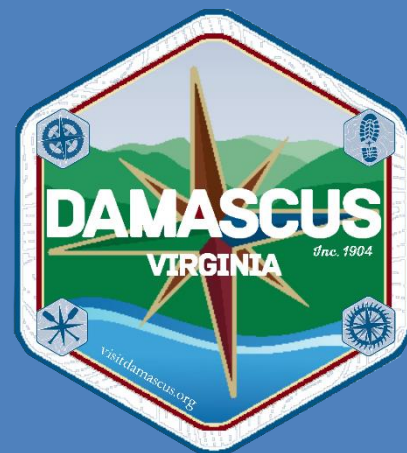


Trail Town Tribune

"THE FRIENDLIEST TOWN ON THE TRAIL"

DECEMBER 2019



IN THIS ISSUE

TOWN NEWS

As part of the Damascus Comprehensive Plan update process, the Damascus Planning Commission and Mount Rogers Planning District Commission have prepared a Damascus Community Survey for residents to fill out. This survey is used to collect as much useful information from the community as possible to be utilized as we update the umbrella plan for the community's future development path. The Comprehensive Plan is an important document that describes the past and present and envisions the future. We want everyone to share their voice during this process - your first opportunity is today - please complete the survey as soon as possible. Be sure to ask friends, family and neighbors to complete the survey as well!

To fill out the survey, click [HERE](https://visitdamascus.org), or go to visitdamascus.org, then select the Resources tab in the menu bar and select Projects in Town. Once there click the survey link under the Comprehensive Plan Update 2020 to fill out your survey!

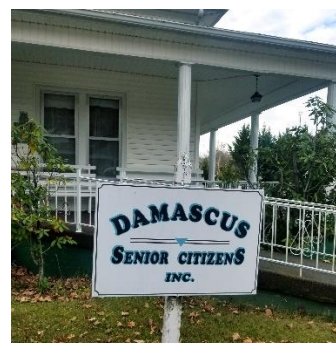
*Update:

Comprehensive Plan Update - the first chapters are in review, but still pending information from the community surveys and SWOT analysis. The survey for the Damascus businesses has already received many responses. Target date for the update to be presented for adoption is June 2020. The next big step in the process is to hold the SWOT (Strengths - Weaknesses - Opportunities - Threats) analysis on Nov. 12, 2019 - all are welcome!



TRAIL TOWN CHRISTMAS

Page #4



DAMASCUS SENIOR CENTER

Page #7

FYI

ATC TRAIL CENTER

As part of an Appalachian Regional Commission Power grant awarded in the fall of 2016 to Friends of SWVA, the Town of Damascus will be constructing a new trail center on West Laurel Avenue across from the Town Hall. The Town is partnering with the Appalachian Trail Conservancy as the primary tenant for the new trail center. The construction costs for the new trail center will be around \$689,000.

The Trail center will support visitor information, exhibits on the neighboring trails and assets and training seminars. The trail center will serve as the anchor piece for downtown businesses and recreational assets such as the Appalachian Trail, Virginia Creeper Trail and public parks.

Through this project the town of Damascus will further secure its namesake as "Trail Town USA."

**Update:* Sealed bids for construction of the Trail center were received and opened on Dec. 3rd, and the Town intends to pursue a

contract with the low bidder. Estimated time for completion from estimated start date of Jan. 1 is 150 (end of May 2020).

DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION

The Damascus Downtown Revitalization is a Department of Housing and Community Development funded project including over \$654,000 of grant funding, nearly \$180,000 of private match, and over \$89,000 of local match - about \$34,000 of which the Community Pathways Project, managed by the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, is directly responsible for raising; in total, this project is worth over \$950,000 of investment in the Damascus downtown. Through this project, the Town will acquire 1 property in the heart of downtown for current use and future economic development.

This project will create a Downtown Connector which includes 1000 LF of existing corridor improvements and 500 LF of new ADA corridor construction linking the Creeper Trail, Appalachian Trail, and Laurel Creek waterfront assets together.

Its project will utilize the Economic Restructuring Plan of the Town to implement a way-finding system, including new signage, and initiate usage of the Town's new branding system, as well as, improve business facades through a 50:50 match program implemented by the Town.

Outcomes of this project will provide a means for the Town to recapture about \$29 million dollars in leakage from the primary trade area, connect over 150,000 cyclists on the Creeper Trail to the downtown and will attract 4,300 motorists daily to visit our downtown.

This project also enabled the town to acquire a property for the development of the Appalachian Trail Center of Damascus, and create an overall safer, more friendly and inviting Town for residents and adventurers.

**Update:* Bid date for the trail section along Shady Ave is scheduled for January 17, 2020.

For more information go to www.visitdamascus.org

LAUREL CREEK TRAIL & PARK

(THE DAMASCUS WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE)

The Damascus Waterfront Development Initiative is a construction project that the Town applied to the Appalachian Regional Commission for funds to implement. On April 18, 2016, the governor announced funding for the project. The Town applied to ARC for nearly \$499,908, utilizing over \$1 million in match from the Downtown Revitalization project and from private investment by a local business and stakeholder in the project. Through this project the Town will expand the Downtown Connector corridor into what is being called the "Laurel Creek Trail," redesign and develop a local access roadway to key property the Town will acquire through agreement with a local stakeholder as part of this project, create a "green-space" and construct an amphitheater to host events, build infrastructure key to the development of the Appalachian Trail Center of Damascus, and increase capacity to support growth and prosperity of the downtown business district.

Through this project, necessary public facilities and amenities will be improved and constructed to support the needs of businesses and citizens.



OPPORTUNITIES HOUSING ASSISTANCE

The Town has initially received \$3,000 to hold a public hearing and complete initial surveying of housing conditions within the town limits. Once those initial products are submitted to the Department of Housing and Community Development, we are hopeful that we will be awarded an additional \$30,000 to create a plan for providing for the housing needs of the community. These plans generally turn into housing rehabilitation projects, which are phased out into as many as are needed to address the housing stock within the community.

These rehab programs are applicable to low-to-moderate income

households, and to property owners that agree to rent to low-to-moderate income individuals for a certain number of years following any work being done to the house. Type of work and amount of work being completed depends on the type of house and the condition of structure - in some cases demolition and new construction are an option if the house is deemed more costly to repair than to construction a new house. Updates to electrical hookups, plumbing, etc. are also part of the program.

We need as much input and participation as possible at these meetings in order to validate community support and need once we apply for additional funding to make these improvements.

*Update

DHCD Planning Grant - The Mount Rogers PDC submitted the initial Planning Grant products to DHCD on Oct. 18 and in preparing to begin the strategic planning process once the full \$30,000 has been awarded to the town following completion of the initial award.

A TRAIL TOWN CHRISTMAS

SANTA WILLIAM

William McKee became Santa for the first time when a lifelong resident of Damascus Vernon Waters asked him to fill in one fall day, more than twenty years ago. Waters had filled the role of Santa in Damascus and the surrounding region for 44 years until his health would impede on the tradition, calling on a new Santa, Santa William. "I had never considered wearing the red suit and portraying this iconic figure in history," said McKee, so naturally he asked Waters for a couple of days to think it over.

McKee decided to give it a try, and twenty-one years later he is still portraying Santa and bringing joy to the children of Damascus and the surrounding region.

William McKee, or better known as Santa William, has always had a soft spot for Damascus given his roots. He is a graduate of Holston High School and is an active member of the Damascus community by portraying Santa Claus in the Towns Annual Trail Town Christmas Parade. Santa William says it is his honor and a great privilege to continue the Santa tradition where Mr. Waters left off. "I have always viewed Damascus through a touch of rose-colored glasses," said Santa William "seeing it as much like the fictitious Mayberry."

When we asked Santa what advice he would give to the children of Damascus, his answer was nothing short of pure

hope and empathy. "Children grow up too fast in today's money, greed and technology driven society. Childhood is very special and should be guarded for the sake of all children. If I had one power, I would make sure every child on planet Earth had a roof over their head, food on the table, a warm bed to sleep and dream, and family and friends to protect and love them. I would also make sure every child received a gift that they could cherish."



Be sure to stop by and see Santa immediately following the Trail Town Christmas Parade on December 6th in the Fire Hall.

Also, don't miss out on the Damascus Loves Dogs Holiday Costume Contest that takes place during the Trail Town Christmas Parade, Friday December 6. The contest will have three judges and the costumes are judged based on best overall costume, which includes showmanship, humor, originality, design and color, and creative presentation. Winners will be awarded at the Fire Hall within 30 minutes after the parade. To enter your pup in the parade contact clerk@visitdamascus.org.



Santa William and Mrs. Claus

SANTA WILLIAM

Trail Town Christmas

December 6, 2019

VISIT SANTA AFTER THE PARADE
208 West Laurel Avenue



Trail Town Christmas 2018

TOWN BUSINESSES

2019 DAMASCUS BUSINESS GROUP MEMBERS



ADVENTURE DAMASCUS

www.adventuredamascus.com
128 W. Laurel Ave.
276-475-6262



ALONG FOR THE RIDE

www.alongfortherideva.com
415 Douglas Dr.
512-971-4961



ALPHA REALTY & AUCTION - ATTI

https://alpharealtyauction.com
https://appalachianrailtowninn.com
100 South Railroad Ave.
276-475-3838



BB&T - DAMASCUS BRANCH

www.bbt.com
202 W. Laurel Ave.
276-475-3112



BIKES & BOOTS COTTAGES

www.bikesandbootscottages.wix.com/bikesandboots
206 E. Creepers Way
336-689-1865



CRAZY LARRY'S HOSTEL

FB@CrazyLarrysHostel
209 Douglas Dr.
276-475-7130



CREEPER TRAIL COTTAGES

www.creepercottage.com
539 Adkins St.
276-451-8342



DAMASCUS BREWERY

www.thedamascusbrewery.com
32173 Government Rd.
276-469-1069



DAMASCUS CABINS

www.damascuscabins.com
127 Imboden St.
276-492-1040



DAMASCUS INN

www.damascusinn.com
215 W. Imboden St.
276-475-3745



DAMASCUS MOTOR SALES

www.damascusmotorsales.com
786 N. Beaverdam Ave.
276-475-3641



DANCING BEAR B&B

www.dancingbearrentals.com
203 E. Laurel Ave.
423-571-1830



HIKERS INN

www.hikersindamascus.com
216 E. Laurel Ave.
276-475-3788



LAUREL RUN CABINS

www.laurelruncabins.com
22405 Jeb Stuart Hwy.
336-362-1372



LITTLE BITS BAKING CO. & PROVISIONS

FB@littlebitsofdamascus
124 E. Laurel Ave.
276-623-7656



MOJO'S TRAILSIDE CAF

FB@MojosTrailsideCafe
331 Douglas Dr. #B
276-475-5505



MOUNTAIN LAUREL INN

www.mountainlaurelinn.com
22750 Jeb Stuart Hwy.
276-475-8822



OMA'S COTTAGE

www.omascottage.us
826 S. Beaverdam Ave.
276-451-8342



7 TRAILS GRILL

FB@7TrailsGrill
338 Douglas Dr.
276-415-7777



SUNDOG OUTFITTER

www.sundogoutfitter.com
331 Douglas Dr. #3
276-475-6252



THE DUCK HOUSE

www.damascusduckhouse.com
210 N. Reynolds St.
804-307-6641



THE DUCK NEST

www.damascusduckhouse.com
203 N. Legion St.
804-307-6641



THE LAUREL HOUSE

laurelhousedamascus.com
103 E. Laurel Ave.
405-760-5930



TRAILHEAD DESIGNS

FB@TrailHeadScreenPrinting
331D Douglas Dr.
276-492-5828



VIRGINIA CREEPER LODGE

www.virginiacreeperlodge.com
702 N. Beaverdam Ave.
276-451-0550



WASH. CO LIBRARY - DAMASCUS BRANCH

www.wcpl.net
310 Water St.
276-475-3820



WICKED CHICKEN WINGHOUSE & TAVERN

FB@Wicked-Chicken-Winghouse-Tavern-37267383995144/
409 Fritz St.
276-475-7400

The Damascus Business Group (DBG) is a selection of Damascus's finest, a partnership developed between local businesses and the Town in the pursuit of making all of our various products and assets – cultural and recreational – accessible to as many adventurers as possible.

The DBG offers a multitude of various goods and services, ranging from bike and shuttle services to antiques, consignment shops, boutiques, restaurants, cafes and coffee houses, breweries, cabins, B&B's, inns, hair stylists, authentic arts and crafts, and more! The group even includes two of our finest realtors for those who want to settle down in beautiful Damascus!

The DBG was developed in 2014 to promote communication between the private sector and local government of Damascus in the effort to build a stronger marketing capacity for the Town. The Damascus Economic Restructuring Plan, developed for the Town in 2015, positions the DBG to focus on marketing first, with business communication and networking second.

Damascus First Place Winners

2019 BEST OF WASHINGTON COUNTY

BEST BAKERY | [JOE THE BAKER](#)

BICYCLE STORE/RENTAL | [ADVENTURE DAMASCUS](#)

BREAKFAST | [DAMASCUS DINER](#)

CAMPGROUND | [BEARTREE CAMPGROUND](#)

COFFEE SHOP | [MOJO'S TRAILSIDE CAFÉ AND COFFEE](#)

NEW RESTAURANT | [7 TRAILS GRILL](#)

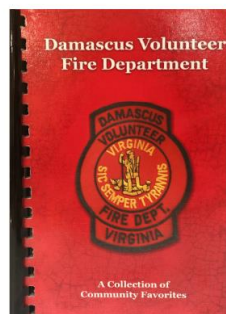
USED AUTO DEALER | [DAMASCUS MOTOR SALES](#)

VETERINARY | [FISHER HOLLOW VETERINARY CLINIC](#)

AVAILABLE AT DAMASCUS TOWN HALL!

208 W. LAUREL AVE.

This cookbook is in dedication to all the men and women who serve or have served their community as a Volunteer Firefighter, EMS Personnel, or Police Officer. Thank you for all your work and dedication.



\$15.00

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

Doris Jean Hash, originally from Stokesdale, NC has had a very interesting career; she worked at the FBI Fingerprint Division for eleven years, then on to leadership positions at the Bank of Damascus. After retiring from the Bank in 1994 she would then become the Director of the Damascus Senior Citizens Inc. where she served in this role from 1994 to 2019. Some of Doris' favorite memories from her role as Director include the Famous Bean Dinners, Saturday Morning Quilting, Day of Caring, Easter Egg Hunt in the park and Traveling with the Seniors Band to nursing homes across the region.

Doris says what she will miss making the daily arrangements and work schedule. Staying an active member, Doris attends each Wednesday's functions, sharing a meal and talking with other members. "I still carry a great love for my seniors," Doris says as she recounts her time at the Damascus Senior Center Inc. As for the future, Doris says she will take it one day at a time and do as much as possible and fill each day and

says, "I have no regrets and would live each day over without making any changes."

Sally Johnson, appointed the new Director of the Damascus Senior Center Inc. in May of 2019, got her start at the Center when her mother, also a member, convinced her to become a volunteer. Johnson, a retired Probation & Parole officer previously volunteered after her retirement as the Market Manager of the Damascus Farmers Market and management of the Alvarado Creeper Trail Café. Johnson says the role does come with its challenges, and one of those challenges includes the budget. The budget is a constant concern for the Damascus Senior Center Inc. says Johnson, "We operate with limited funds and our fundraising by our members and volunteers helps us tremendously."

Johnson says the new role has given her the chance to learn more about the growing number of seniors, including their careers and their life in Damascus, as a lot of them have moved here to retire. Looking ahead, Johnson says that the Center is tentatively planning a town-wide Birthday Party for all Damascus citizens over the age of 90, along with the first Annual Damascus Health Fair, which is in the early stages of

development. The Center is also planning a special holiday party for their volunteers who keeps the Damascus Senior Center Inc. moving forward, who Johnson says without they could not operate.



OUTREACH

RECOVERY FOR DAMASCUS

Damascus United Methodist Church

202 E. Laurel Ave.
Damascus VA, 24236
Sunday Nights at 6PM

Free Music and Food!

A short twelve step lesson and small share groups will meet in the Fellowship Hall.

Support Groups will include: Anger Management, Co-Dependency, Depression, Divorce, Eating Disorders, Gambling, Grief, Parenting, Sexual Addiction, Substance Addiction and Teen Anxiety

DAMASCUS HISTORY TOUR

WITH RICHARD SMITH



The Damascus History Tour is slowly taking shape. We interviewed Richard Smith, who initiated the effort, to get his ideas on where the project is now.

“First thing to know,” he says, “is that this is a group effort. It is a town project. Many people are involved, such as all the contributors who add something of our history, the folks at Trailhead Designs, Bob Craig who builds the framework for the signs, and town maintenance who does the actual installation.”

We asked what the purpose of this “history tour” is. “There is a lot of places in town that are not immediately identifiable, and there is a lot of our history that is slowly fading from memory. So, I wanted

to capture something about these places,” Smith said. “For example, there are some old concrete ruins around, and when I asked not many people knew what they were. So, we wanted to explain them, talk about the old water tank where the train took on water, talk about the concrete channel under Trestle 16 that took water to the town’s first electric plant.”

We asked how many informational signs are proposed and how many are built. “We are ready to put up our eighth sign, Electricity Comes to Damascus,” he says. This will be the next week or two. Then we have a history and photos of Laurel Avenue through the years. After that is Legion Island and some classic Damascus homes. Total for the first stage will be 11 or 12 signs.”

What happens after that, we asked. “We want to create both paper and online maps for people,” Smith says. “We’ll be looking for new kinds of volunteers, those with social media and coding skills. It would be great to have our history accessible to someone who wants to walk or bike

around town and learn our history.”

I asked him which informational signs were his favorites. “All of them,” he answered. “But the Churches of Damascus, and Founders of Damascus, and the Old Mill, and the newest, Trails of Damascus, Rock School are all great. And if you feel like the walk, go out to the old chemical plant grounds and read about what was there and look at the old photos.”



LOCAL EVENTS

DAMASCUS PUBLIC LIBRARY

Matinee Movies

3rd Wednesday of the month at 12:30PM

Murder Club

4h Thursday of the month at 7:00PM

Adult DIY

2nd Tuesday of the month at 4:00PM

Steam Projects for Homeschoolers

1st Monday of the month at 11:00PM

**For the month of December, the Damascus Public Library will be providing gift bags for children 12 years or younger.*

RHEA VALLEY ELEMENTARY

December 12, 2019 | 6PM
PTA Christmas Program
31305 Rhea Valley Rd,
Meadowview, VA 24361

HOLSTON HIGH SCHOOL

December 12, 2019 | 7PM
Band and Chorus Concert
21308 Monroe Rd,
Damascus, VA 24236

Hope Closet

December 7
9AM-1PM
Damascus FBC

Morrison & Perkins LIVE

December 7 | 8PM
@ 7 Trails Grill

2nd Annual Ugly Sweater Christmas Party

December 14, 8PM-11:55PM
@ 7 Trails Grill

Holston Holiday 5K

December 21st
For more info call
276.696.1214

Trivia Night

Tuesday Nights | 7:30PM
@ 7 Trails Grill

Recovery for Damascus

Sunday nights | 6PM
Damascus UMC

Damascus Senior Center

Open Wednesdays
8:30AM-12:30PM
60+ encouraged to join the fun with food and fellowship.

New Year's Eve Party

Tuesday | December 31
8PM
7 Trails Grill

TRAIL TOWN CHRISTMAS PARADE



FRIDAY, DEC 6 AT 7PM

210 WEST LAUREL AVENUE

Santa will be at the Damascus Fire Department after the Parade.



DEC. 21 AT 1PM

ROCK SCHOOL AUDITORIUM CHRISTMAS SPECTACULAR

Benefit Concerts

**MORGAN WADE
& FRIENDS**

CHRISTMAS SPECTACULAR

B E N E F I T S H O W

DECEMBER 21 @ 1PM

**ROCK SCHOOL AUDITORIUM
505 S SHADY AVE, DAMASCUS, VA**

**BENEFITING THE REBUILDING OF THE
CREEPER TRAIL COTTAGES' PAVILION AND STAGE**

**SUGGESTED DONATION
\$10-\$20**

**FOOD & DRINK AVAILABLE
FOR PURCHASE**

FEATURING

**MORGAN WADE
DAVID CHILDERS
JP PARSONS
MR. NOBODY & THE EXTRAS
GRACIE LANE
ADAM BOLT
FLATTOP MIKE**

DAMASCUS POLICE DEPT. COLLECTOR COIN



ON SALE AT THE
DAMASCUS TOWN
HALL AND POLICE
DEPARTMENT

COINS ARE \$12 EACH
SHIPPING PRICE ADD \$5



DAMASCUS, CROSSING PATHS



IRON
ON PATCHES

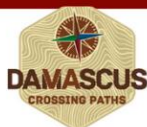
COME GET YOUR IRON ON
PATCHES AT THE
DAMASCUS, VA TOWN HALL.

PRICE - \$3
SHIPPING - PRICE + \$1



DAMASCUS, VA BAG TAGS

AT THE DAMASCUS, VA
TOWN HALL
PRICE - \$ 2
SHIPPING - PRICE + \$1.5



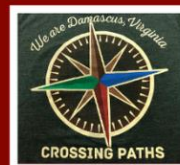
DAMASCUS, VA T-SHIRTS

On sale at the Town Hall



GET YOUR VERY OWN
DAMASCUS
T-SHIRT AND SHOW
YOUR LOVE FOR THE
FRIENDLIEST TOWN
ON THE TRAIL!

SHIRT PRICE \$15
SHIPPING PRICE ADD \$6



HIKER TO TRAIL/ TO TOWN CUSTOM BANDANAS



HIKER BANDANAS AVAILABLE NOW AT THE
DAMASCUS, VA TOWN HALL.
PRICE - \$5
SHIPPING - PRICE + \$2.5

**Available for purchase at
the Damascus
Town Hall!**

TOWN OF DAMASCUS REGULAR SCHEDULED MEETINGS

Town Council Meeting	1 st Monday of each Month	7:00PM
Parks & Rec./Trail Days Committee	2 nd Monday of each Month	6:30PM
(AS CALLED) Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA)	4 th Monday of each Month	6:00PM
(AS CALLED) Finance, Budget, and Admin	Last Monday of each Month	7:00PM
Downtown Revitalization Management Team	1 st Tuesday of each Month	6:00PM
Public Works Committee	2 nd Tuesday of each Month	5:00PM
(AS CALLED) Planning Commission	2 nd Tuesday of each Month	6:00PM

DAMASCUS VIRGINIA TOWN HALL

208 West Laurel Ave
P.O. Box 576
Damascus, VA 24236

SUBMISSION:

To promote better communication within our community, from us to you, and to foster excitement and support for all events and developments in Damascus, the Town of Damascus would like to invite you to sign up for our rising newsletter. If you have ideas for stories feel free to submit them to the following email and we will take them into consideration. clerk@visitdamascus.org.