



News Release

Contact: Lisa Meriwether
Tourism Manager, Danville Office of Economic Development & Tourism
434-793-1753

Monday, July 29, 2024

City unveils sports tourism strategic plan

The Huddle Up Group, in collaboration with the Danville Office of Economic Development & Tourism, unveiled its research and recommendations for the City's sports tourism strategic plan on July 25. Through the creation of a strategic plan, or "playbook", the regional tourism brand, Visit SoSi, aims to strengthen its position among sports tourism destinations in the region and develop a framework for its marketing efforts.

The project kicked off in September of 2023, in which the Visit SoSi team completed the Sports Tourism Index, a first-of-its kind tool developed to help destinations benchmark and evaluate their position in the sports tourism market against regional and national standards. In November, the Huddle Up Group presented its goals for the strategic plan through a Sports Tourism Strategic Planning Meeting at the Institute for Advanced Learning & Research.

The strategic plan development process included phone interviews, electronic surveys, an in-person market visit in November, and site visits of 27 sports and event venues, including: Angler's Park, Averett University, Ballou Park, Dan Daniels Park, George Washington High School, Hargrave Military Academy, the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research, Olde Dominion Agricultural Complex, Smith River Sports Complex, and VIRgna International Raceway.

"Throughout the process, we have seen great participation from not only the staff at Visit SoSi, but also from stakeholders throughout Pittsylvania County," says Jon Schmeider, Founder and CEO, Huddle Up Group. "With that level of cooperation, the Danville area is in a great position to solidify itself as a strong sports tourism destination. We believe it is within the power of the community's sports stakeholders to capture more opportunities in the sports tourism market while also enriching the lives of its citizens."



Formed in 2012, the Huddle Up Group is a sports tourism, marketing, venue, and event consulting company, based in Phoenix, Arizona. The consulting firm has experience in working with volunteer boards, donors, elected officials, hospitality community leaders, and various corporate partners.

“This is an exciting time for Danville and the entire region,” says Danish Saadat, Virginia Tourism Cooperation, National Sales & Marketing Manager. “With the strategic plan provided by The Huddle Up Group in collaboration with the Danville Office of Economic Development & Tourism, Danville will be able to make calculated decisions to become a serious player in the sports tourism market. Sports tourism in 2022 accounted for nearly 8% of Virginia's overall visitor economy, directly contributing \$2.4 billion in visitor spending, while generating a total \$2.7 billion in direct spending. That spending was driven by 12.1 million sports travelers who participated in tournaments or attended other sports related events in Virginia.”

To view the final strategic plan, click here: <https://www.visitsosi.com/sports/sports-strategic-plan/>.

###

About the Danville Office of Economic Development & Tourism

The Danville Office of Economic Development & Tourism is responsible for leading the city of Danville’s tourism efforts by branding and promoting the city and Pittsylvania County to differentiate it from other regional competitors through advertising, promotions, trade events, and visitor experience initiatives to stimulate economic growth for the region. To learn more about the Visit SoSi brand and regional attractions, visit <https://www.visitsosi.com/>.