.0%		680	6.0%	
Transportation & Warehousing	668	5.8%		651	5.8%	
Other Services (Except Public Administration)	672	5.9%		620	5.5%	
Administrative, Support, Waste Management & Remediation	554	4.8%		526	4.7%	
Construction	440	3.8%		441	3.9%	
Management of Companies & Enterprises	284	2.5%		346	3.1%	
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	347	3.0%		343	3.0%	
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	314	2.7%		328	2.9%	
Finance & Insurance	220	1.9%		221	2.0%	
Public Sector						
Government (Federal, State, Local)	1,591	13.9%		1,597	14.2%	

Source: EMSI, 2021.1

## Tax Revenue Highlights

Fiscal Year 2020

**\$4,978,740**

MACHINERY & TOOLS TAX\*

-4.05%  
COMPARED  
TO FY 2019

**\$6,192,584**

COMMERCIAL  
REAL ESTATE TAX

+1.26%  
COMPARED  
TO FY 2019

**\$2,352,862**

RETAIL  
SALES TAX

-1.92%  
COMPARED  
TO FY 2019

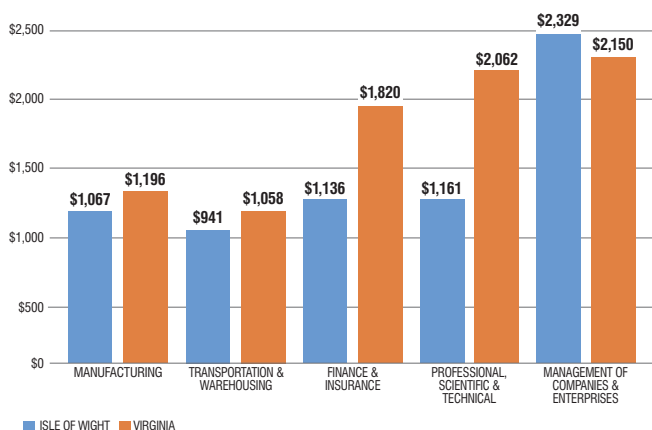
**\$502,646**

MEALS  
TAX

+1.72%  
COMPARED  
TO FY 2019

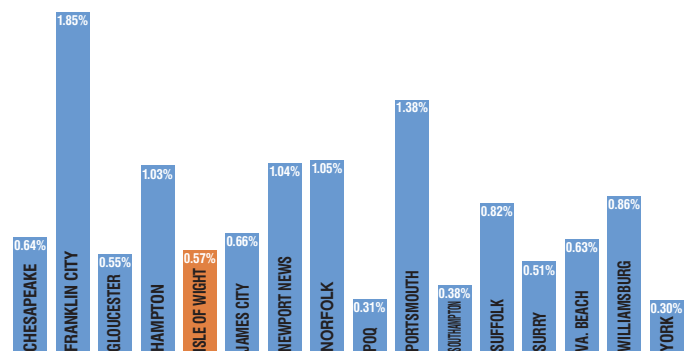
Source: Isle of Wight County Commissioner of Revenue

## Average Weekly Wages Isle Of Wight vs. State



Source: Virginia Employment Commission, Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages, 2Q 2020

## Per Capita Basis — Ongoing Jobless Claims thru the end of 2020



Source: Virginia Employment Commission

# ISLE OF WIGHT PARTNERS, PILLARS AND PROSPECTS

## Target Industries



## Strategic Partners

- Isle of Wight Chamber of Commerce
- Town of Smithfield
- Town of Windsor
- Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP)
- The Port of Virginia
- Hampton Roads Alliance
- Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS)

- Virginia Department of Small Business and Supplier Diversity (SBSD)
- Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)
- Eastern Virginia Regional Industrial Facility Authority (EVRIFA)
- Hampton Roads Workforce Council
- Hampton Roads Small Business Development Center (HRSBDC)
- Hampton Roads Planning District Commission (HRPDC)
- Paul D. Camp Community College
- Blackwater Regional Library

### Economic Development Strategic Plan Update

In January 2020, Economic Development staff launched an update of its Strategic Plan by hosting a facilitated brainstorming session with the Board of Supervisors, County EDA and County Administrator, Town Managers, County staff and other community leaders. The plan was last updated in 2013.

### County Adopts New Comprehensive Plan

In January 2020, following a community-led effort to ensure the County's new comprehensive plan accurately reflected the priorities of the County's residents and businesses, the Board of Supervisors adopted *Envisioning the Isle*. The plan was created based on the feedback of more than 714 meeting participants and 1,625 survey respondents. It was done with the guidance of the Citizens Task Force, the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors.

### County Invests in Regional Project

Isle of Wight County is one of six localities in Hampton Roads investing in a new regional economic development project as part of its membership in the Eastern Virginia Regional Industrial Facility Authority (EVRIFA). EVRIFA was formed in 2018 so that two or more localities

could work together on specific projects as regional partners and receive fiscal benefits from them. Located in York County, this project is the first one under consideration by the authority.

In 2021 EVRIFA will acquire a 432-acre tract of land from the Commonwealth of Virginia and will lease approximately 250 acres to a firm that plans to develop a major solar facility. The remaining acreage will be named Kings Creek Commerce Center and will be marketed for light industrial development.

All tax and other revenues that would normally have been collected by York County, the host locality, will instead be shared by the participating localities on a basis proportional to their investments. Other participating localities are Poquoson, Williamsburg, Hampton and Newport News.

### Reuse Study of Former Academy Continues

In cooperation with the property owner, the Economic Development Department continued to lead this cross-departmental effort to study and determine the best potential community-oriented uses for the former James River Christian Academy campus. A market and feasibility study surveyed the community services landscape. It analyzed current "supply and demand" for these vital services with fiscal support from a Community Development Block Grant Planning Grant obtained through the Commonwealth's Department of Housing and Community

Development (DHCD).

The County and the landowner continued forward in 2020 by submitting an application to DHCD for grant monies to fund more in-depth community surveys meant to help narrow the list of best-use candidates (awarded in February 2021). As part of the grant agreement, the County will initiate a preliminary architectural review to ensure optimal site and building redevelopment scenarios are considered.

### Offshore Wind Presents Huge Economic Potential

The Coastal Virginia Offshore Wind (CVOW) project has given our region the chance to gain enormous economic benefits on a scale that can be termed "once in a generation." In 2020, the County joined with the Alliance, its member localities and the Commonwealth to ensure our region's businesses have every opportunity to be suppliers and service providers as 180 massive turbines are manufactured and installed 27 miles from the coast. Expected economic impact is more than \$280 million during the construction phase and \$210 million per year in operations and maintenance for decades into the future.



## Pillars of the Economy:

### Manufacturing

*Manufacturing* continues to be the lead sector of the Isle of Wight economy for employment, with 26.5% of county jobs. It also leads sales with 49.2% of total industry sales for 2020. Sector performance continues to be largely driven by Smithfield Foods. “Exported” sales, goods and services purchased from county firms by entities outside the county, account for an inflow of more than \$1.3 billion into the economy. County firms represent \$137.3 million or 14.4% of total sales.

### Management of Companies & Enterprises

Aside from Government, *Management of Companies & Enterprises* is the next leading industry sector for Isle of Wight. This sector accounts for 6.9% of total sales in 2020 and is the second largest, behind Manufacturing, in

exported sales (8%). The sector showed the largest year-over-year growth over 2019, increasing by more than \$86.1 million.

### Real Estate & Rental & Leasing

Total sales for *Real Estate & Rental & Leasing* increased year-over-year by \$14.2 million, bringing total sales to approximately \$127 million. This increase, coupled with a downturn in *Transportation & Warehousing* over 2019 (-\$1.7 million), moves the *Real Estate & Rental & Leasing* sector into one of the 2020 top-performing industry sectors behind *Management of Companies & Enterprises*.

### Transportation & Warehousing

*Transportation & Warehousing* generated nearly \$122.1 million in 2020 total sales, compared to \$123.7 million the year prior. Total sales are driven by in-region sales of \$68.9 million, where exported sales were \$53.2 million.



### Agriculture

Agricultural output remained strong in 2020. With approximately 85% of the county's land zoned as Rural Agricultural Conservation (RAC), *Agriculture* is a significant part of Isle of Wight County life and culture. Isle of Wight produced \$73.7 million in total sales within the *Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting* sector, an increase of \$8.2 million over the previous year. The sector accounts for 2.4 percent of total industry sales for the County.

*Source: Economic Modeling Specialists International, 2021.1, Hampton Roads Alliance, 2021*

## 2020 MARKETING MISSIONS, EVENTS AND CONFERENCES

Prior to the onset of COVID-19 in Virginia, which cancelled all travel and most in-person events, the Economic Development staff participated in two targeted outreach events. Conferences were held virtually.

### Outreach and Event Sponsorships

- Tidewater News Job Fair
- Hampton Roads Real Estate Market Review & Forecast

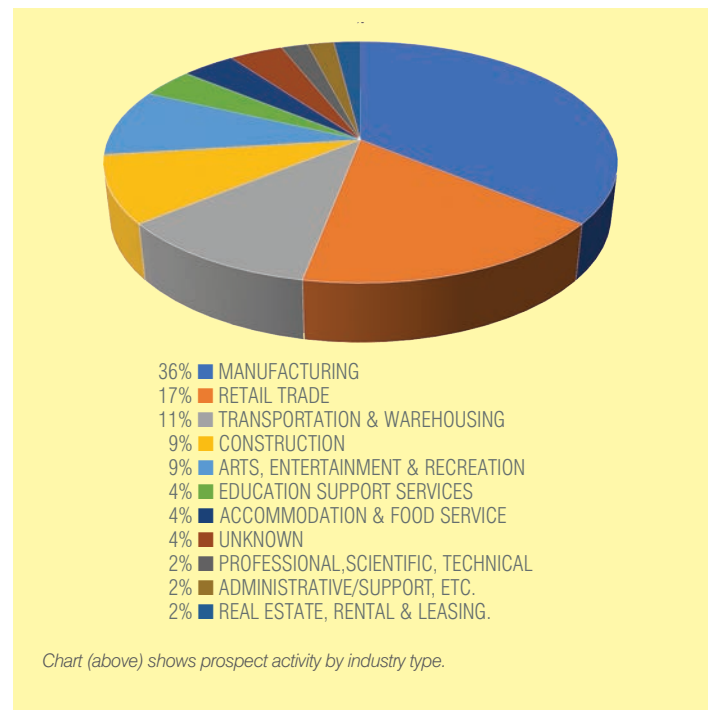
### Conferences/Professional Development

- IEDC Annual Conference (International Economic Development Council)
- VEDA Conferences (Virginia Economic Developers Association)
- Virginia Agribusiness Council Annual Conference

### 2020 New Prospect Activity

In addition to working with existing business projects throughout the year, Economic Development was actively engaged with VEDP, the Alliance, site selection consultants, commercial real estate brokers and developers, and various companies directly on new prospective businesses interested in the County.

### Prospect Activity by Industry Type



**+47** TOTAL NEW PROSPECT INQUIRIES

- 24 industrial prospect inquiries
- 8 retail prospect inquiries
- 3 office prospect inquiries
- 5 completed Requests for Information (RFIs)

# INTERMODAL PARK AND PORT OF VIRGINIA EXTEND ISLE OF WIGHT'S GLOBAL REACH



## Shirley T. Holland Intermodal Park: Easily Accessible and Ready for Business!

Strategically located for port-related businesses, the county-owned Shirley T. Holland Intermodal Park provides affordable acreage close to The Port of Virginia.

### Park Highlights

- Permit-ready site in Phase II under development
- Transportation planning underway in all phases
- Industrial zoning
- Easily accessible to interstates 95, 85, 64, 264 and 664
- Water, sewer, electricity, natural gas and fiber-optic services available
- Proven fast-track site plan review and permitting process
- Access to a regional workforce of more than 843,000 people
- Incentives include: VA Enterprise Zone, Foreign Trade Zone #20 and Port Grants

- Park tenants: Keurig Dr Pepper, Safco Products Co. and Cost Plus World Market

### Location Advantages

- 26 miles to The Port of Virginia
- Easy access to local interstates (30 minutes to I-64 and I-664; 46 miles to I-95 and I-85). Site also adjacent to U.S. Route 460 and within 10 minutes of U.S. Route 58
- 15 miles to Franklin Regional Airport; 39 miles to Norfolk International Airport; 40 miles to the Newport News/Williamsburg International Airport
- Direct rail access possible to adjacent Norfolk Southern Rail Heartland Corridor
- Nearly flat topography reduces on-site development costs
- One of the lowest real estate tax rates in Hampton Roads

## Intermodal Park Earns GO Virginia Site Readiness Grant



VIRGINIA INITIATIVE FOR  
**GROWTH &  
OPPORTUNITY**  
IN EACH REGION

In September 2020, Isle of Wight County was awarded a Go Virginia Site Readiness Grant for Shirley T. Holland Intermodal Park, Phase II, in the amount of \$150,500. The grant funding, which was matched by previous expenditures related to site readiness, is managed by the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission, which contracted with Timmons Group to update environmental assessments and surveys. This work began in December 2020 and is expected to be completed by June 2021.



## Regional Airport Completes Rebranding

The County's municipal aviation airport was renamed Franklin Regional Airport in 2019. Isle of Wight Economic Development and Franklin Southampton Economic Development Inc. partnered with the airport on a new logo design in June 2020 and signage was updated at the terminal. The airport, which is owned by the City of Franklin, is capable of hosting larger aircraft with its 5,000-foot runway. It offers competitive pricing on both Avgas and Jet-A fuels and has available hangar space. The County and the City are working together to develop a marketing strategy for more than 60 acres of industrial-zoned land adjacent to the airport.

## The Port of Virginia — Mid-Atlantic Global Gateway

### Port Rebounds Despite 2020 Challenges



Photo by Jack Mayer, Office of Gov. Ralph S. Northam

The Port of Virginia ended 2020 with record-setting volumes in October, November and December, despite the effects of the pandemic and trade tariffs on world trade. For the year, the Port handled more than 2.8 million 20-foot equivalent units (TEUs), which represents a 4 percent dip in cargo volume from 2019.

The Port continues to be a significant driver of economic investment and job creation in the Commonwealth. The Port is responsible for nearly 400,000 new jobs and for developing more than 8 million square feet of space since 2016, totaling more than \$2 billion in capital investment.

## Foreign Trade Zone Offers Many Benefits

Due to its strategic mid-Atlantic location, Virginia is the best choice for Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ) activities. Companies locating in FTZ 20 can benefit from advanced distribution networks and easy, reliable access to shipping channels, highways, railways and airways.

FTZs are areas which are geographically inside the United States but are legally considered outside its customs territory. Companies that locate in FTZs can benefit by using special procedures to encourage U.S.-based assembly/manufacturing or warehousing with reduced, eliminated or delayed duties. Shirley T. Holland Intermodal Park acreage can become a "Magnet Site" within 30 days of application. This means companies get immediate FTZ benefits and allowance for expedited final approvals from U.S. Customs.

# \$3.3 BILLION

AGRICULTURE AND  
FORESTRY EXPORTS VALUE FOR 2020

**VIRGINIA RANKS NO. 3**  
ON EAST COAST AMONG AGRICULTURAL GOODS EXPORTERS



### Top Virginia Agriculture/Forestry Exports in 2020

Soybeans	\$751.7 Million
Pork & Pork Offal	\$619.3 Million
Wood Products	\$225.0 Million
Miscellaneous Food & Beverage	\$218.4 Million
Soybean Meal	\$210.3 Million
Soybean Oil	\$177.5 Million
Leaf Tobacco	\$164.5 Million
Beer	\$143.3 Million

Source: Global Trade Information Services Inc.



# ISLE OF WIGHT ECONOMY REMAINS RESILIENT



## The Christmas Store Wins Retail Alliance Award

The Peninsula Division of Retail Alliance named The Christmas Store of Smithfield Gift Shop Retailer of the Year. Jim and Elaine Abicht founded The Christmas Store in 1994 as a hobby stemming from their many years of collecting antique Christmas items. In addition to Christmas ornaments, decorations, gifts and collectibles, the store carries items for every major holiday.



## Welding on Wheels Classroom Comes to Students in Region

In 2020, Paul D. Camp Community College acquired an eight-bay mobile welding lab and began offering training in the four-week Fast Track Welding program, as well as the Virginia Ship Repair Association's Marine Trade Training Welding program. Students completing the Fast Track program are eligible to test for the American Welding Society (AWS) Certification. Also those finishing the marine welding program are candidates for jobs in the region's shipbuilding and repair industry.

The new rolling lab will help meet the growing demand for welders in the region. It can be transported throughout the college's service region to high schools and employer sites.

## Blue Sky Distillery Pivots to Produce Hand Sanitizer

In April and May, Blue Sky Distillery switched up production at its micro distillery in Isle of Wight Industrial Park. In response to community need, it began producing small batches of hand sanitizer instead of its usual line of handcrafted spirits. Owners Mark and Kim Rangos donated their first batches to Isle of Wight's first responders and offered limited quantities for sale to the public.



## Isle Biz Rocks Feature Promotes Local Businesses

Businesses in Isle of Wight County rock. So, Economic Development set out to tell the world with its Isle Biz Rocks feature in its monthly newsletter and on social media. In 2020 the following businesses were featured:

- Serendipity Meadworks
- J&C's Pitt & Play
- Fleur de Fou
- MurSto Productions



## Isle Ask & Answer Videos Focus on Business Recovery Resources

In April 2020, Economic Development partnered with the Isle of Wight Chamber to produce a new video Q&A series called Isle Ask & Answer. The series aims to keep the business community informed about relief and recovery resources.

Topics included the federal stimulus, alcohol licensing for your business, local government reopening strategy, the COVID-19 Business Interruption Small Business Grant, Paycheck Protection Program and the #IsleShopSmall Gift Card Match Program. Jim Carroll, executive director of the Hampton Roads Small Business Development Center, was a frequent guest on the series.



## Businesses Open and Expand In Isle of Wight

### CARROLLTON

- **Triad Engineering Solutions**, a multidisciplinary engineering firm specializing in the industrial, shipbuilding and commercial market sectors, opened on Carrollton Boulevard.
- **Twisted Scissors**, a full-service salon, opened in the Carrollton Cove Shoppes.
- **Shine Hair Studio**, a salon specializing in haircuts, coloring, styling, perming and facial waxing, opened on Brewers Neck Boulevard.
- **Tavayah Investment Group**, a real estate investment company, opened in the Carrollton Business Center.
- **The Pink Picket Fence Boutique**, a retail shop offering clothing, home décor and gift items, opened in the Carrollton Shoppes.
- **Smithfield Family Automotive**, a car dealership, expanded and relocated from Smithfield to Carrollton Boulevard.

### CARRSVILLE

- **Old Glory Grill** is a mobile food truck serving barbeque, wings, hot dogs and more throughout the County.

### SMITHFIELD

- **Phoenix Physical Therapy**, a practice providing physical and occupational therapy, athletic training and massage therapy services, opened in Smithfield Plaza.
- **Ink and Lasers**, a one-stop shop for custom screen printing, embroidery, awards, trophies and banners, opened on Canteberry Lane.
- **Creative Touch Beauty Salon**, a hair salon and day spa, opened on Main Street.
- **Focused Psychiatric and Mental Health Care Services**, a practice providing psychiatric assessments to include determining the need for psychotropic medication therapy and management, opened on South Church Street.
- **Pearl's Boutique**, a retail shop offering clothing, home décor and gifts, opened on Main Street.
- **Cowgirl Crossing**, a retail shop offering boots, hats and gifts for horse enthusiasts, opened on Main Street.
- **Smithfield Aesthetics**, a new division of Family Medical Care of Smithfield that's co-located on Gumwood Drive, offers procedures for skin rejuvenation, body contouring and feminine rejuvenation.
- **E and R Title LLC**, a real estate title company, opened at 403 Grace Street.
- **Smithfield Tobacco and Gift**, a retail smoke shop, opened in Cypress Run Plaza.
- **Dollar Tree**, a national retailer, relocated to a freestanding store on Benns Church Boulevard.

## COVID-19 RESPONSE: Isle Helps Businesses Recover

In mid-March 2020, the Economic Development Department recognized that the pandemic already presented significant, extended challenges to the local business community. Staff began an outreach effort with a series of email messages to businesses. These included timely resources and guidance from the Small Business Administration, the Virginia Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Staff then created a web page at [www.INSIDETHEISLE.com](http://www.INSIDETHEISLE.com) dedicated to providing

COVID-19 business resources, including Governor's Executive Orders, grant funding opportunities, recovery and reopening guidance, and workforce updates.

Staff participated in weekly virtual meetings with state and regional partners to stay up to date on the latest resource information available. They then shared findings with businesses via a series of numerous bulletins and the regular monthly newsletter.



### County Establishes COVID-19 Small Business Grant Program

Isle of Wight County and the Towns of Smithfield and Windsor established the COVID-19 Business Interruption Small Business Grant Program to help businesses impacted by COVID-19 recover and reopen. The grant program, fully funded by Federal CARES Act proceeds, was administered by the Economic Development Department in two application rounds. Grants were available for up to \$4,000 per business.

**Total Grant Recipients**  
**331 Businesses**

**Total Grant Amount**  
**\$1,299,198**

**Round 1: 238 grants awarded**  
Total grant amount: \$932,698  
**Round 2: 93 grants awarded**  
Total grant amount: \$366,500



### Obici Healthcare Foundation Funds County Grant Program

In November 2020, the Obici Healthcare Foundation's COVID-19 Response Fund for Counties and Cities awarded a \$135,000 grant to the County. Isle of Wight used the funding to establish the Isle Recover Business Assistance Grant Program. Its goal was to help increase fiscal assistance to businesses impacted by COVID-19 so they could recover and reopen.

The Department of Economic Development administered the program, which exceeded application capacity within 40 minutes of opening. A total of 45 businesses each received \$3,000 grants.

### #IsleShopSmall Gift Card Match Program Sells Out



Smithfield and Isle of Wight County Tourism, Isle of Wight County Economic Development and the Isle of Wight Chamber of Commerce united to create the #IsleShopSmall Gift Card Match Program. They used CARES Act funding from IOW and the Towns of Smithfield and Windsor to help local businesses remain viable during and after the pandemic. The Isle of Wight Chamber of Commerce administered the program.

Gift certificate vouchers to participating businesses — locally owned, for-profit, retail, restaurant and service-based businesses including local franchises and local licensees — were available for purchase online.

More than 100 businesses signed up to participate in the sale, which matched purchases dollar for dollar until the funds ran out. The first round sold out in 90 minutes. After that, a second round with even more matching funds and more participating businesses also sold out.

**Total Sales**  
**Round 1: \$205,880**  
**Round 2: \$607,600**  
**TOTAL SALES: \$813,480**

**Vouchers Purchased**  
**Round 1: 5,147**  
**Round 2: 15,190**  
**TOTAL VOUCHERS: 20,337**

**Range of checks distributed to LOCAL SMALL BUSINESSES**  
**\$40 to \$52,640!**



## BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION PROGRAM WE STAY CONNECTED!

The Economic Development staff builds relationships by meeting with new and established businesses throughout the year. It provides information on available programs and services tailored to each business' specific needs. Due to COVID-19, most interaction with businesses in 2020 was done by phone or email. This interaction significantly increased due to local grant programs administered by the department.

■ **Business Outreach and Advocacy** – Staff reaches out to businesses via face-to-face meetings, new business welcome packets, phone calls, emails, events, newsletters, its website and social media. One of the chief objectives is to help businesses navigate the development/permitting process by coordinating monthly pre-application meetings. This allows applicants to get timely feedback on projects from Planning and Zoning, Inspections, Utilities, Stormwater and Economic Development representatives.

■ **Marketing** – Economic Development features local businesses in its monthly newsletter spotlight, "Isle Biz Rocks." It also provides an Online Business List on the Economic Development website, prepares press releases for the media on openings and expansions, and shares social media posts. Staff can also provide one-on-one analysis of marketing opportunities and make business-to-business connections.

■ **Business Resources** – Staff maintains close ties with professionals who provide counseling and support services. Economic Development also continues to financially help support the Small Business Development Center of Hampton Roads. The center provides business planning, marketing and financial planning services to startups and existing businesses.

■ **Expansion and Relocation Assistance** – Staff maintains a database of available commercial properties. It also assists new and expanding businesses in finding locations that meet their requirements.

■ **Networking and Education** – Staff promotes regional small business workshops. It also hosts events with state and regional partners.

# QUALITY OF LIFE FLOURISHES IN DEEP-ROOTED COMMUNITY

## IWCS Receives Grants to Expand Agriculture Program



Photo courtesy of IWCS

Isle of Wight County Schools (IWCS) received two grants in 2020 to expand Career Academy programs offered at its Agricultural Land Lab.

A \$15,000 grant from Bayer Fund's America's Farmers Grow Rural Education will be used to construct a new 34-by-72-foot greenhouse. Subsequently, students will grow fresh produce for school cafeteria meals beginning with Windsor Elementary School as a pilot "Farm to Fork" program.

A \$500 grant from Virginia Agriculture in the

Classroom will be used to conduct a Beef Quality Assurance certification course for students at the Land Lab. The program teaches safe handling practices of cattle, as well as proper identification techniques and injection locations.

The IWCS Land Lab is a 30-acre working farm that provides authentic, hands-on learning experiences for students in the Agriculture Career Academy. The facility includes livestock, pastures, a greenhouse, vegetable garden, and a state-of-the-art barn and classroom building.

## Career Academy Implements Innovative Scheduling Program

In January 2020, the Isle of Wight School Board approved the creation of a forward-thinking, year-long schedule that allows Career Academy students to spend a week in their chosen Career and Technical Education (CTE) course, while alternating with a week of core classes. This pilot program began with the 2020-2021 school year. Career Academy programs include agriculture, building trades, cosmetology, culinary arts, nurse aid and welding.

As part of the CTE program's redesign the school system is emphasizing developing high-quality internships and apprenticeships with area business partners. Businesses have been fully supportive of this initiative, indicating that the traditional high school schedule wasn't conducive to real life, work-based experiences



Photo courtesy of IWCS

## Virginia Tech honors IWCS Farm Manager

Daniel Judkins, the farm manager for Isle of Wight County Schools, was recognized as Virginia Tech's Agricultural Technology Outstanding Alumni.

"Being the farm manager for IWCS has been one of the most rewarding careers I have had," said Judkins. "I have a passion for agriculture and every day I am able

to be outside working around the farm and sharing my knowledge and love for the industry with our students."

Under Judkins' direction, and in partnership with agriculture teacher Jason Brittle, the farm has grown from six acres of uncut grass to multiple pastures with a variety of livestock and a vegetable garden. The property welcomed a beautiful barn and classroom facility in fall 2018. Most recently, it added a cattle-handling facility.

## Rezoning Approved for The Park @ Battery Condos



Rendering by Coastal Design Group

In January 2020, the Town of Smithfield approved the rezoning of property along Battery Park Road and South Church Street for a new 150-unit residential development. Named The Park @ Battery, it will include 15 buildings with 10 units each with prices projected to start at \$190,000.

## Construction Underway: Mixed-Use Developments Coming to Carrollton



Site work and construction began on new apartments at the Brewers Station development along Brewers Neck Boulevard in Carrollton. The mixed-use development, approved in 2014, will include 261 housing units when complete.

The development will be located on both sides of Brewers Neck Boulevard, at the intersection of New Towne Haven Lane and Norsworthy Drive. It was approved for 34 condominiums, 65 townhouses, 162 apartments and 85,000 square feet of commercial space.

Site work began on James River Crossings at the intersection of Carrollton and Brewers Neck boulevards. The mixed-use development, approved in 2000, will include 210 condominiums and approximately 202,000 square feet of commercial development when complete.

## Town of Windsor Breaks Ground on New Public Works Building



Photo courtesy of Stephen Faleski, The Tidewater News

In July 2020, officials from the Town of Windsor broke ground on a new 4,000-square-foot public works building on East Griffin Street next to the water tower. The building will house the town's maintenance vehicles, equipment and parts. It will also serve as an office for the town's public works staff.

**92.5% ON-TIME  
GRADUATION RATE  
TOPS STATE AVERAGE**

**396**

**INDUSTRY  
CERTIFICATIONS  
ACHIEVED**

# TOURISM AND COMMUNITY EVENTS

## Town Completes Restoration of Windsor Castle Park Manor House



In January 2020, the Town of Smithfield completed a restoration project of historic structures at Windsor Castle Park. The project costs were estimated to be \$5 million but came in under budget at \$3.3 million. The Manor House is now being marketed as a wedding venue and meeting space. The house includes two dressing rooms and lounges, a commercial-grade catering kitchen, a board room, living room, music room, a “pub” style space and a game room in the basement. In 2010 Joseph Luter III donated Windsor Castle Park to the Town of Smithfield.

## Buy Local, Buy Fresh! Farmer’s Market Comes to Windsor



Photo courtesy of Windsor Farmer's Market

Windsor Farmer’s Market — a new, Friday-afternoon market featuring vendors selling local produce, meats and handmade goods — launched in June 2020 and extended its season into November. The market is a local initiative by the Isle of Wight Community Foundation. It was sponsored by Anytime Fitness Windsor and Old Point National Bank, which also hosted the market.

## Tourism Awarded Marketing Leverage Grants

To mitigate the effects that COVID-19 had on the tourism and hospitality industries, Smithfield and Isle of Wight Tourism was awarded \$10,000 through Virginia Tourism Corp.’s WanderLove Recovery Grant Program.

The grant was used for new photography, a video and podcast series, and digital and print advertising. It was also used to initiate the WanderLove Stroll along Hayden’s Lane, a promotional program for local merchants. A second grant for \$5,000 was used to promote family field trips to Smithfield and Isle of Wight County.



## BOB Happened in 2020

BOB FEST, one of three annual signature festivals hosted by Smithfield VA Events, was held in January, and sold out with 2,500 attendees. However, its other two festivals were cancelled due to COVID-19.

Much of 2020 was spent dealing with the effects of COVID-19 on tourism stakeholders and events. Smithfield and Isle of Wight Tourism focused on creating and promoting boutique events, such as those hosted by the Genuine Merchants of Downtown Smithfield (GMODS).

## Restaurants and Shops Offer More Options During Pandemic

With the restrictions placed on restaurants and retailers, many Isle of Wight, Smithfield and Windsor merchants switched to offering takeout, curbside and delivery options to support their staff and keep their businesses running during the pandemic. Some restaurants also got creative by adding an outdoor dining option.

## 2019 TOURISM IMPACT

**\$45.1 MILLION**  
FROM LOCAL TOURISM EXPENDITURES

**+4.4%**  
FROM 2018

**430** TOURISM-SUPPORTED JOBS  
**+5.9%** FROM 2018

**\$1,005,455** LOCAL TAXES GENERATED  
**+4.3%** FROM 2018

Source: Virginia Tourism Corp.

## 2020 VISITOR COUNTS

**25K–38K** PEOPLE VISITED  
SMITHFIELD FARMERS MARKET  
(based on 800–1,200 attendees per market)

**8,637** PEOPLE VISITED  
SMITHFIELD & ISLE OF WIGHT COUNTY  
VISITOR CENTER

Source: Smithfield & Isle of Wight Tourism



## AWARDS

Isle of Wight County  
Distinguished Budget Presentation Award  
(for fiscal year beginning July 1, 2020)  
*from Government Finance  
Officers Association*



Isle of Wight County  
Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in  
Financial Reporting  
(for fiscal year ended June 30, 2019)  
*from Government Finance  
Officers Association*

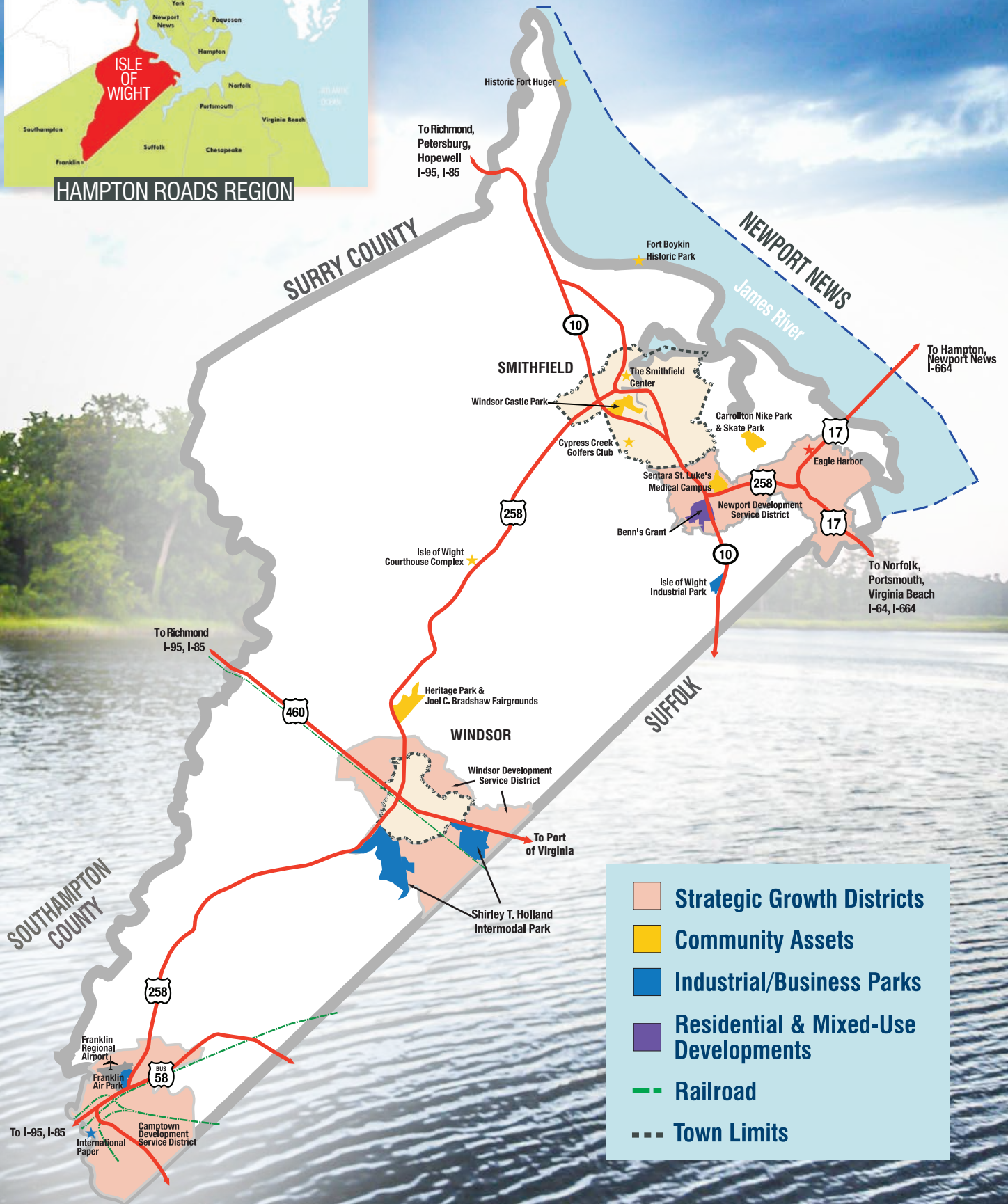


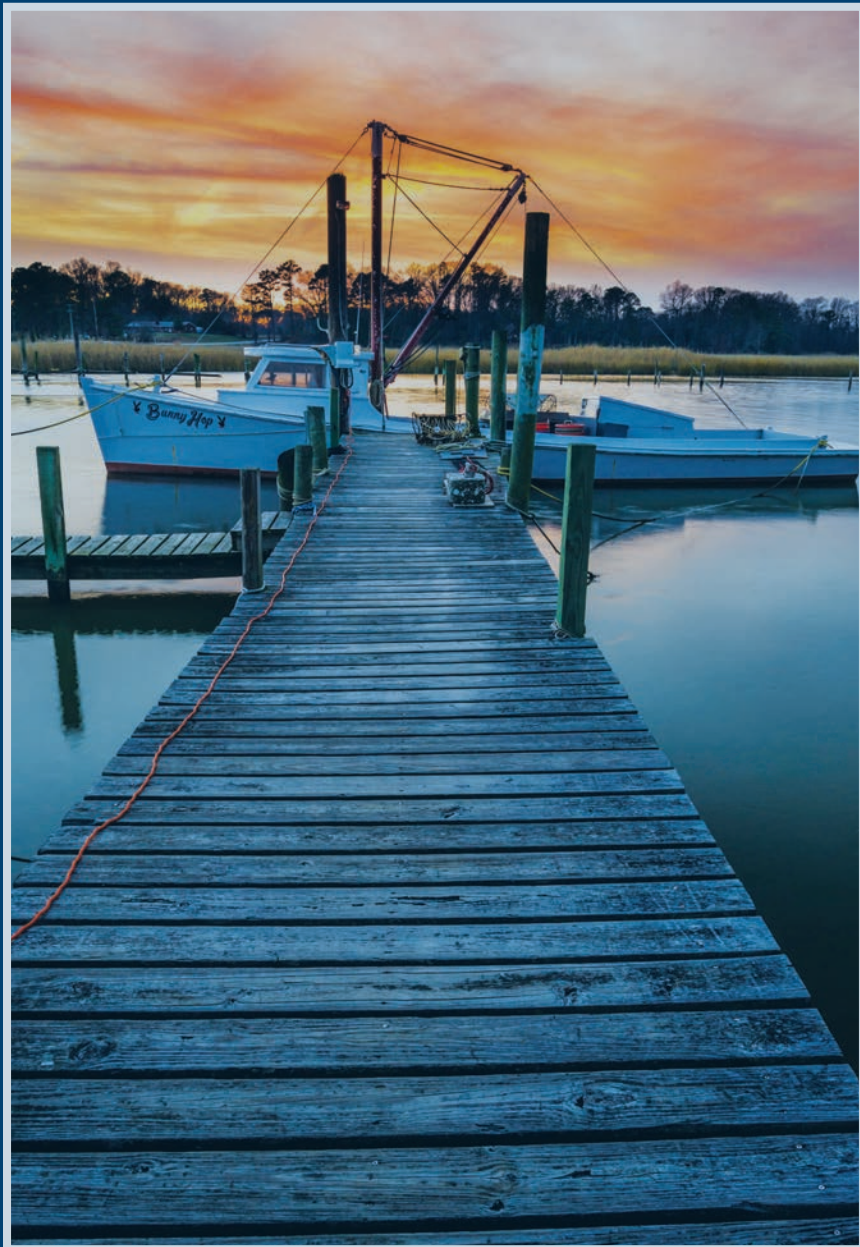
Smithfield & Isle of Wight Tourism  
2020 Virgo Award  
for its interactive, new tourism website  
([GenuineSmithfieldVA.com](http://GenuineSmithfieldVA.com))  
*from Virginia Association of Destination  
Marketing Organizations*



Isle of Wight County Schools  
2020 Green Schools Challenge  
Certified Platinum  
*from Virginia School Board Association*







*Photo by Mike O'Shell Photography*



Local Roots, Global Reach

# ISLE OF WIGHT COUNTY, VIRGINIA

ISLE OF WIGHT COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
P.O. BOX 80, ISLE OF WIGHT, VIRGINIA 23397 | 757.356.1962

IWCED@IWUS.NET     INSIDETHEISLE.COM