

The Economic Development Department leads a variety of special events and hosts business support efforts throughout the year to galvanize new and existing businesses to engage in the City's vibrant community. These efforts provide businesses and citizens alike with opportunities to contribute to Williamsburg's culture as a unique place to live and do business.



The EDA hosts monthly Business Roundtables on the second Tuesday of each month. In 2019, the City celebrated a 10-year milestone of 120 Roundtables. These local lunch events are designed to increase communication with existing businesses, therefore solving critical business operating issues. This regular venue also allows the City to provide the highest level of support for local businesses and share good news about relevant business support efforts.



Topics vary each month, with various local, regional, and state speakers invited to discuss important issues affecting local business. A different City restaurant caters each Roundtable which provides a venue for them to highlight and serve their culinary offerings. In 2019, local business leaders came together to hear presentations related to:

- **Entrepreneurship**
- **Transportation Infrastructure**
- **High Speed Rail**
- **Workforce Development**
- **Downtown Redevelopment**
- **Nonprofit Community Work**
- **Higher Education**
- **Sports Economy**
- **Federal Opportunity Zones**
- **Digital Marketing**
- **Local Farm to Table Efforts**
- **Regional Marketing Initiatives**



The all-day annual Home-Based Business (HBB) Resource Fair & Conference is a regional effort hosted by the Cities of Williamsburg, Newport News, Hampton and Poquoson and the Counties of James City, York and Gloucester. The conference features relevant speakers and topics related to area Home-Based Businesses. All of the economic development offices from participating localities have resource booths and staff to answer locality-specific questions. This effort also has year-round programming, where each locality takes turns hosting and planning a series of Lunch and Learns targeted to HBBs.

This unique event features a resource fair with over 20 exhibitors. In addition, conference sessions and specialty breakout tracks focus on topics relevant to all stages and types of HBB, including traditional, franchise, and direct and network marketing.

Intuit and Emergent Research predicted that the number of people working on-demand [gig] jobs will grow from 3.9 million Americans in 2016 to

**9.2 million by 2021.**

## SUPPORT existing businesses



In December 2019, the Economic Development Department distributed 22 fir trees along Prince George Street in Downtown Williamsburg and held a decorating contest by local businesses. Business partners enjoyed getting in the holiday spirit with this initiative. Winners were selected in four categories:

- (1) **Best Holiday Spirit – The Hound’s Tale Corner BARKery**
- (2) **Most Original – Rick’s Cheese Steak Shop**
- (3) **Best in Show – Aromas Coffee**
- (4) **Best Business Marketing – Baskin-Robbins**



To kick off Williamsburg’s historic Fourth of July celebrations and honor both businesses and citizens, the Economic Development Department planned and implemented an All-American July 4th Celebration in downtown Williamsburg in 2019. The event included a live band, tethered hot air balloon rides, an egg toss, and family fun for businesses and citizens alike.



Each year, the City opens submissions for the public to nominate a Business of the Year whose hard work and dedication make Williamsburg a better place to live, work, and visit. These awards celebrate small businesses with less than 100 employees who have been operating in the City for at least five years and have demonstrated innovative, measurable growth. In addition to the City’s own annual Business Appreciation Award, Williamsburg rotates with James City County and York County to host a regional business appreciation event. The 2019 event was hosted at Williamsburg Winery.

### PAST BUSINESS APPRECIATION AWARD WINNERS

2019 Cardinal Survey and Design  
2018 Quirks!  
2017 Binns of Williamsburg  
2016 Taproot Hearth & Patio  
2015 Chesapeake Bank  
2014 Ace Hardware  
2013 Sal’s by Victor  
2012 Williamsburg Merchants

2011 Aberdeen Barn  
2010 Aromas  
2009 The Blue Talon Bistro  
2008 RJS & Associates and Master Craftsmen  
2007 Second St – An American Bistro  
2006 Jefferson Restaurant and Williamsburg Farmers’ Market