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A Rebuilding Story for Louisville's Tourism Economy

Top 15 events showcase diverse line-up of groups for 2022

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (January 4, 2022) While much of 2021 was spent rescheduling groups and bolstering the future convention calendar, the story for 2022 is of a rebuilding year that includes a diverse variety of meeting groups for the year's top 15 anticipated conventions.

Louisville is slated to host several familiar annual conventions, popular music festivals, multiple youth sports as well as religious and educational groups. Mid-America Trucking Show is one of the annual trade shows returning in 2022, celebrating their 50th anniversary after canceling both 2020 and 2021 shows. The return of Louisville's largest annual shows will position 2022 as a significantly stronger year than 2021.

After weathering a tourism downturn that crippled the nation's travel industry, Louisville's recovery is still gradual although leisure tourism has rebounded the fastest - evident through the often-sold-out bourbon attraction distillery tours around the city. However, the continued ramp up of meetings and conventions is still crucial to return the city's hospitality industry to its once robust state.

The Top 15 events are projected (at this time) to have the largest estimated economic impact (EEI) for the Louisville area this year:

Event Name	Forecasted Attendance	Economic Impact
Kentucky Derby / Kentucky Oaks	271,323	\$366,820,262
50 th Mid-America Trucking Show	62,050	\$20,781,842
National Farm Machinery Show and Championship Tractor Pull	303,000	\$20,548,637
TFN Camps & Clinics "Run 4 Roses"	30,000	\$17,717,445
53 rd NSRA Street Rod Nationals	30,000	\$16,939,689
Equip Exposition (formerly GIE+EXPO)	22,500	\$16,252,419
Junior Volleyball Association – 2022 World Challenge	15,000	\$15,257,384
TFN Camps & Clinics "Battle in the Boro"	12,000	\$12,914,486
Danny Wimmer Presents - Louder Than Life	160,000	\$10,294,637
North American International Livestock Exposition Annual Expo	140,000	\$10,030,988
KIVA Sports/OVVC Adidas Bluegrass Tournament	10,000	\$9,832,372
Kentucky Derby Festival's Thunder Over Louisville	416,250	\$9,132,767
National Speech & Debate Association National Tournament	8,000	\$7,599,324
Together for the Gospel	12,750	\$7,450,138
Forecastle Festival	75,000	\$7,419,090

"While sports has been and continues to be a very successful market segment, Louisville is seeing more variety across the booked groups for 2022, which speaks to the recovery of our industry as all segments begin to meet again," said Zack Davis, Vice President of Destination Services for Louisville Tourism.

The comparisons to pre-pandemic business are stark – even into 2022, which is anticipated to have nearly 400 less groups than the city hosted in 2019 with 504 groups accounting for 1,446,616 attendees versus 2019's 881 groups translating to 1,851,256 attendees.

“Louisville’s hosted events will almost double over 2021 levels with a very similar story line related to hotel room nights. 2021 is forecasted to finish around 320,000 room nights while 2022 could be as strong as 625,000 to 650,000 hosted room nights,” said Doug Bennett, Executive Vice President of Louisville Tourism. “This is certainly the story of our destination’s comeback that will be more of a marathon - not a sprint back to 2019 levels.”

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Since 1968, **Louisville Tourism’s** primary goal has been to enhance the area's economy through tourism development - to promote and sell Louisville as a world-class destination. Prior to the pandemic, Tourism was the third largest industry in Louisville generating an estimated economic impact of \$3.4 billion which supported 70,000 local tourism-related jobs.