

2025



SPRING CONFERENCE

MARCH 20 & 21
HOTEL 24 SOUTH
STAUNTON, VA

HOSTED BY:
GREATER AUGUSTA REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

CONFERENCE AGENDA

Thursday, March 20, 2025 – Hotel 24 South – Staunton, VA

8:00 – 9:30am	VACCE BOARD MEETING	Blue Ridge Room
9:30am	CONFERENCE REGISTRATION OPENS Please note that hotel rooms may not be available for check-in until 4:00pm.	Hotel Lobby
10:00 – 11:15am	OPENING KEYNOTE SESSION <i>The Power of You: Own Your Talents, Transform Your Team</i> In this session, chamber professionals will explore how identifying and harnessing their individual talents can transform not only their own work but also their entire team. By understanding and owning what they naturally do best, participants will learn how to elevate their personal performance while contributing to a more cohesive, successful chamber team. Through interactive activities and practical tools, this session will help you unlock your potential and make an even greater impact within your chamber and community. - <i>Teri Smiley, Starfish Partnerships</i> <i>Keynote Speaker Sponsored by Lumin Strategies</i>	Ballroom – Salon A/B
11:30am – 12:45pm	NETWORKING LUNCHEON Join us as we announce our 2025 Service Awards and Scholarships.	Colonnade Ballroom
1:00 – 2:00pm	BREAKOUT SESSIONS – choose one: Successful Crisis Initiatives Learn from your peers on how chambers should mobilize in times of crisis. - <i>Beth Rhinehart, Bristol TN/VA Chamber</i> Think Tank Showdown: Non-Dues Revenue Edition This session will engage our chamber professionals in a dynamic brainstorming competition where teams generate and refine innovative non-dues revenue ideas. The most creative, actionable, and effective ideas win! - <i>Tracy Hale Clark, Louisa County Chamber</i>	Ballroom – Salon A/B Ballroom – Salon C
2:00pm	BREAK	Hotel Lobby – Sponsor Area
2:15 – 3:15pm	BREAKOUT SESSIONS – choose one: Strategic Media & PR for Chambers Effective communication is essential for Chambers of Commerce to build credibility, engage their communities, and advocate for local businesses. Led by the City of Staunton's Communications Coordinator and Public Speaking teacher at Mary Baldwin University Morgan Smith and the City of Staunton's Tourism Department's Sales & Marketing Manager Jessica Williams, this session will provide key strategies for working with the media, crafting impactful messages, and managing interviews with confidence. Learn how to proactively shape your Chamber's public image and maximize media opportunities to enhance your influence. - <i>Morgan Smith, City of Staunton Communications Coordinator</i> - <i>Jessica Williams, City of Staunton Tourism Manager</i>	Ballroom – Salon A/B

Quack the Code: Strengthening Teamwork Through Play **Ballroom – Salon C**
Join us for a fun and interactive session where you'll use LEGO® to explore teamwork in a whole new way. Through a hands-on challenge, you'll practice key skills like communication, problem-solving, and collaboration. Expect some surprises as you work through the activity and discover how different ideas and approaches can make a team stronger. This session is designed to spark creativity, build connections, and show the power of working together. Don't miss this chance to Quack the Code and find new ways to make your team even better!
- Jason Boron, Leading Strong LLC

3:15pm **BREAK** **Hotel Lobby**

3:30 – 4:30pm **KEYNOTE SESSION** **Ballroom – Salon A/B**
Measuring & Communicating Your Impact: A Data-Driven Approach to Chamber Success
In this session, we will discuss how to effectively measure and communicate the impact of chamber work using meaningful data. This interactive workshop will cover strategies for identifying key metrics, building an impactful one-pager for annual reports, and crafting concise, compelling stories that highlight chamber achievements. By the end of the session, attendees will have the tools to create a data-driven narrative that not only showcases results but also aligns with their strategic goals, making it easier to share the chamber's value with stakeholders and the community.
- Teri Smiley, Starfish Partnerships

5:00 – 6:00pm **Tour of Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library & Museum**
We'll take a short walk from the hotel to visit the museum to retrace the inspiring journey of our 28th president. You'll have a chance to tour through seven galleries which explore Wilson's early years, his eventful presidency, suffrage, prohibition, and World War I.

6:00 – 6:30pm **RECEPTION** **The 1924 Lounge – Hotel Lobby**
You'll receive one drink ticket for beer or wine, and the bar will be open for other cocktails, as well.

6:30 – 8:30pm **NETWORKING DINNER** **Colonnade Ballroom**
Join us for a fun evening of networking with your peers!

Friday, March 21, 2025 – Hotel 24 South – Staunton, VA

7:45am **CHAMBER TOPIC BREAKFAST** **Colonnade Ballroom**
Sit at a table with the chamber topic of most interest – come prepared to share best practices!
Sponsored by Virginia Talent + Opportunity Partnerships (V-TOP)

8:30 – 9:00am **KEYNOTE SESSION** **Ballroom – Salon A/B**
Taking Your Internship to the Next Level
A candid conversation about internships and work-based learning strategies in Virginia.
- Dr. Alisha Bazemore, Virginia Talent + Opportunity Partnership (V-TOP)
- Ashley Crute, Virginia Talent + Opportunity Partnership (V-TOP)

9:00 – 11:00am **CLOSING KEYNOTE WORKSHOP** **Ballroom – Salon A/B**
AI Revolution in Chamber Management: Empowering Engagement, Efficiency, and Growth
Explore how AI is transforming chambers of commerce and revolutionizing member engagement, operational efficiency, and community growth. Drawing from extensive experience working directly with chambers across the country, Zach Giglio will present real-world, practical use cases—proven strategies that have successfully been implemented to enhance chamber operations. This session will move beyond theory, focusing on actionable solutions that are already helping chambers streamline tasks, improve member relationships, and scale multi-channel marketing efforts. Attendees will gain insight into the challenges chambers face when adopting AI, and how those challenges can be overcome to deliver measurable results. Whether you're just starting to explore AI or looking for new ways to expand its role, this session provides tangible examples and hands-on guidance to help your chamber thrive.
- Zach Giglio, GCM

11:00am **CLOSING REMARKS & DOOR PRIZES** **Ballroom – Salon A/B**