

Hanover Monthly

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Ashland Train Day – On Track for a Day of Fun and Surprises

by Steve Cook



According to Louise Keeton, director of operations for the Downtown Ashland Association, everything is on track for another fun-filled Ashland Train Day – the 22nd anniversary, by the way. This year, the celebration of all things railroad will be held throughout Ashland’s quaint, picturesque downtown on Saturday, April 25 from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m.

“Ashland was built around the tracks,” says Keeton, “it only makes sense to have an entire celebration of the industry that created this town.”

So, what are some of the attractions scheduled for this year’s festivities? For



starters, Keeton says the food court will be centralized in the Downtown Municipal Parking Lot and will feature the nation’s longest Railroad Mural by Ed Trask. Enjoy the artwork while feasting on mouthwatering flavors from such vendors as Strawberry Street, Wild >>>

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Bill's Sodas, and Mason's Famous Lobster Rolls. Cool off with local favorites like Farm-view Creamery and Good Vices Ices.

Kids of all ages can "Touch a Truck" including fire trucks, dump trucks, and even the big rigs. The popular Kid Zone will be back and will feature two (count-em. Two!) bounce houses.

Head on over to the Ashland Town Hall and shop for railroad memorabilia and other local arts and crafts. Food and business vendors will be located along South Railroad Avenue, and will be taking up the whole Hanover Arts and Activities Center Lawn, as well.

Of course, what's a Train Day without trains? Model train enthusiasts will be delighted to see everything from mini locomotives to racing railcars. There will be model trains of every size and style, including Lego layouts, vintage railroad equipment, and, of course, a classic red caboose!



Once again, Tiny Tim's Trains & Toys will be sponsoring their fun scavenger hunt, which includes a chance to win prizes.

A variety of entertainment will be offered at several locations throughout downtown. The Hanover Concert Band will be making music on the Hanover Arts and Activities Center Lawn at 11 a.m. while Center Street Sound Company keeps family-friendly favorites blasting from the Town Hall Pavilion Stage.



Ashland Dance Academy will be touring their Choo Choo Boogie all around town, making a special dance appearance in front of the Virtual Railfan cameras, which will allow Train Day fans around the world to enjoy the day Center of the Universe style.

And while free shuttlebus service will be offered from designated parking lots, wouldn't it be super fun to roll into town on

a train? Amtrak is offering Train Day specials. Visit Amtrak.com for details.

"We are always trying to bring more ways for people to experience what it means to be a train town," Keeton says. Make your plans now to get on board for Ashland Train Day 2026!

For more information including links to Amtrak and the Virtual Railfans Cam, visit online at AshlandTrainDay.com.

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CREATING YOUR OWN BACKYARD OASIS

by Steve Cook

If a man's (or woman's) home is their castle, then what does that make the backyard? Certainly, if one's home offers sanctuary, privacy, and a place of enjoyment, one should be able to take those personal pleasures to the outdoors.

Imagine your backyard as a beautiful extension of your personal sanctuary. You can start small and let that oasis develop progressively. Make a list. Perhaps outdoor furniture would be at the top of that list. Now, imagine the enjoyment you'll be sharing when you invite your friends to an event on the patio. This oasis can provide a perfect retreat in warm weather, and such additions as a firepit or an outdoor fireplace will allow you to enjoy your backyard virtually year round.

Flipping burgers on the grill may be your ultimate idea of a backyard feast. However, maybe you desire to up your game by incorporating a full outdoor kitchen into your ultimate oasis.

Throw in landscaping, lighting, pavers, and more – and voila! Your backyard becomes your personal oasis. Consider these options.

HAVE A SEAT

Mixing and matching your outdoor furniture is a fun, creative way to show off your tastes. Diversity may be at the top of your list, but consistency in color and/or texture serves to create a cohesive look.



FEEL THE WARMTH

Having an outdoor heater allows you to make the most of your patio throughout the year. Whether you choose a propane, electric, or natural gas heater, you will want to consider not only your personal preferences but what will work best in the space you will be using.

NOW WE'RE COOKING

As you plan your outdoor kitchen, consider your space, functionality, and personal lifestyle. Is a hotdog with a bun your perfect outdoor dining preference or are you a true foodie who wants to display your gourmet prowess? There are virtually limitless options but consider carefully just how you intend to use the space. Gas, electric, charcoal, infrared, and teppanyaki grills along with smokers, pizza ovens, and burners support the creativity of any chef – amateur or pro.



LET THEIR BE LIGHT

Let your oasis sparkle with creative and functional lighting. Illuminate your trees, shrubbery, and flowers with landscape lighting. Your guests will be aglow with excitement when your outdoor lighting comes to life as the sun sinks slowly in the west.

For even more ideas on how to enjoy your personal backyard oasis, visit our website HanoverMonthly.com.





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WHO IS IT FOR?
This countywide specialized transportation service is for residents of Hanover County, ages 65+, or those with a short-term or long-term disability.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

- Rides are scheduled 24 hours in advance by phone or on the DASH App.**
- \$5 fee for one-way trip.
- Wheelchair accessible vehicles are available.

WHERE CAN IT TAKE ME?

- Medical appointments including Hunter Holmes McGuire VA Medical Center and the Medical Offices at Stony Point
- Employment
- Personal business such as grocery shopping, banking, or attending social and recreational programs.
- Hanover County government buildings
- Within the County's defined service area, which includes the entire county and a 7-mile area beyond the county boundary.

WHEN DOES IT RUN?
Monday-Sunday, 6 a.m.-6 p.m.

HOW CAN I GET STARTED?

- Call 804-365-3274 (DASH) to apply.
- Visit HanoverDASH.org for more information.

Hanover DASH is funded in part by Hanover County, as well as by state and federal funding from the Virginia Department of Rail & Public Transportation. Hanover County is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participation in, or denied the benefits of, its transit services on the basis of race, color or national origin, as protected by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. In accordance with requirements of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), Hanover County will not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities on the basis of disability in its services, programs, or activities. For additional information on Hanover County's non-discrimination and ADA policies and procedures, or to file a complaint, please visit the website at www.HanoverDASH.org or contact, the Director of Community Resources, P.O. Box 470, Hanover, VA 23069.

**Once approved for eligibility, all ride requests and scheduling will be handled directly by UZURV, the county's contracted ride service.

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Hanover DASH

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From the Pantry

CRISPY POTATO CHIPS

Potatoes in any form are the ultimate side dish, but these homemade potato chips are salty, crunchy, and just hit the spot. We made ours with the basics: salt, pepper and olive oil, but they are easy to customize. Old Bay seasoning, fresh rosemary, or smoked paprika are some great additions. These are perfect for a quick and easy side dish all year long. *Cindy*



INGREDIENTS:

- 4 russet potatoes
- Olive oil
- Salt and pepper

DIRECTIONS:

Preheat oven to 400 degrees (you can also easily make these in an air fryer or toaster oven). Slice the potatoes to your desired thickness. Cover both sides of each chip with olive oil and your desired seasonings. Place them on a sheet pan without overlapping. Bake for 10-15 minutes, flipping halfway through. Enjoy while hot and fresh and with your favorite dipping sauce.



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