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Louisville Projects Growth Versus Recovery in 2023

Slate of annual events and conventions anchor anticipated busy year

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (January 3, 2023) Louisville's convention calendar is still striving towards a full comeback in 2023 with booked meetings continuing 2022's momentum. Although last year was a decisive turning point for the city's tourism economy, the hospitality industry's staffing challenges are still lingering.

The city's top conventions for 2023 include the typical slate of annual conventions, music festivals, youth and collegiate sports, as well as cultural and educational groups. Louisville's Kentucky Exposition Center will host both Equip Exposition and The Utility Exposition - two of the largest tradeshows by square footage in the U.S. according to the expo industry organization Trade Show News Network.

The Top 16* events are projected (at this time) to have the largest estimated economic impact (EEI) for the Louisville area this year:

Event Name	Attendance	Estimated Economic Impact
Kentucky Derby / Kentucky Oaks	250,000	\$360,120,113
Mid-America Trucking Show	59,000	\$28,476,982
National Farm Machinery Show and Championship Tractor Pull	255,000	\$23,134,569
TFN Camps & Clinics "Run 4 Roses"	50,000	\$21,659,586
Equip Exposition	25,000	\$21,024,374
Junior Volleyball Association World Challenge	40,000	\$17,963,149
NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Regional	22,000	\$15,025,192
The Utility Expo	20,000	\$15,017,588
Danny Wimmer Presents - Louder Than Life	160,000	\$14,547,787
North American International Livestock Exposition Annual Expo	200,000	\$13,950,497
KIVA Sports/ Ohio Valley Volleyball Center Adidas Bluegrass Tournament	40,000	\$12,012,989
National Beta Club National Convention	13,000	\$11,140,205
Danny Wimmer Presents - Bourbon & Beyond	160,000	\$11,096,839
54th NSRA Street Rod Nationals	30,000	\$10,806,880
Kentucky Derby Festival's Thunder Over Louisville	450,000	\$9,307,996
Kentucky State Fair	590,000	\$8,771,603

**Louisville's Top 16 is in honor of the city's namesake, French King, Louis XVI*

"We're beginning to see a full-scale return to normal in conventions, meetings, tradeshows and events as some of our top groups are forecasted to not only reach - but exceed pre-pandemic numbers in 2023," said Zack Davis, Destination Services Vice President for Louisville Tourism. "While Louisville's

tourism economy has not wholly returned to 2019 levels, we anticipate solid performances from all of our top events. Louisville is fortunate, and somewhat unique in our competitive set, that 10 of our top events each year call our city home on an annual basis.”

“The early spring, summer and fall are the most top-performing periods throughout the year for events. While the trajectory for business transient and leisure travel is somewhat clouded by sentiment around recession and inflation, we continue to see strength in the meetings, conventions and events market,” said Davis.

Though smaller in economic impact (not in the top 16), other impactful 2023 groups include the March ConferenceDirect Partner Meeting, bringing an opportunity to showcase Louisville directly to 1,000 meeting planners, as well as the African American Golf Expo & Forum in August. Louisville won the golf hosting opportunity due in part, to members of Louisville Tourism’s Black Tourism Advisory Council (BTAC) – which supports the agency’s overall mission to grow African American leisure visitation from 11% to 14% by 2025.

Additionally, music will be in the air with the 2023 hosting of both Sweet Adelines International, a female choral group in late October and the international Barbershop Harmony Society, the corresponding male counterpart in July. Typically, these large singing competitions do not meet in the same city in the same year, but with the 2020 disruption to the convention calendar, Louisville will uniquely welcome them both in 2023. Combined, these two groups boast 13,000 attendees.

“We’ve been talking for two years about the industry’s recovery, and barring any unexpected twists, we’ve finally turned a corner and are now planning for growth,” said Cleo Battle. “Though some headwinds out of our control include staffing, a possible national recession and a new threat to Kentucky’s ability to remain competitive nationally through the imminent implementation of House Bill 8’s tax on meeting facilities.”

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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.