



What's New in Kentucky

Arts & Culture

Traveling art exhibit focuses on Native Americans in Kentucky — Team Kentucky, the Kentucky Arts Council, the Kentucky Native American Heritage Commission and the Kentucky Heritage Council worked together to invite American Indians living in Kentucky to share their visual art. A panel of American Indians and experts on Native American heritage selected works to include and the result is this amazing collection. The exhibit will be on display through May 2025. Each month the pieces will move to the new location. Locations include Somerset, Erlanger, Murray, Berea, Corbin and Henderson.

<http://www.kentuckymonthly.com/events/Native%20Reflections%20Exhibit:%20visual%20art%20by%20American%20Indians%20living%20in%20Kentucky/>

Bluegrass Heritage Museum celebrates 20th anniversary – Over 80 people gathered on the patio of the Bluegrass Heritage Museum recently to cap off a year's long celebration of its 20th anniversary. The museum explores many eras, ranging from the Eskippakithiki Indian Village, to Daniel Boone and his settlement of Boonesboro, and to the modern day. <https://www.winchestersun.com/2024/10/18/museum-celebrates-20th-anniversary/>

National Underground Railroad Museum receives grant from Kentucky African American Heritage Council – Maysville's National Underground Railroad Museum was awarded a grant for over \$12,000 for roof repairs. The museum, located in the Bierbower House, is a documented safe house that contains hidden slave chambers. In addition to the chambers, the exhibits also contain slavery artifacts, documents and memorabilia that document Maysville's role in the abolitionist movement and the role of slavery in America. <https://maysville-online.com/news/212058/national-underground-railroad-museum-receives-grant-from-kaahc>

Trigg County unveils new Pig statue – In September 2024, Trigg County unveiled a new pig statue. Currently named Big Pig, the statue features painted images stitched together like a quilt. The images contain agricultural scenes and landmarks such as Land Between the Lakes and Lake Barkley State Resort. It also pays homage to the county's annual Country Ham Festival.

<https://hoptownchronicle.org/what-a-ham-trigg-county-unveils-new-10-foot-pig-statue/>

Bernheim Forest installing new large-scale outdoor art experience – Bernheim Arboretum and Research Forest has opened a new art experience called L+A+N+D, which stands for Landscape + Art + Nature + Design, the exhibit features large-scale outdoor installations that explore the human connection to nature, sustainability, climate change, and other environmental issues.

https://www.thenewsenterprise.com/news/local/next-big-thing-in-art-opens-at-bernheim/article_e3c51c2b-1ed7-5b2d-b30e-0a359e5c02e6.html

Louisville Zoo unveils new Mural – The Louisville Zoo debuted a new mural at its entrance that features a series of animals. The piece was a partnership between the Zoo and an art collective called Often Seen Rarely Spoken. The mural took a week to complete and involved meticulous planning and collaboration between the artists and zoo staff. <https://www.wdrb.com/news/louisville-zoo-unveils-new->

[mural-created-by-local-artists/article_d2c1592e-4f99-11ef-920d-d743156d1ad6.html](https://www.wave3.com/2024/07/31/louisville-zoo-unveils-new-mural-by-local-art-collective/)
<https://www.wave3.com/2024/07/31/louisville-zoo-unveils-new-mural-by-local-art-collective/>

Kentucky Derby Museum opens new exhibit showcasing 150 years of Derby fashion — In July 2024 the Kentucky Derby Museum opened “See & Be Seen: 150 Years of Derby Fashion” to the public. The exhibit features 32 ensembles dating back to the 1860s as well as fashion artifacts.
<https://www.wave3.com/2024/07/10/kentucky-derby-museum-opens-new-exhibit-showcasing-150-years-derby-fashion/>

New Frazier History Museum exhibit celebrates all 120 Kentucky counties – In March 2024, the Frazier History Museum debuted a new exhibit called 120 Cool KY Counties. The exhibit is the result of a huge collaboration between the museum and all 120 Kentucky Counties. 120 Cool KY Counties features stories, pictures and artifacts from each county in one location. <https://www.leoweekly.com/arts/frazier-history-museums-120-cool-ky-counties-16074432>

50-foot-tall alien named Clive installed on Covington parking garage – Covington has a new public art installation in the form of a 50-foot-tall alien dubbed Clive. The extraterrestrial can be seen hanging out of the Midtown Parking Garage on Fifth and Scott Street studying anyone who passes under him with his magnifying glass. <https://www.cincinnati.com/story/entertainment/2024/01/24/50-foot-tall-clive-alien-towering-over-covington-kentucky/72338298007/>

New mural on Purple People Bridge combines iconic symbols from both sides of the river – Cincinnati based artist Matt Grote has completed a mural on the Purple People Bridge which connects downtown Cincinnati and Newport on the Levee. The mural, which is on the floor of the bridge, celebrates both Kentucky and Ohio and their respective cultures. The Purple People Bridge is only open to pedestrians and spans the Ohio River between the two cities.
<https://spectrumnews1.com/ky/louisville/news/2023/12/01/people-purple-bridge-mural>

Attractions

Kentucky Kingdom debuts Christmas attractions and announces \$25 million investment — Kentucky Kingdom Theme and Waterpark debuted its latest investment project, the \$8 million Christmas at Kentucky Kingdom. Additionally, the park announced a \$25 million investment to bring new experiences for the 2025 and 2026 seasons.
<https://www.bizjournals.com/louisville/news/2024/11/22/kentucky-kingdom-christmas-millions-investment.html>

Bluegrass Train Experience is new Ky Tourism passport project — The Bluegrass Train Experience launched from the Bowling Green Convention & Visitors Office in October 2024 with collaboration across five total communities and tourism offices, all of which boast a historic train presence. The latest passport program includes Oldham County, Bardstown, Woodford County, McCreary County and Warren County. The experience offers 13 train experiences ranging from a museum on wheels, train rides through the countryside, historic diner trains, and one of the newest interactive Kentucky attractions, the Rail Explorers©. <https://www.lanereport.com/177391/2024/10/bluegrass-train-experience-is-new-ky-tourism-passport-project/>

New passport program highlights Horses, Horsepower and Hollers attractions across six counties – “Horses, Horsepower and Hollers” is a new initiative aimed at giving visitors an authentic Kentucky experience. By using one of the itineraries on the initiative website, tourists can visit places unique Kentucky destinations such as National Corvette Museum and Cumberland Falls State Park. Visitor’s can register for the digital pass, and track visits to earn points and be entered into a sweepstakes.
<https://spectrumnews1.com/ky/louisville/news/2024/04/04/kentucky-tourism-initiative-horses-horsepower-hollers-> <https://www.kytripleh.com/>

National Corvette Museum Debuts New Pop Culture Exhibit - The National Corvette Museum's new pop culture exhibit discusses the Corvette's appearances in movies, music, and literature. The exhibit features cars from TV shows like Hawaii Five-0 and movies like Transformers. It also highlights celebrities who owned Corvettes, such as Reggie Jackson and Jim Lowell. The Exhibit opened in October 2024 and will run throughout 2025. <https://spectrumnews1.com/ky/louisville/news/2024/10/23/national-corvette-museum-pop-culture->

Nine Counties Take Part in Kentucky Garden Trail — Nine Kentucky counties have teamed up to form a botanical adventure that allows visitors to discover gorgeous gardens across the Bluegrass State. From exquisite plant collections to historic sites and monuments, each garden offers its own distinct experience worth enjoying. <https://www.aol.com/oldham-county-tourism-introduces-kentucky-090412275.html>
<https://www.courier-journal.com/story/news/local/2024/11/14/kentucky-garden-trail-see-the-full-guide-for-all-12-stops/75649052007/>

New Kentucky Black History Trail Uses Augmented Reality — The Kentucky Black History Trail is a new collaborative project between six Kentucky counties that uses augmented reality to bring Kentucky's Black history to life. Visitors can use their mobile devices to experience holograms of Kentucky historical figures at more than six sites across the region. <https://www.lpm.org/news/2024-07-23/historical-black-kentuckians-tell-their-stories-in-new-augmented-reality-experience>
https://www.thenewsenquirer.com/news/local/hardin-part-of-multi-county-award-to-establish-state-black-history-trail/article_4af0b36b-ab55-5705-a036-847c93d58fcf.html

Kentucky After Dark Trail adds more spooky attractions across the state – With 21 stops across the state, Kentucky After Dark is a trail and passport program that promotes some of Kentucky's favorite haunted locations and stories. Some of the locations for the trail's second season include Somerset's International Paranormal Museum, Waverly Hills Sanatorium in Louisville and the Anderson Hotel Haunted House in Lawrenceburg. <https://long-weekends.com/articles/fallwinter-2024/kentucky-after-dark-trail/> <https://www.southernliving.com/kentucky-after-dark-7973329>

Louisville Zoo adds several new animals – The Louisville Zoo has welcomed several new critters over the last few months. In July the zoo's Sumatran tiger gave birth to a cub. The facility also began fostering a baby gorilla from another zoo in Seattle. In June they introduced two koalas from San Diego as part of a breeding agreement with Australia. <https://www.wlky.com/article/louisville-new-zoo-baby-tiger-cub-sumatran-when-how-see/61741170> <https://www.courier-journal.com/story/news/2024/06/05/louisville-zoo-introduces-two-koalas-to-kentucky/73919658007/> <https://www.leoweekly.com/news/say-hello-to-the-louisville-zoos-adorable-baby-gorilla-16738718> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3hgS47XhZag>

Kentucky Derby Museum updates Winner's Circle exhibit, adds new fashion exhibit and receives grant to upgrade 360 film– The Kentucky Derby Museum is updating its Winner's Circle to commemorate the 150th Derby winner, Mystik Dan. The museum's front lobby banner and 18-minute 360° movie, "The Greatest Race," have been updated to include Mystik Dan's photo finish. The museum also debuted a new Derby Fashion Exhibit in July 2024. Guests can experience the vibrant colors, glamour and humor of Derby fashion through the years. Additionally, the museum was awarded the \$1 million James Graham Brown Foundation Grant that will support an update of the museum's 360° feature film, "The Greatest Race." <https://www.lanereport.com/174092/2024/06/kentucky-derby-museum-completes-derby-150-updates-to-winners-circle-exhibit/#:~:text=%E2%80%9CThe%20Greatest%20Race%E2%80%9D%20%E2%80%94%20Kentucky,Museum's%2040th%20anniversary%20in%202025.>

Kentucky Derby Museum debuts a \$1 Million upgrade to iconic Riders Up! exhibit – The Kentucky Derby Museum has unveiled a \$1 million upgrade to its Riders Up! exhibit. It debuted in April 2024, just in time for the 150th Kentucky Derby. Introduced in 2000, The Riders Up! exhibit lets visitors get a taste of what it feels like to be a jockey during the Run for the Roses. The attraction captivates visitors with state-of-the-art technology that brings the thrill of horse racing into the 21st century. <https://www.wlky.com/article/kentucky-derby-museum-riders-up-exhibit-reopening/60468419>

<https://paulickreport.com/news/the-biz/kentucky-derby-museum-gallops-into-future-with-1-million-riders-up-exhibit-upgrade>

Louisville Zoo adds new polar bear to the family – The Louisville Zoo announced the addition of Borealis, or Bo for short, to the facility's award-winning Glacier Run exhibit. Bo is one of two polar bears at the facility. Qannik, a wild-born female, has resided at the zoo since 2011. With the addition of Bo allows for the zoo to join the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, a cooperative breeding program that works to ensure the continuation of threatened and endangered species.

<https://www.wave3.com/2024/02/16/meet-bo-louisville-zoo-announces-latest-polar-bear-addition/>

Railbike tours offered along Bluegrass Scenic Railroad – Rail Explorers, a railbike tour company, has opened a new location in Versailles. The 10-mile round-trip tour takes riders through two thoroughbred farms, between limestone cliffs, to the Kentucky River with views of a bourbon distillery and Young's High Bridge. Riders may choose the Quad Railbike (up to four riders) or Tandem Railbike (up to two riders) option. The tour is pet-friendly and pets ride for free. <https://www.lex18.com/news/covering-kentucky/railbike-tours-offered-along-bluegrass-scenic-railroad>

Bourbon

*See the separate document, [What's New in Kentucky Bourbon](#), for a list of new and expanded bourbon experiences.

Culinary

New Restaurants in Louisville debut menus that feature wide variety of cuisine - Louisville's restaurant scene is booming! New spots like Korean fried chicken hotspot CM Chicken and Indian-Caribbean fusion eatery Mom's Kitchen offer exciting flavors. Vegan favorite Shahar Cafe has a new permanent location, and Steak & Bourbon expands downtown with a bigger space and new menu items. <https://styleblueprint.com/louisville/everyday/new-restaurants-louisville/>

Silver Dollar in Louisville gets new owner and new menu - The Silver Dollar, a Louisville institution, has reopened under new ownership. Brian Downing, the new owner and general manager, has made changes to the restaurant, including a refreshed menu focused on Tejano cuisine. The restaurant also boasts a curated whiskey and bourbon list, alongside innovative cocktails.

<https://www.leoweekly.com/food-drink/louisvilles-iconic-silver-dollar-gets-a-new-owner-and-refreshed-menu-16739405>

High Stakes Grill, new rooftop restaurant, opens in Louisville – Located on the roof of the new Tempo by Hilton Louisville Downtown NuLu, High Stakes Grill offers fine dining and a fine view from its perch six stories up. In addition to an extensive menu consisting of high-end surf and turf entrées, High Stakes features a full bar and wide-ranging cocktail list. <https://www.courier-journal.com/story/entertainment/dining/restaurant/2024/07/26/high-stakes-grill-new-rooftop-restaurant-opens-downtown-louisville/74372484007/>

Log Still Distillery opens high-end restaurant in downtown Louisville - Log Still Distillery celebrated the grand opening of its restaurant and tasting room experience, Monks Road Boiler House, on Whiskey Row in downtown Louisville. Named after the distillery's flagship line of bourbons and gins, Monk's Road Boiler House embodies the rich history and craftsmanship of Log Still Distillery, providing guests with an immersive and nostalgic dining experience. <https://www.leoweekly.com/louisville/a-new-chophouse-from-well-known-distillery-is-now-open-on-louisvilles-whiskey-row/Slideshow/16592190>

Western Kentucky Wine Trail launches - The Western Kentucky Wine Trail is a new collaborative initiative from area tourism offices that launched June 6. Christian, Graves, Logan, Marshall, McCracken, and Warren County tourism offices have brought together nine area wineries to create an official wine trail in Western Kentucky. <https://www.wbko.com/2024/06/12/area-tourism-offices-team-up-launch-western-kentucky-wine-trail/>

New West Kentucky BBQ Belt campaign launches –Tourism offices in western Kentucky have a new campaign aimed at promoting the fantastic barbecue in the western part of the Commonwealth. As part of the outreach, there are social videos, digital ads and billboards, placed in barbecue hotbeds like Nashville, Memphis, St. Louis and Kansas City. <https://www.adweek.com/agencyspy/kentucky-tourism-curates-a-west-kentucky-bbq-belt-collection/>

The Brown Hotel hires a new executive chef for its historic restaurant – The Brown Hotel in Louisville, Kentucky has hired Gary Palm as their new executive chef. Palm has over 30 years of experience working in five-star hotels and Michelin-starred restaurants around the world. He is a graduate of Johnson & Wales University and completed an apprenticeship in France. The Brown Hotel expects Palm to inspire and develop their culinary team. <https://www.whas11.com/article/life/food/louisville-brown-hotel-new-executive-chef-gary-palm/417-1cf6699c-3997-4558-a6f3-86b7e824ebcb>

Louisville Chef celebrates the opening of his second restaurant in two years – Chef and Louisville native Shaquan McDonald opened a new Shaq Kitchen at 2300 W. Market St. to go along with the original location at 612 S Fifth St. His menus consist of a mix of classic American fare such as burgers, sandwiches and barbecue. <https://www.courier-journal.com/story/entertainment/dining/restaurant/2024/05/10/chef-shaq-kitchen-opens-second-restaurant-in-louisville-what-to-know/73590309007/>

Southern Kentucky Distillery Joins the Moonshine Trail – The first legal distillery in Cumberland County has just joined the Moonshine Trail. Founded in 2022, Southern Kentucky Distillery has worked to revitalizing the region's storied distilling tradition, embodying the spirit of innovation while honoring age-old techniques. Moonshine Trail consists of eight distilleries and four landmarks in eastern Kentucky and is designed to inspire tourists to travel the region and experience its unique culture and history. <https://www.prunderground.com/southern-kentucky-distillery-joins-the-moonshine-trail-connecting-history-heritage-and-high-spirits/00336272/> <https://www.wkms.org/business-economy/2023-11-16/moonshine-trail-looks-to-get-tourists-eyes-on-eastern-kentucky-through-local-history-culture>

The Burl music venue and arcade starts brewing beer too – Located in Lexington's Distillery District, The Burl opened as a live music venue in 2016. In 2018 they added an arcade that featured dozens of pinball machines, retro video games and Skee-Ball. In February 2024, The Burl debuted its craft beer line, Burl Brew. Located on the Burl's campus next to the concert hall and arcade, the microbrewery taproom will feature more than a dozen unique taps as well as a full cocktail bar. The Burl campus is also planning a new food option, Lucy's Kitchen, which will offer a fresh twist on favorite bar fare. <https://extoday.6amcity.com/food/the-burl-brew-lexington-ky>

West Kentucky Brewery Hop trail launches a digital pass – The Kentucky craft beer trail known as West Kentucky Brewery Hop debuted its new digital pass on National American Beer Day. The downloadable pass offers an engaging and interactive platform for craft beer aficionados to explore the rich brewing culture of the region. By downloading the digital pass and visiting each brewery included on the trail, users can unlock exclusive merchandise and the chance to win exciting prizes, all while savoring the finest brews that West Kentucky has to offer. <https://www.craftbrewingbusiness.com/business-marketing/west-kentucky-brewery-hop-trail-launches-a-digital-pass-promising-prizes-to-users/>

Horses

Renovations at Keeneland are underway - Keeneland racetrack is undergoing a major \$93 million expansion project, the largest in its history. Construction began in January 2024 and is expected to be completed by September 2025. The project includes a new Paddock Building with dining, bar concepts, and a rooftop area, as well as improved saddling stalls. This expansion aims to enhance the visitor experience, increase seating capacity, and modernize the track while maintaining its historic charm.

<https://www.kentucky.com/sports/horses/keeneland/article293222264.html>

<https://www.sportstravelmagazine.com/keeneland-race-course-plans-93-million-in-upgrades/>

Churchill Downs in the midst of massive renovation - Churchill Downs is undergoing a major \$80-\$90 million renovation ahead of the 2025 Kentucky Derby. The project includes adding 8,300 comfortable seats, upgrading the third-floor box seats, and creating a new Grandstand Pavilion. In addition to the current renovation, Churchill Downs Inc. plans a long-term project to transform the area past the finish line, replacing 10,000 uncovered box seats with 16,000 premium hospitality experiences.

https://www.wdrb.com/news/business/after-historic-kentucky-derby-150-churchill-downs-lays-out-major-renovation-plan/article_c5fbb182-92f4-11ef-8e25-1f1297d004c1.html

Churchill Downs completed \$200 million in paddock renovations ahead of 150th Kentucky Derby –

Churchill Downs unveiled a completely revamped paddock for Kentucky Derby 150. The new space is bigger, grander, and offers premium seating with close-up views of the horses. Construction took nearly 2 years and cost \$200 million. <https://www.courier-journal.com/story/entertainment/events/kentucky-derby/2024/04/24/churchill-downs-200m-paddock-renovation-ahead-of-kentucky-derby-150/72522916007/>

Kentucky Horse Park building New Barns – Construction kicked off fall 2024 on two 100-stall pavilions at Kentucky Horse Park, replacing old barns. The new barns will maximize the number of stalls and provide ample access for trailers and exhibitors, and includes new restrooms, muck pits and more. The barns are on track to be finished by May 2025. <https://eventingnation.com/coming-soon-to-kentucky-horse-park-new-barns/>

Owensboro Racing and Gaming Set to Open in 2025 — Owensboro Racing and Gaming is on schedule to open in mid-2025. The venue will feature entertainment options like historical racing machines, a sportsbook, and a center bar. It will also create 200 jobs and partner with local charities. <https://www.owensborotimes.com/entertainment/2024/10/owensboro-racing-and-gaming-construction-progresses-hosting-job-fairs-ahead-of-early-2025-opening/>

Construction underway for quarter-horse track in Boyd County — Construction has begun on the \$10 million Sandy Ridge Racetrack in Ashland, KY. The facility will be Kentucky's only quarter horse track. It's expected to create hundreds of jobs and boost local economy. The track, set to open in 2026, will host races and other events. The track will be an addition to \$70 million gaming facility that opened in 2024. <https://www.wowktv.com/news/kentucky/boyd-county-ky/new-quarter-horse-track-underway-in-boyd-county/>

Derby City Gaming Downtown facility opens for business– Derby City Gaming Downtown, the first major gaming center in downtown Louisville, officially opened in December 2023. Located at the corner of Fourth and Market streets, the 43,000-square-foot building features 500 of the latest historical horseracing machines, a "fresh-air gaming area" and three bars, each with a unique theme. There will also be a Churchill Downs gift shop. <https://www.wlky.com/article/derby-city-gaming-downtown-open-louisville-sports-gambling/46052309>

Hotels & Lodging

Cumberland Falls State Resort Park to undergo renovations - Officials with Kentucky State Parks announced that the Dupont Lodge and Riverview Restaurant at Cumberland Falls State Resort Park will undergo \$10 million in renovations to enhance visitor experiences. The lodge and restaurant will be temporarily closed starting November 2025 and officials have not released a completion date. People can still reserve cabins and all other facilities will remain open while the renovations are happening. <https://www.wymt.com/2024/11/19/cumberland-falls-state-resort-park-undergo-renovations/>

Drury Hotels announces expansion in Northern Kentucky Region - Drury Hotels Company, LLC, a renowned hospitality brand with over 150 properties across 27 states, has unveiled its latest addition in the Greater Cincinnati area. The Drury Plaza Hotel Cincinnati Florence marks the company's third property in the region and the sixth in Kentucky. Boasting 186 modern guest rooms and over 1,200 square feet of versatile meeting space, this new hotel is part of Drury's ambitious expansion, which includes four openings in 2024 and three more planned by the end of 2025. <https://www.travelandtourworld.com/news/article/cincinnati-and-kentucky-shine-as-drury-hotels-unveils-major-expansion-with-new-luxury-addition/>

Developers close real estate deal on future site of 27-floor high-rise hotel in downtown Louisville - The 300-room hotel would feature a rooftop bar, first-floor restaurant and more. In the company's release, it highlights "One Forty West" would be located a short distance from the Kentucky International Convention Center, KFC Yum! Center and across the street from another Zyyo co-developed site, the forthcoming Canopy by Hilton hotel. Construction is slated to begin in 2026 and completed by 2028. <https://www.bizjournals.com/louisville/news/2024/11/05/zyyo-closes-deals-to-buy-land-for-27-story-tower.html> <https://spectrumnews1.com/ky/louisville/news/2024/07/03/louisville-based-zyyo-proposes-high-rise-hotel-one-forty-west>

Crown Plaza Hotel Completes Big Renovation – The Crowne Plaza Louisville Airport, Kentucky's fourth largest hotel, completed a \$25 million expansion and refresh. The project, which took a year to complete, involved remodeling all 588 rooms in the eight-story Crowne Plaza, which sits on state-owned land leased from the adjacent Kentucky Exposition Center. The Schneider Co. also added a bar to the lobby, replaced the hotel restaurant called Blue Horse with a new concept and to remake all of the event spaces. <https://www.bizjournals.com/louisville/news/2024/10/29/check-out-the-renovated-crowne-plaza.html>

Historic Mallard Hall debuts as luxury lodging – After extensive renovations Mallard Hall, located in Fisherville on Shelbyville Road, has reopened as a luxury vacation rental and event space. Originally built in 1790 this estate features seven bedrooms, eight bathrooms, pool, heated flooring and a helipad. <https://www.courier-journal.com/story/life/home-garden/home-of-the-week/2024/01/18/mallard-hall-in-fisherville-kentucky-features-speakeasy-helipad/71934653007/>

Hyatt Regency in downtown Lexington approved for massive renovation – The Hyatt Regency, located just steps away from Rupp Arena in downtown Lexington was received preliminary approval for incentives for a potential \$66 million renovation. The 17-story hotel was built in 1977 and would be eligible for incentives up to \$16.5 million. <https://www.aol.com/major-66-million-renovation-proposed-142855136.html>

Canopy by Hilton set to open in downtown Louisville by the end 2024 - Construction is nearly complete on the Canopy by Hilton at 143 W. Market St. Not far from the KFC Yum Center, the \$60 million hotel will offer 168 rooms across five stories. The hotel's doors are expected to open in January 2025. <https://www.bizjournals.com/louisville/news/2024/12/02/5-nulu-and-downtown-projects-set-to-be-completed.html>

Tempo by Hilton opens in Louisville's NuLu neighborhood – Tempo by Hilton opened for business just in time for the 150th Kentucky Derby. This full-service hotel, located on East Jefferson Street in NuLu, offers several amenities, including a rooftop restaurant, meeting space, wellness rooms and events spaces. https://www.wdrb.com/news/business/tempo-by-hilton-opens-in-nulu-just-in-time-for-kentucky-derby-150/article_6870db12-0804-11ef-9ab9-8b6519e95edd.html

The Lodge at Mammoth Cave reopens after renovation – After two years of being closed for renovation, the Lodge at Mammoth Cave reopened to the public in January 2024. The Lodge, which was built in 1965 received upgrades to its rooms, lobby, giftshop and restaurant. It also remodeled for ADA-accessible rooms, a conference room and two public restrooms. https://www.bgdailynews.com/news/the-lodge-at-mammoth-cave-reopens-after-renovation/article_8bbdd009-7f6e-54e1-98e3-df4320e80096.html

New cabins shaped like bourbon barrels available for booking – A new type of lodging experience has popped up in Lawrenceburg. Bourbon Barrel Retreats offers bourbon enthusiasts a chance to stay in cabins shaped like oversized barrels. The seven barrels sit on a 50-acre property just minutes away from more than a dozen distilleries, including, but not limited to: Four Roses, Woodford, Buffalo Trace and Makers Mark. <https://gardenandgun.com/articles/wake-up-in-a-bourbon-barrel-in-rural-kentucky/>

Jimmy Buffett Margaritaville resort hotel coming to Northern Kentucky – A Margaritaville Hotel and Resort is set to be built in Newport, Ky. Named after the famous song written by the late Jimmy Buffett, the \$133.6 million hotel will sit on the banks of the Ohio River and feature 264 full-service rooms, several restaurants, bars and retail shops. To drive the laidback theme home, there will be 5 O’Clock Somewhere Bar and a pool on the 12th-floor that overlooks downtown Cincinnati. The resort is expected to be completed by fall 2026. <https://www.kentucky.com/news/state/kentucky/article279569624.html>

Derby City Gaming Hotel opened for Business – The 123-room Derby City Gaming Hotel opened for business in June 2023. Owned and operated by Churchill Downs this hotel features over 1,300 thrilling horse racing games, delicious dining, a spacious sports bar, exciting promotions and more. <https://www.courier-journal.com/story/entertainment/events/kentucky-derby/2024/04/10/louisville-hotels-and-kentucky-derby-myriad-hotel-tempo-by-hilton/72486011007/> https://www.wdrb.com/news/derby-city-gaming-celebrates-opening-of-brand-new-hotel/article_dc8908ee-066b-11ee-bb69-6f9a692584f2.html

Myriad hotel opens in Louisville – The Myriad, a new 65-room boutique hotel located at 900 Baxter Avenue, and its onsite restaurant, Paseo, are open and accepting reservations. The facility includes a swim club complete with a lounge pool, cabana rentals and a poolside bar. <https://www.whas11.com/article/news/local/the-myriad-boutique-hotel-baxter-avenue-highlands-opening-soon/417-e4e71d74-460e-4d05-acb0-cdb974057a2e> ^[OBJ]

Bardstown Motor Lodge opens in bourbon country — This mid-century-inspired hotel, located at 418 East Stephen Foster Ave., is unmistakably authentic. Guest rooms flow seamlessly into breezy outdoor spaces with welcoming fire pits, a swimming pool, poolside bar, and a retro-styled rec room. The motel is on the same property as the hugely popular fine dining restaurant, Toogie’s Table. <https://www.whas11.com/article/news/community/bardstown-motor-lodge-kentucky-community-common-bond-hotel-collection/417-eb434317-023c-43ef-a64a-0bb5f7b2bd14>

North by Hotel Covington, Knowledge Bar & Social Room open – North by Hotel Covington and Knowledge Bar & Social Room are officially open to the public. Construction on the 72,000-square-foot building began in the spring of 2022. The space, which sat vacant since 2015, was the previous home of the Covington YMCA and Gateway Bookstore. In total, North added 53 luxury suites and lofts to Hotel Covington. Additionally, a new ballroom with a 500-person capacity was built over top of the YMCA’s old swimming pool. Dubbed The Lightwell, this space honors its past as a natatorium with traditional pool tile, cove lighting and a contrasting color scheme. <https://linknky.com/business/openings-closings/2023/04/11/north-by-hotel-covington-knowledge-bar-social-room-celebrate-grand-opening/>

The Manchester hotel opens in Lexington – This new downtown Lexington hotel, located at 941 Manchester St., not only treats its guests to a restful stay, but also to beautiful architecture and decor. Interior designer Jenny Bukovec drew on all the best bits of Kentucky history and culture for Lexington’s The Manchester – which hosts guests in rich wood- and brick-lined interiors. <https://thespaces.com/manchester-hotel-lexington-ky/>

Hotel Genevieve Opens in NULU – Hotel Genevieve is open for business in downtown Louisville on East Market Street. This 122-room boutique hotel features a ground floor restaurant, Rosettes, and Bar Genevieve which is situated on the hotel’s rooftop. The view from the roof gives guests a spectacular view of downtown Louisville. <https://www.wdrb.com/news/business/hotel-genevieve-opens-in-nulu->

[bringing-something-different-to-louisvilles-entertainment-scene/article_eb84f5f8-ef58-11ed-841c-67a8f8af2ab4.html](https://www.wlky.com/article/millennium-tour-louisville-trey-songz-omarion-bow-wow/62967491)

Music

Legends of 2000s rap and R&B are coming to Louisville — The Millennium Tour 2025 is coming to Louisville's KFC Yum! Center on March 7th. This nostalgic tour will feature iconic R&B and hip-hop artists like Trey Songz, Omarion, Bow Wow, and more. Fans can expect to hear classic hits like "Say Aah" and "Ice Box." This is the second time in a year that the Ying Yang Twins will be performing in Louisville. <https://www.wlky.com/article/millennium-tour-louisville-trey-songz-omarion-bow-wow/62967491>

Tyler Childers announced massive 2025 tour — Tyler Childers, renowned Americana superstar and native Kentuckian, has announced an extensive tour in 2025 and he's bringing along some friends from the Bluegrass State. Joining Childers on his "On the Road Tour" are music icon Wynonna Judd and singer-songwriter S.G. Goodman. Both Kentucky-bred artists will be special guests at Childers' April 19, 2025, concert at Kroger Field in Lexington. <https://www.courier-journal.com/story/entertainment/music/2024/11/15/tyler-childers-on-the-road-tour-announces-ticket-sales/76330460007/>

Bourbon & Beyond 2025 set for September - 100 acts are set to perform across five stages at Highland Festival Grounds at the Kentucky Exposition Center in Louisville Sept. 11-14. The lineup is still to be determined, but in years past, bands such as Sting, Cody Jinks, and Koe Wetzel have headlined. <https://www.courier-journal.com/story/entertainment/2024/08/27/bourbon-and-beyond-2024-performance-set-times-locations/74954165007/>

Slayer to headline Louder Than Life 2025 in Louisville - Slayer will headline the 2025 Louder Than Life festival in Louisville. The iconic metal band was forced to cancel their 2024 performance due to Hurricane Helene. The 2025 festival will take place on September 18-21, 2025, at the Highland Festival Grounds. Additional headliners and the rest of the 2025 lineup will be released in the months preceding the festival. <https://www.courier-journal.com/story/entertainment/music/2024/10/30/louder-than-life-2025-slayer-to-return-as-headliner-in-louisville/75890692007/>

Kentucky Music Hall of Fame and Mount Vernon Tourism to host annual Kentucky Blues Music Festival – The Kentucky Music Hall of Fame is hosting the third annual Kentucky Blues Music Festival on Saturday, June 7 at 5 p.m. the 2025 festival will celebrate Kentucky's rich blues heritage, bringing people together to enjoy this iconic genre in the heart of Mount Vernon. <https://kymusictrail.com/event/kentucky-blues-music-festival/>

America's River Roots festival to celebrate the Nation's 250th Anniversary– Northern Kentucky and Cincinnati are planning a massive festival to celebrate the Nation's 250th Anniversary, October 9-12, 2025, as well as the culture and heritage of the regions on both sides of the Ohio River. The festival will feature performers on multiple stages along both sides of the river, tall stacks riverboat cruises, and educational programs, celebrity chef presentations, bourbon and craft beer tastings, multicultural food vendors, and regional food artisans. <https://spectrumnews1.com/ky/louisville/news/2024/05/03/america-s-river-roots-festival>

Outdoors

Kentucky Fish and Wildlife expands public hunting lands in southeast counties — Kentucky's Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources is opening 60,233 acres of new public hunting grounds in eastern Kentucky. The land, mostly reclaimed mine land and forest, is part of the Pocahontas Wildlife Management Area. It offers opportunities for deer, turkey, and bear hunting. The land was acquired as part of a deal with a private landowner: the landowner gets elk hunting permits in exchange for public access. Hunters must have a permit to hunt elk and should use maps to navigate the area.
<https://www.weku.org/the-commonwealth/2024-10-12/kentucky-fish-and-wildlife-expands-public-hunting-lands-in-southeast-counties>

Leitchfield named newest Certified Trail Town - Leitchfield, Kentucky, has been officially certified as the 30th Kentucky Trail Town. This certification recognizes the city's commitment to outdoor recreation and tourism. The Kentucky Trail Town Program aims to help communities capitalize on their recreational opportunities and attract visitors. Leitchfield's certification highlights its beautiful natural surroundings and its dedication to preserving and promoting them. https://www.messenger-inquirer.com/grayson_county/news/leitchfield-certified-as-kentuckys-30th-trail-town/article_a65cbc13-3955-515b-be41-9cbb7060fd7b.html

Company helicopter tours of Red River Gorge – A new helicopter tour company, Red River Gorge Air Tours, is offering scenic flights over the Red River Gorge in Kentucky. The tours aim to provide a unique perspective of the gorge's breathtaking beauty for those who may not be able to experience it through traditional hiking. The company has worked closely with the FAA to ensure compliance with regulations and minimize disruptions to visitors on the ground. Flights are currently available on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays, weather permitting. <https://www.wkvt.com/2024/07/31/company-offer-helicopter-tours-red-river-gorge/>

Pikeville has been certified as a Trail Town – Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear announced that the city of Pikeville has been certified as a Trail Town, making it the 29th locality to achieve the designation. Trail Town certifications are given to towns that make a public commitment to share its outdoor opportunities, culture, history and stories with visitors seeking adventure. <https://wchstv.com/news/local/pikeville-gets-kentucky-trail-town-certification-recognized-for-outdoor-tourism>

Cave Country Trails revamps website to connect visitors to nature near Mammoth Cave – The purpose of Cave Country Trails is to create a regional network of biking, hiking, equestrian, and water trails to connect communities and make the Mammoth Cave Area and South-Central Kentucky a more attractive outdoor destination and place to live. This initiative promotes healthy lifestyles while attracting visitors and new businesses, managed with local flavor, resulting in regional economic growth. https://ket.org/program/kentucky-edition/non-profit-offers-resources-to-give-people-a-tailor-made-mammoth-cave-adventure/?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAR2HFP6FITpLqpZkaGFzFMy9ULxsDVrYVQuXwNc-GrheV8qpB3uvmBssZfl_aem_AUYkDLnZrY_EOdiSetmqtsPB2Kdeuii0oPAObZZibGtQy74dHDZOqNMNKEL28PjpNqGv2C_9lkiEzhKv8KbytN9y

Seven Kentucky state parks featured in newly-launched online Kentucky Science Trail – The Kentucky Science Trail, an online guide to science attractions in the Bluegrass State, features seven Kentucky State Parks, including: John James Audubon, Jenny Wiley, Cumberland Falls, Natural Bridge, Wickliffe Mounds, Carter Caves and Big Bone Lick. Each attraction has a description and link to its website, as well as an interactive map, making it easy for visitors to find nearby attractions. https://www.floydct.com/news/seven-kentucky-state-parks-featured-in-newly-launched-online-kentucky-science-trail/article_f1539e2e-1227-11ef-a8a6-2f0ab971767f.html

Kentucky State Parks celebrate 100 years – 2024 marks 100 years since it was established in 1924. In that time the department has dedicated itself to preserving the natural and historical sites throughout the commonwealth for future generations, while opening 45 state parks. <https://www.lex18.com/news/kentucky-state-parks-celebrate-100-years-in-2024>

Other

Lawrenceburg tapped to host 2025 national triathlon event — Lawrenceburg, Kentucky will host the 2025 USA Triathlon Long Course National Championships on September 25, 2025. This prestigious event will bring hundreds of athletes and spectators to the town, boosting its economy and national recognition. The event will include various triathlon and duathlon races. https://www.pmg-ky1.com/the_anderson_news/lawrenceburg-to-host-2025-national-triathlon-event/article_22d73835-be49-5202-b96a-48bbe46f26c5.html

Kentucky launches 'New Kentucky Home' initiative — Kentucky's "New Kentucky Home" initiative aims to boost tourism and business growth. Highlighting the state's beauty, strong economy, and friendly communities, it uses a new website (NewKentuckyHome.ky.gov) and social media (#NewKyHome) to showcase Kentucky to potential residents, tourists, and businesses. <https://www.lanereport.com/177663/2024/11/new-kentucky-home-initiative-to-attract-business-tourism-and-future-residents-to-kentucky/>

Lexington Airport to restart direct flights to New York City — Blue Grass Airport and Delta Air Lines announced on Friday the return of a non-stop flight from Lexington to New York City beginning on May 7, 2025. <https://www.lex18.com/news/blue-grass-airport-and-delta-air-lines-announce-non-stop-flight-from-lexington-to-new-york-city>

Louisville Muhammad Ali International Airport begins \$45 million expansion project - Louisville Muhammad Ali International Airport is undergoing a major \$45 million expansion project. This significant investment will expand the security checkpoint in the Jerry E. Abramson Terminal by 30,000 square feet, increasing screening capacity by 60%. The project, the largest terminal expansion in 35 years, is funded by federal grants and airport authority funds. Construction is set to begin soon and is expected to be completed by late 2026. <https://www.msn.com/en-us/travel/news/45-million-expansion-project-underway-at-louisville-muhammad-ali-international-airport/ar-AA1tH3MY?apiversion=v2&noservercache=1&domshim=1&renderwebcomponents=1&wcseo=1&batchservrtelemetry=1&noservertelemetry=1>

Air Canada announces direct flights between Northern Kentucky and Montreal — Starting in May 2025, Air Canada will launch a new daily nonstop flight between Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport (CVG) and Montreal. CVG officials note that this addition will give customers more connecting options between Kentucky and European destinations. Air Canada currently has twice daily service between Toronto (YYZ) and CVG. <https://lanereport.com/176500/2024/09/air-canada-adding-nonstop-service-to-montreal-from-cvg/>

Kentucky Exposition Center breaks ground on expansion project — Kentucky Exposition Center in Louisville is undergoing a \$393 million expansion. The two-phase project will add new buildings, redevelop existing structures, and increase convention center space. The goal is to attract more conventions, trade shows, and events, boosting Louisville's economy and reputation as a premier destination. Construction on the first phase begins in 2025. <https://conventionsouth.com/kentucky-exposition-center-breaks-ground-on-much-anticipated-expansion-project/>

Kentucky Tourism Industry sets record for second year in a row with \$13.8 billion in economic impact – The Kentucky tourism industry generated nearly \$14 billion in economic impact and sustains nearly 100,000 jobs. Bourbon tourism is a particularly flourishing area, and visitors spent \$9.7 billion in Kentucky in 2023. <https://apnews.com/article/kentucky-tourism-21502d059324c537cf3886e8e2411abb>

Kentucky Capital finalizes plans for a \$150 million mixed-use development project – Frankfort, Kentucky is getting its first Target store as part of a \$150 million development project. Once built, "The Paddocks of Frankfort" will spur economic development, boost tourism and, most of all, provide a new shopping and entertainment experience for locals and tourists. The 128,000-square-foot store is expected to be a major draw for the area and create over 1,000 jobs. Governor Andy Beshear, Mayor Layne Wilkerson, and other officials celebrated the project, which is the largest in the city and county's history.

<https://www.lanereport.com/174135/2024/06/target-store-coming-to-frankfort-150-million-project-expected-to-support-over-1000-jobs/>

Louisville Tourism opens new welcome center at the Muhammad Ali International Airport – Louisville Tourism has opened a brand-new information hub inside the region’s busiest airport. The center provides a dedicated space to learn about the great things to do, variety of local restaurants and top attractions throughout the community, including all things bourbon.

<https://www.futuretravelexperience.com/2024/04/welcome-center-opens-at-louisville-muhammad-ali-international-airport-for-a-best-in-class-arrivals-experience/>

Great Big Kentucky Adventure Campaign highlights attractions through retro videogames – The Great Big Kentucky Adventure allows players to take control of one of many characters and make your way through levels themed around different Kentucky attractions. The game features cities all over Kentucky such as Cave City, Frankfort, Hopkinsville and many more. <https://www.wnky.com/great-big-kentucky-adventure-features-attractions-in-south-central-ky/> <https://www.wave3.com/2024/05/24/video-game-features-louisville-kentucky-tourism-destination/> https://www.wpsdlocal6.com/news/paducah-featured-in-new-video-game-featuring-kentuckys-tourism-destinations/article_330df452-1207-11ef-a17e-cb2c26e705d8.html

Louisville Tourism reopens newly renovated visitor center – The Louisville Visitor Center has reopened after renovations. The center now features a bourbon bar, Muhammad Ali memorabilia, and equestrian touches. Leaders from Louisville Tourism hope the new center will attract more visitors. The downtown center is open from 10 am to 5 pm Monday through Saturday and 12-5 pm on Sundays. https://www.wdrb.com/news/business/tourism-officials-cut-the-ribbon-on-renovated-louisville-visitor-center-downtown/article_de98fcb2-1717-11ef-9eb9-6befc6bb812b.html

Blue Grass Airport institutes Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Program – Lexington’s Blue Grass Airport in Kentucky has adopted the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Program. This program allows travelers with hidden disabilities to discreetly signal that they might need additional assistance or patience from airport staff. Travelers can wear a sunflower lanyard or pin, and staff are trained to recognize these symbols and provide support. <https://www.lex18.com/news/blue-grass-airport-institutes-hidden-disabilities-sunflower-program#:~:text=Blue%20Grass%20Airport%20instituted%20the,community%20relations%20manager%20Lauren%20Simmerman.>

Southeastern Kentucky debuts new Appalachian Triangle campaign – In an effort to boost Southeastern Kentucky’s visibility on the national tourism scene, eight counties and cities in the region have teamed up to form the Appalachian Triangle of Kentucky. The coalition includes, Rockcastle-Mt. Vernon, London-Laurel County, the city of Corbin, Whitley County, Bell County, Barbourville, Manchester, and the city of Harlan. The Visit ATKY website offers visitors a complete overview of the region’s events, festivals, museums, lodgings and more. <https://fox56news.com/news/kentucky/visit-the-appalachian-triangle-southeastern-kentucky-launches-tourism-campaign/>

New passport program, Kentucky Capitals Quest launches – Visitors to Kentucky can earn a prize while learning about the Bluegrass State’s diverse culture and heritage. The program features 11 “capitals” throughout the Commonwealth, such as the Corvette Capital in Bowling Green, the Batter Capital in Hopkinsville and the Muskie Fishing Capital in Morehead, to name a few. <https://www.lex18.com/news/covering-kentucky/new-passport-program-allows-visitors-to-explore-hidden-gems-across-kentucky>

New Joy Ride campaign encourages visitors to explore the bluegrass region via the backroads– Kentucky Tourism kicked off a new campaign that encourages visitors to get the most out of their trip through the bluegrass region by taking advantage of Kentucky’s backroads. By driving the backroads travelers will witness the state’s scenic beauty in the form of horse farms, distilleries, wineries, small towns, historic homes and so much more. <https://www.travelagentcentral.com/continental-united-states/kentucky-unveils-joy-ride-tourism-campaign>

Covington, Lexington, and Louisville receive highest rating for LGBTQ rights — Covington, Lexington, and Louisville all received top marks from the Human Rights Commission. This is the fifth year Lexington has been in the top 2.5% in the nation for protecting and supporting the LGBTQ community. The HRC's index examines each city's inclusivity on a range of issues including non-discrimination laws, municipal services and law enforcement. <https://spectrumnews1.com/ky/louisville/news/2024/11/26/city-of-covington-mei-perfect-score> <https://www.kentucky.com/news/politics-government/article295935624.html>

British Airways is now operating direct flights between London and Cincinnati – As of June 2023 British Airways is operating direct flights between London Heathrow Airport (LHR) and Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport (CVG). British Airways will operate the flights five times a week during the summer and four times a week during the winter. <https://nkytribune.com/2023/06/british-airways-offers-cvg-fliers-new-international-travel-choice-first-flight-has-arrived-from-heathrow/>

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