



# VIEW*S* & VISIONS

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## The Gateway to the Shenandoah Valley

The Honorable George Karos, Mayor  
City of Martinsburg, West Virginia

The Honorable George Karos was re-elected to his fifth term as mayor of the City of Martinsburg in June 2016. He served on City Council for 26 consecutive years.

Karos was the owner/operator of Patterson's Drug Store until his retirement in 2015.

In addition to civic awards from numerous organizations, he was also awarded "Small Businessman of the Year," by the Martinsburg-Berkeley County Chamber of Commerce in 2005. In 2007, he was named "Mayor of the Year" by the West Virginia Municipal League, and "Public Official of the Year" by Main Street Martinsburg in May 2009.

Karos is a native of Martinsburg, attended Shepherd College and received his bachelor's degree in pharmacy from the Medical College of Virginia School of Pharmacy. Prior to receiving his degree, he served in the United States Navy as a hospital corpsman with the rank of 3/C Petty Officer.

He serves as president of the West Virginia Board of Pharmacy, and holds positions on a variety of civic boards and commissions in the community.

Martinsburg is widely known as the "Gateway to the Shenandoah Valley" and for its small town charm. As the county seat of Berkeley County, the city has welcomed new and potential business and industry, resulting in successful economic development opportunities.

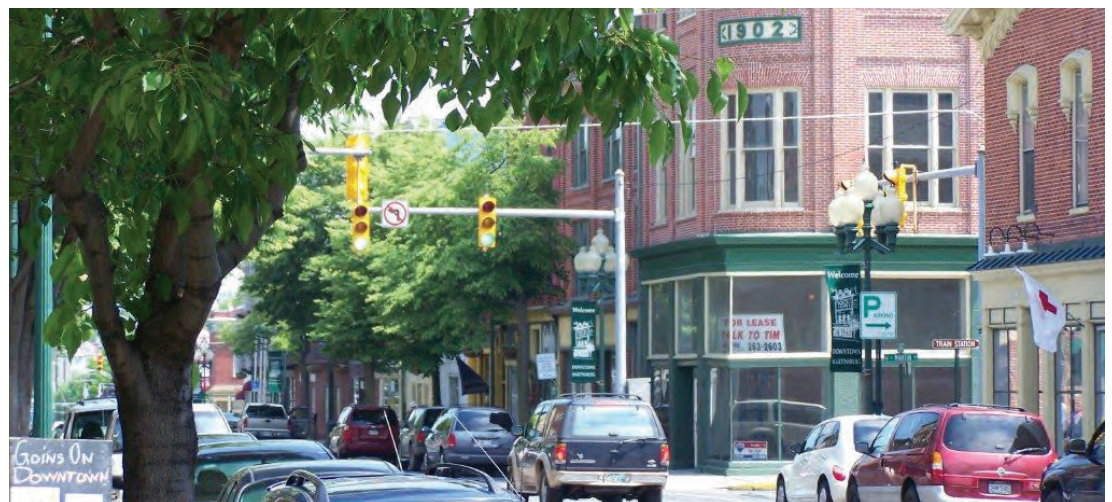
Martinsburg is blessed by our proximity to the Washington, D.C., and Baltimore, Maryland, metropolitan areas. The North/South I-81 corridor, new East/West Route 9 and the recent construction of the Raleigh Street Extension provides for an excellent transportation corridor to attract new business and industry. Several industrial parks located along the I-81 corridor, overseen by the Berkeley County Development Authority and the Eastern West Virginia Airport Authority, continue to flourish with new and existing industry and warehousing.

The recent economic and population growth has allowed Martinsburg to benefit in other ways. A new shopping center is planned for the west side of I-81, the Foxcroft Towne Center continues to redevelop with outparcels consisting of new retailers and restaurants, a new hotel was



constructed on Foxcroft Avenue, and office space continues to be developed with an emphasis on federal facilities.

The recent announcement of Procter & Gamble locating in Berkeley County will have a direct impact on Martinsburg's economy. Construction activity will benefit our local retail stores, hotels and restaurants. Future employees will provide an additional tax base to the region as they find new housing opportunities and become members of our community.



*Downtown Martinsburg, West Virginia*





*Clockwise from left: the ARTS Centre, the Caperton Train Station, the Belle Boyd House*

Historic downtown Martinsburg also continues to see redevelopment as several buildings have recently been purchased by new owners. New developments have come in technology, retail, services and restaurants.

The City of Martinsburg continues to play a role in economic development as well. The city recently renovated the Town Square; contributed to the “For the Kids, by George” Children’s Museum; commenced the Train Station Corridor Project; conducted North Queen Street underpass improvements; and, worked on the King and Church Street Stormwater Project, to name a few. These public improvements will assist in attracting new businesses and retaining existing businesses.

The city also became a home rule city in 2015. One initiative was enacting the passage of the one percent sales tax. This new economic revenue generator will allow the city to continue to provide essential

services to our community as well as complete public improvement projects.

The implementation of the sales tax will also create a funding source for the city to move forward in creating an Economic Development Authority and hiring an economic development director. The city envisions this process to be completed in fiscal year 2016-2017.

Along with new growth and economic development, the city will continue to address and meet the challenges of adequate transportation improvements, stormwater management, water and sewer improvements, public improvement projects and tourism opportunities. Meeting these challenges will allow for new economic development opportunities, housing and job creation.

In addition to the city’s economic development initiatives, we will continue

to partner with the Berkeley County Development Authority, Eastern West Virginia Regional Airport Authority, the Martinsburg-Berkeley County Chamber of Commerce, Main Street Martinsburg, Berkeley County Council, Shepherd University and Blue Ridge Community Technical College in our economic development efforts.

The City of Martinsburg looks forward to being a part of the growth of this region, providing our residents with an attractive quality of life with plentiful historic sites, tourist attractions, recreation options and higher education opportunities.

The City of Martinsburg invites you to visit our community to experience the Eastern Panhandle for yourself. ❧