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## 2026 Travel Guide FLOCK TO THESE **ANIMAL ADVENTURES**

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Win a Getaway. See page 51.

Léttleiki Icelandic Horse Farm





2026  
Travel  
Issue

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# APRIL

VOL 80 | NO 4

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## GO WILD

**ON THE COVER** Roar, hop and slither your way to animal adventures at interactive and educational destinations across the state.

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Kentucky bourbon tourists can now book stays in two historic properties with ties to E.H. Taylor, the father of the modern bourbon industry.

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## TIME TRAVEL

Explore Kentucky history one destination at a time—from the ancient past and Native American history to coal mining, Bluegrass and Civil Rights.

**ON THE COVER** Dahlia Stanev poses with an armful of parakeets at Wendt's Wildlife Adventure in Carlisle. At destinations across Kentucky, visitors can experience wildlife up close. Check out offerings at Ararat Ridge Zoo, Kentucky Down Under Adventure Zoo, Kentucky Reptile Zoo, Louisville Zoo, Salato Wildlife Education Center, Newport Aquarium and Wendt's Wildlife Adventure on page 16. Photo: Deni Stanev

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## OUR MISSION STATEMENT

*Kentucky Living* is published to create a community of people who take pride in thinking of themselves as Kentuckians and as knowledgeable electric co-op consumer-members, in order to improve their quality of life.

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# MOREHEAD KENTUCKY PROUD EXPO



April 24 & 25, 2026

Morehead Conference Center

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Win a Getaway. See page 51.



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MAY 1-31

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## CO-OP COMMUNITY

# Living history

Explore your co-op, past and present

### DIAMOND CAVERNS.

Sheltoewe Trace. Churchill Downs. History is alive in so many places across our state, and this month's travel guide encourages you to time travel through the Bluegrass. You can visit the Perryville Battlefield State Historic Site and take a moment to remember the sacrifices as the Union



Reenactors commemorate the 161st anniversary of the Battle of Perryville. Photo: Mark Lowry

and Confederate armies clashed years ago, or maybe you'll walk through the Bill Monroe Homeplace and imagine the beginnings of Bluegrass as music notes would have floated out the windows.

There are so many places in Kentucky you can visit to learn about the heritage of this great state—and I would suggest that your local cooperative is one of them.

After President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Rural Electrification Act in May 1936, farmers in rural America, including here in Kentucky, could get access to low-cost loans to bring electricity to the farm.

In 1937, Henderson Union became the first electric cooperative to distribute power in Kentucky. These days, that cooperative is called Kenergy—it merged with Green River Electric in 1999.

Today, Kentucky is home to 24 distribution cooperatives, who serve 1.8 million consumer-members. We've made a lot of progress in the last nine decades, but to paraphrase Robert Frost: we have miles to go before we sleep.

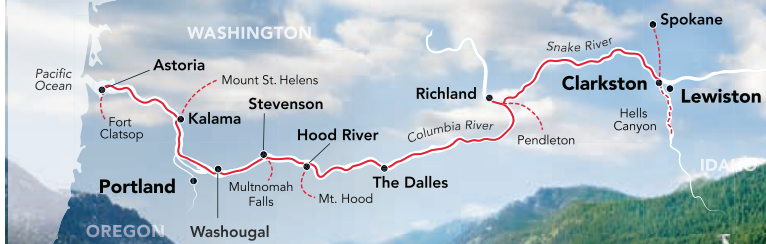
The cooperative mission means bringing you safe and reliable electricity. When either of those tenets are threatened, we advocate for you and speak up on your behalf. Electric cooperatives face a pivotal moment in history. As energy demand from data centers, AI and beyond stresses the grid, we must work to make sure we are as innovative and prepared as our predecessors.

We are proud of our history, but we must look forward. However, we know we can tackle the challenges up ahead because our history represents just how far we've already come.

**CHRIS PERRY**  
President/CEO

**KENTUCKY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES**





PANORAMIC VIEWS ★ BRAND NEW IN 2026 ★ PIONEERING INNOVATIONS

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Win a Getaway. See page 51.

# FROM THE EDITOR

## THIS IS YOUR

*Kentucky Living* editor. These days, I'm a little wiser, a little older and my bangs are a lot less permed. But I thought the photo change was fitting. This month's magazine highlights festivals across Kentucky from April through August. One of those festivals is in my hometown of Pineville each May: the Kentucky Mountain Laurel Festival. I was an attendant in the Queen's Court in first grade.



Kentucky is a wonderful state that I'm proud to call home, and I'm proud to have a connection to this festival full of tradition.

Whether you visit the Mountain Laurel celebration, pick a colorful festival from our Worth the Trip column or visit any of the dozens of festivals on this spring's map, I hope you can find something that piques your interest. Maybe you can even create a new tradition with your friends and family.

Some things change (like my bangs), but some things stay the same—these dagger eyes even go back to 1992.

**SHANNON BROCK,**  
EDITOR

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# KentuckyLiving.com

Follow us online for events, recipes, videos, contests and more!



CLOUD AERIAL IMAGING

## FESTIVAL FUN

### More to explore online

Check out our map of 142 Kentucky festivals on page 54, then turn to page 64 to zoom in on festivals like the Mountain Mushroom Festival, World Chicken Festival and PossumFest. Visit KentuckyLiving.com for videos that showcase festivalgoers' strutting and clucking talents, a wheeled train on Beattyville's Main Street and more.



KENTUCKY DOWN UNDER



KENTUCKY DERBY MUSEUM

## WALK ON THE WILD SIDE

### Animal adventures behind the scenes

Sites across the state offer up-close encounters with animals of all kinds. Read the story on page 16, and visit us online for videos of animals, a demonstration of venom extraction, educational resources and a full listing of destination details.

## WIN A TRIP FOR FOUR

### Enter by May 15

Experiences like Belle of Louisville, Evan Williams Bourbon Experience and the Frazier Kentucky History Museum are just a few of the giveaways sponsored by Louisville Tourism. Read full details on page 51, and enter at KentuckyLiving.com.



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# Something in the water

In the 1820s, Dr. Christopher Columbus Graham, a Transylvania University graduate, built the Graham Springs Hotel, a resort and spa overlooking the town of Harrodsburg. Graham believed the minerals infused in the nearby natural spring held healing powers, attracting guests from all over the country to “take the waters” for relief of their ailments. He also knew the importance of exercise, and his resort offered a plethora of ways to get his guests moving. A favorite was the almost nightly dancing in the resort’s ballroom, where romance was almost always in the air.

In the early 1840s, a charming mystery woman reportedly arrived at the hotel only to meet her demise during the last dance of her one-night stay. To this day, the question of her identity has not been answered, and her grave is still tended on the grounds of Youngs Park, where the hotel formerly stood. Legend has it that her ghost can sometimes be seen wandering about on a moonlit night.

It was this story that enticed rural Kentucky author Ann H. Gabhart to write a historical romance novel, *The Pursuit of Elena Bradford*, set at the Graham Springs resort.

Women in the 1840s had few opportunities beyond making a favorable marriage and then raising children.

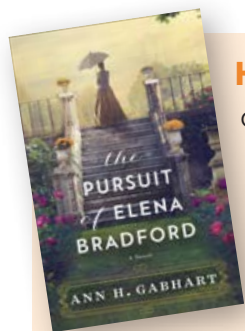
Without the support of a husband, an aging single woman was destined to rely on extended family to provide for her needs. It was of utmost importance to marry well, and love was not always considered a requirement.

Such is the case for Elena Bradford, an independent and talented artist who is nearing the prospect of spinsterhood. Confounding her situation is the untimely death of her father, whose legacy is a mountain of debt that falls to Elena’s mother to repay. Having no means to do so, the widow deems Elena the family’s ticket out of poverty and ruin if she can only secure a wealthy husband.

So Elena finds herself spending the summer with her mother and sister at the socially affluent Graham Springs Hotel, where the matchmaking begins. Never believing she was much of a catch, Elena is surprised to find herself the object of more than one suitor. Will she be forced to marry for money? Is love something only to be dreamt of and never found?

Unlikely heroes emerge when a tragedy occurs at the hotel, and Elena must summon all the courage she has, learning much about herself in the process and painting her future into a masterpiece.

» Penny Woods



## Healing grounds

Graham Springs was known as “the Saratoga of the West,” and some physicians claimed taking the spa’s waters could help or cure a variety of ailments, author Ann H. Gabhart found in her research. In 1853, the hotel was sold to the U.S. government to be used as a military asylum. Three years later, the main building burned with the remaining buildings being used as a hospital.

*The Pursuit of Elena Bradford*, (Revell, \$18.99) is available at [www.bakerpublishinggroup.com](http://www.bakerpublishinggroup.com) or major book retailers.

Connect with the author at [www.AnnHGabhart.com](http://www.AnnHGabhart.com).

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY

tip

As we prepare for the seasonal shift, remember to set your ceiling fan rotation accordingly. In summer months, when your home cooling system is running, blades should rotate counterclockwise, which produces a downdraft or windchill effect that makes you feel cooler.

Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)



JASON/ADOBE STOCK



“WHEEE!”

## Three \$1,000 scholarships available

Women in Rural Electrification is offering three \$1,000 scholarships to Kentucky college students. The scholarships are open to any eligible student whose family is served by a Kentucky electric cooperative, who has completed one semester in college and who has at least 60 hours of credit at a Kentucky college or university by the end of the 2026 spring college term. **The deadline to apply is June 5, 2026.** For an application form, go to



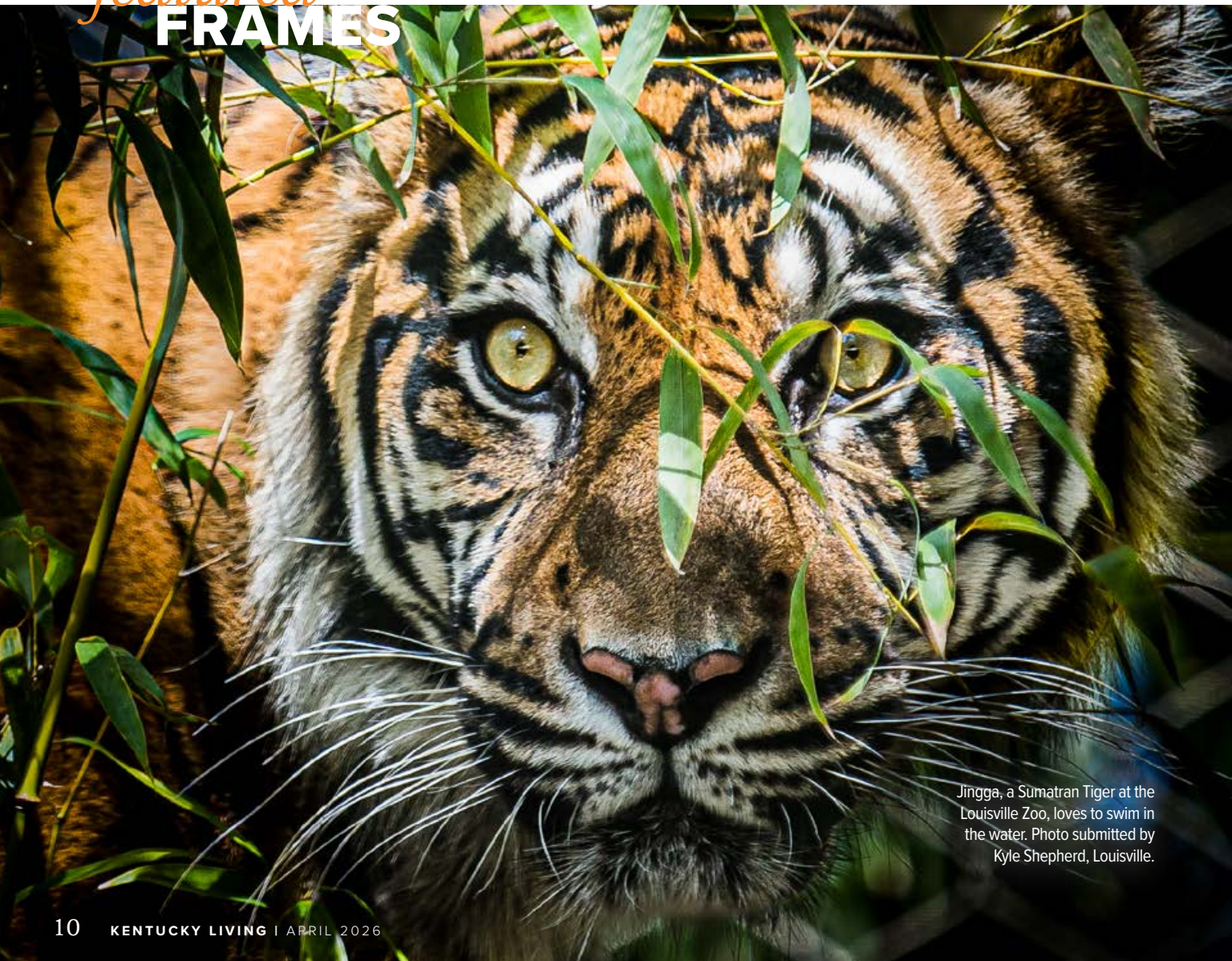
KentuckyLiving.com and search for “WIRE 2026” or contact your local cooperative.

Have a question or comment for the editor?



Please address letters to the editor to: Letters, *Kentucky Living*, P. O. Box 32170, Louisville, KY 40232 or email by going to KentuckyLiving.com and clicking on “Contact Us.” Letters may be edited for style, length and clarity.

## featured FRAMES



Jingga, a Sumatran Tiger at the Louisville Zoo, loves to swim in the water. Photo submitted by Kyle Shepherd, Louisville.

## Silver Traverse Award

*Kentucky Living*, along with several partners, received a Traverse Award for Excellence in Kentucky Tourism from the Kentucky Travel Industry Association. The award was presented during the 2025 Kentucky Travel Industry Annual Conference held November 5-7 at The Galt House in Louisville.

*Kentucky Living*, Ark Encounter, BB Riverboats, Grant County Tourism and meetNKY received a Silver Traverse for the Two Boats One Day print ad campaign, which ran in the April 2025 issue.

The Kentucky Travel Industry Association represents and serves all segments of Kentucky's tourism industry, which contributes more than

\$14 billion to Kentucky's economy annually. The 1,000-member association engages in advocacy and provides its members with education, information and business development opportunities. The association also works to inform the public of the enormous economic, employment and tax revenue contributions tourism makes to the people of Kentucky.

"*Kentucky Living* is a proud supporter of KTIA, and we are thrilled to be acknowledged among such prestigious competition," says Advertising Manager Renee Williams. "We value our advertising partners and are grateful to be included in this group of winners."



For more information, visit [www.ktia.com](http://www.ktia.com).



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Win a Getaway. See page 51.

# Policy reset

*EPA move sends major climate questions back to Congress*

JOE ARNOLD

**WHEN A COLD SNAP HITS KENTUCKY**, electricity is more than a convenience. It's a lifeline. Heating systems, medical devices and basic daily routines depend on reliable power. And when winter weather drives up electricity use, the size of the monthly bill can become a real concern for families already stretching their budgets.

Those realities help explain why a recent decision by the United States Environmental Protection Agency is drawing attention across the electric industry.

In February, the EPA moved to rescind its 2009 "endangerment finding," a determination that greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide pose a danger to public health and welfare. That finding became the legal trigger for a long list of federal climate regulations affecting vehicles, power plants and other industries.

Supporters of the reversal say the change is less about climate science and more about restoring balance to energy policy.

For more than a decade, rules tied to the endangerment finding have pushed the nation's power grid toward rapid change, faster than engineers and planners believe the system can handle.

Electric reliability experts have warned that demand for electricity is rising quickly while dependable power plants are being retired. The North American Electric Reliability Corporation, which monitors the stability of the bulk power system, recently warned that "uncertainty and lag in the pace of new resource additions are driving heightened concerns that industry will not be able to keep up with rapidly increasing demand."

"This assessment is not a prediction of failure but an early warning on the trajectory of risk," says John Moura, NERC's director of reliability assessment and performance analysis.

At the same time demand is rising, NERC estimates more than 100 gigawatts of generating capacity could retire in the coming years—enough energy to power more than half of the households in the U.S.

Policies built on the endangerment finding have played a role in that shift.

*The EPA should only be allowed to regulate if it properly considers factors such as price and energy effects, potential benefits or effectiveness of a rule, and other costs and tradeoffs."*

» **Kristen Walker, policy analyst for American Consumer Institute**

The finding itself originated from a 2007 U.S. Supreme Court decision that gave the EPA authority to regulate greenhouse gases under the Clean Air Act. What followed was a cascade of rules affecting automobiles, manufacturing and the electric sector.

The Clean Power Plan sought to dramatically reduce emissions from power plants before being struck down by the Supreme Court.

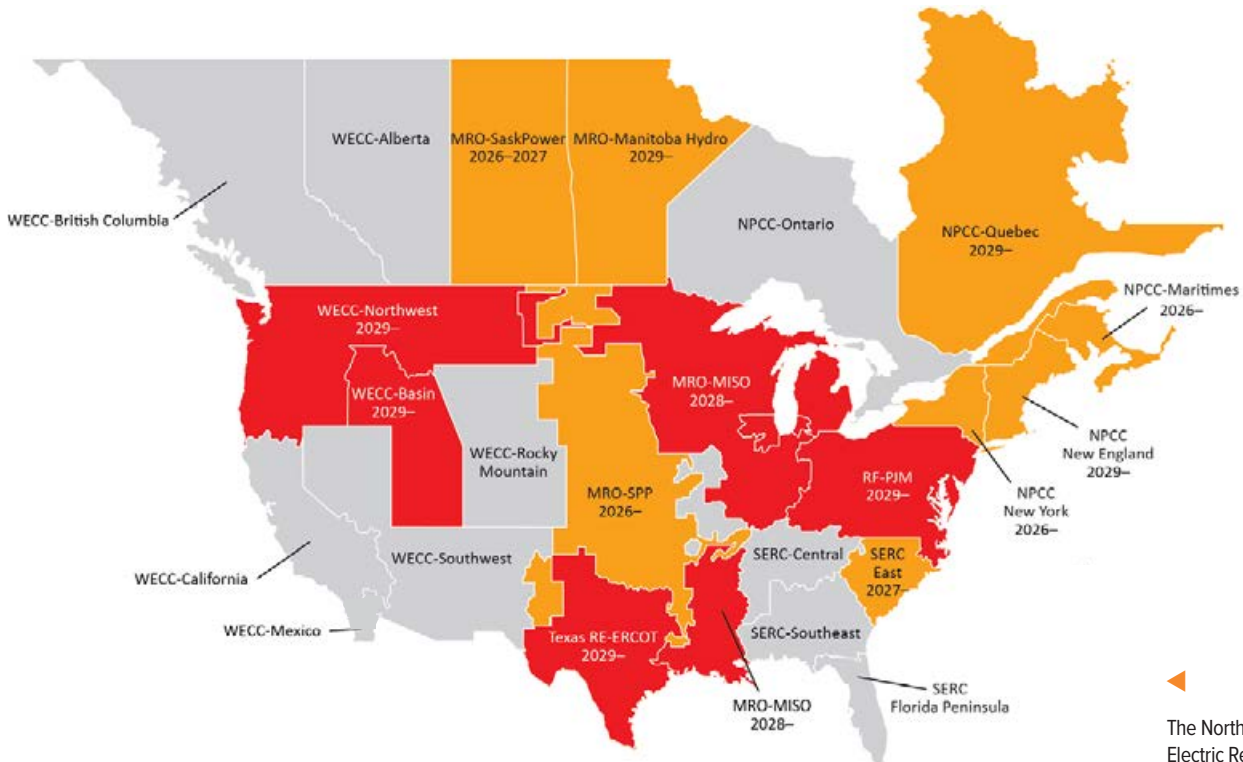
As *Kentucky Living* reported last year, instead of ensuring a perfectly balanced electric grid to meet the surging demand, federal regulations were forcing power providers to shut down reliable sources of baseload power. Many large coal plants have been converted to use cleaner-burning natural gas, but the new rules made it too costly to convert some coal plants, leading to their premature retirement.

Critics of the endangerment finding argue that these policies stretched the Clean Air Act beyond its original purpose.

"The EPA should only be allowed to regulate if it properly considers factors such as price and energy effects, potential benefits or effectiveness of a rule, and other costs and tradeoffs," writes Kristen Walker, a policy analyst for the nonprofit American Consumer Institute. "Instead, the endangerment

## Risk Area Summary 2026-2030

(Shows highest risk classification occurring in the first 5 years and the initial year of occurrence)



- **High Risk:** Planned resources fall short of established criteria in the next five years
- **Elevated Risk:** Resource adequacy targets are met but shortfalls are identified in extreme conditions
- **Normal Risk:** Resources are available the range of assessed conditions

◀ The North American Electric Reliability Corporation’s 2025 Long-Term Reliability Assessment spotlights intensifying resource adequacy risks throughout the North American bulk power system over the next 10 years. In this map, Kentucky is largely in the “high risk” category.

finding has given rise to regulations driving up costs, restricting vehicle choice, cultivating unreliable energy, eliminating jobs and industries, and hurting national security. Consumers are not better off.

“These coercive regulations disproportionately hurt the poor who can’t afford their energy bills, let alone an expensive electric vehicle,” Walker continues. “Levels of energy poverty continue to rise, approaching half the country.”

Environmental groups, meanwhile, say the endangerment finding reflects scientific evidence that greenhouse gases contribute to climate change.

But supporters of the reversal argue that the question now returns to where major national decisions belong: Congress.

Rather than debating climate science, they say the discussion should reflect the laws of physics and the practical realities of how the electric grid works.

Generating electricity requires a delicate balance of engineering and physics. Power plants must supply electricity at the exact moment customers use

it, and the system must remain stable even during extreme weather or sudden demand spikes.

Electric cooperatives know these challenges well. Their mission has always been straightforward: provide reliable power at the lowest possible cost for the communities they serve. That mission is becoming more complicated as electricity demand grows and energy policy evolves.

The EPA’s decision does not eliminate environmental rules, nor does it settle the broader debate about energy and climate policy. Instead, it removes the regulatory cornerstone that allowed sweeping changes through agency rulemaking.

Supporters say that is a step toward a more transparent and democratic process—one in which major decisions about the nation’s energy future are debated and decided by Congress rather than by federal bureaucracies.

For electric consumers, the stakes are simple: keeping the lights on and keeping electricity affordable. **KL**

# Fishing with Kids

## Youth event continues to grow

### DUNMOR

Mike Kirby got hooked on fishing as a teenager in the 1970s. With a pole in hand and worms for bait, he wore a path to a neighbor's pond. Later, as a father, Kirby shared his love of the sport with his children. "My oldest boy was fishing on the pond bank in diapers," he recalls. "I'd catch them and let him reel 'em in."

Kirby, a Pennyrile Electric consumer-member, previously served as president for both the Lake Malone Bass Club and the Warren County Anglers. He's also hosted fishing tournaments for adults throughout the years.

In 2009—with the encouragement of his friend Don Harper—Kirby founded Fishing with Kids, an annual Christian-focused event that encourages kids to spend more time outdoors.

▶ Mike Kirby presents a prize during a previous year's tournament.

▼ Hundreds participate in the annual Fishing with Kids event. Photos: Shelby Belcher



But there was one caveat: Kirby didn't want any kids or their families to have to pay to participate. To ensure there were no costs involved, Kirby and Harper began collecting donated items from sponsors.

That first year, Fishing with Kids kicked off at Lake Malone with 107 kids in attendance. Fast forward to last year's event—358 kids registered. Prizes are given in different categories, and a child doesn't have to catch the biggest fish to win. "Every kid there gets a prize," Kirby explains. Prize giveaways include tents, fishing gear, bikes, kayaks and more. Then there's the grand prize every kid dreams of taking home—a new jon boat, complete with a trolling motor and battery.

"It's just an awesome event," Kirby says, crediting Fishing with Kids' success to God, the Lake Malone State Park staff and the approximately 50 volunteers who lend a hand, noting "it's a group effort." Even so, event board member

Lannie Whitmon recognizes Kirby's year-round dedication. "He does this for the kids' benefit only," says Whitmon. And for kid-at-heart fishing enthusiasts age 50 and up, this year Kirby started something new—a monthly Old Timers tournament.

These days, Kirby doesn't go fishing as often as he'd like. But when he isn't running his business, Kirby Siding, or planning community events, Kirby still enjoys the sport as much as he did when he was a teenager. Only now, he fishes out on the lake from his boat. "I go every chance I can go," he says. "I just love to fish."

Fishing with Kids is held annually at Lake Malone State Park in Dunmor on the third Saturday in June for kids ages 15 and under. This year's free event will be June 20. For more information, visit Fishing with Kids on Facebook. **KL**

**AMY COBB** is the author of two book series for children, *Band Geeks* and *Libby Wimbley*.



# Kimberly-Clark's world-class brands

*Owensboro company invests in safety, sustainability and community*

JOE ARNOLD

**PRODUCTS THAT** line store shelves across North America start on the production floor of a facility that has been part of the Owensboro community for more than three decades.

Since opening in 1993, Kimberly-Clark's Owensboro plant has produced well-known brands like Kleenex facial tissues and Scott paper towels and bath tissue—items that millions rely on every day. The more than 600,000-square-foot facility plays a role in a global operation that touches nearly a quarter of the world's population daily, while maintaining deep local ties in Daviess County.

The company continues to invest in its Owensboro operations. A new 120,000-square-foot on-site raw materials warehouse replaces a leased facility miles away, reducing hundreds of monthly truck trips and improving production flow. The project supports the company's



broader sustainability goals by cutting transportation costs, reducing emissions and streamlining operations.

Inside the facility, safety and quality remain central to the company's approach.

"Safety is non-negotiable," says Owensboro Facility Manager Mark Sisson. "And when employees are safe, they also can focus better on delivering exceptional quality."

That focus extends throughout the plant—from raw materials to finished

products—where teams conduct detailed quality testing for items designed for everyday use.

With approximately 360 employees, the Owensboro facility is a significant local employer and a source of long-term career opportunities. Many employees begin in entry-level roles and advance through training programs, mentorship and technical development. The company also partners with local schools and workforce programs to help prepare the next generation of manufacturing talent.

Sustainability efforts are woven throughout the operation. The plant uses recycled fiber in many of its products and relies in part on an on-site combined heat and power system that helps meet electricity and steam needs while reducing environmental impact.

"We're proud of the work we do here in Owensboro," Sisson says. "Our mission is to provide high-quality products while prioritizing safety, sustainability and the well-being of our employees and neighbors." **KL**

**\*Kimberly-Clark**

[kimberly-clark.com](http://kimberly-clark.com)

**LOCATION:**  
Owensboro

**INDUSTRY:**  
Consumer paper and hygiene products

**ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE:**  
Kenergy

◀ In 2025, Kimberly-Clark leaders officially opened a new warehouse on the company's site in Owensboro. Photo: Kimberly-Clark

## *Investing in people and community*

Kimberly-Clark's Owensboro team extends its impact well beyond the production floor. Employees regularly volunteer and support local nonprofits, including the United Way of the Ohio Valley, strengthening connections across Daviess County. The company also partners with schools, technical programs and workforce initiatives to help develop future employees for careers in advanced manufacturing.

With about 360 employees on-site, Kimberly-Clark continues to hire for skilled positions in operations, maintenance, engineering and digital manufacturing support. Training programs, mentorship opportunities and advancement pathways enable employees to grow their careers close to home, reinforcing the company's long-standing commitment to both its workforce and the Owensboro community.

2026  
Travel  
Issue

# GO



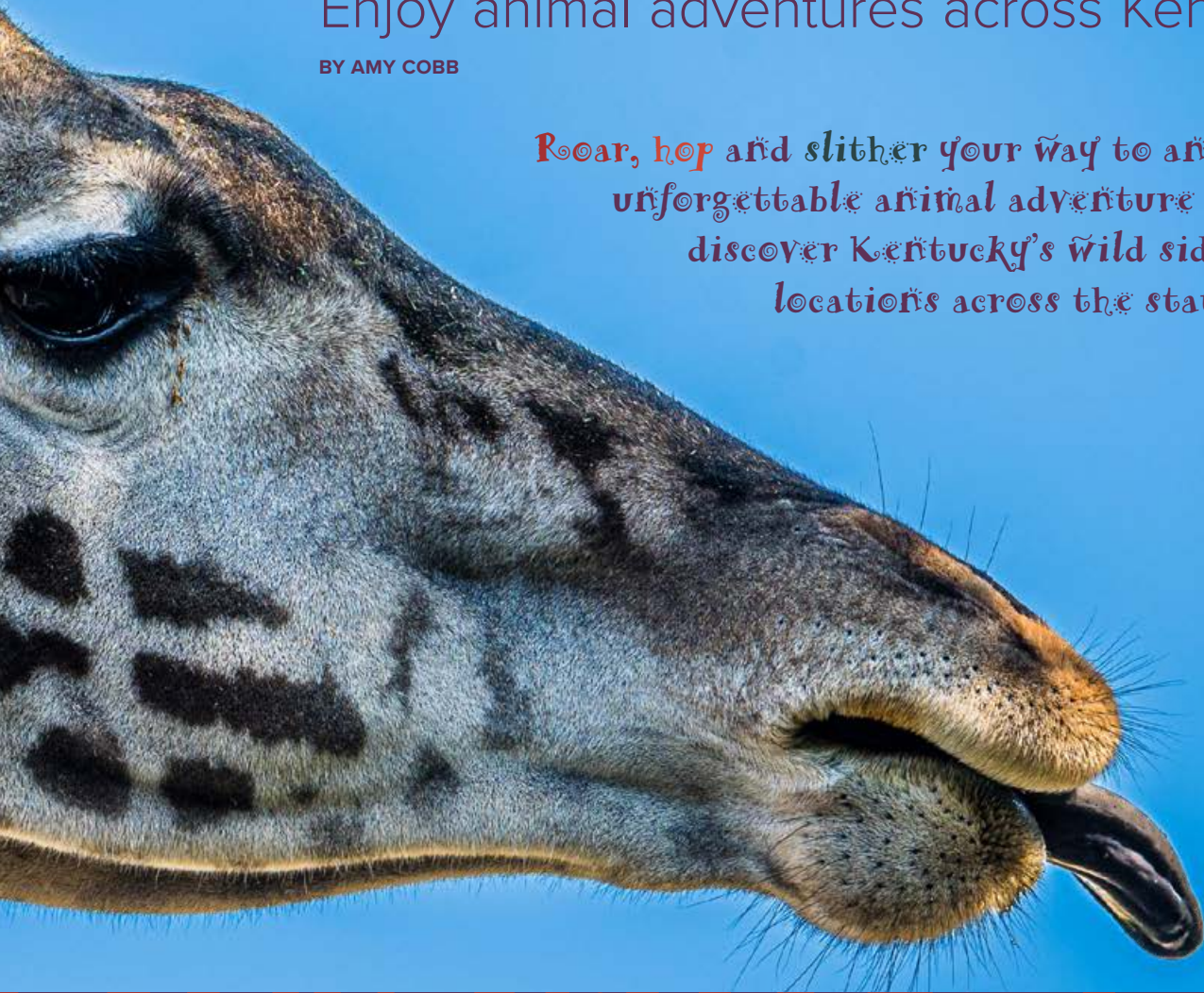
Giraffes are among more than 1,000 species guests can see at the Louisville Zoo. Photo: Louisville Zoo

# WILD

Enjoy animal adventures across Kentucky

BY AMY COBB

Roar, hop and slither your way to an unforgettable animal adventure as you discover Kentucky's wild side at locations across the state.





◀ At far left, Ark Encounter's Ararat Ridge lets visitors feed, pet and interact with kangaroos and wallabies. Photo: Answers in Genesis

At left, lemurs are among the species that educate and entertain at Kentucky Down Under Adventure Zoo. Photo: Kentucky Down Under



**Animal Ambassador:** Luna

**Common name:** Eurasian eagle-owl

**Home:** Ark Encounter's Ararat Ridge Zoo

**Fun fact:** Luna enjoys enrichment—especially paper items, which she loves shredding.

## Ark Encounter's Ararat Ridge Zoo

"Our zoo is really designed to get you up close with a lot of animals," says Ark Encounter's Ararat Ridge Zoo Director Leanne Sarkisian. "There's a lot to see, a lot to do and a lot to learn about."

Located in Williamstown and served by Owen Electric Cooperative, animals on exhibit include Felix, a Hoffmann's two-toed sloth, who spends much of his day hanging around upside down. There's Rikki, a binturong, also called a bearcat—although binturongs are neither bears nor cats—and "not very common in zoos," Sarkisian notes. Recently, Ararat Ridge acquired the proper federal and state permits to permanently house

General Boone, an injured bald eagle that was found in Eastern Kentucky.

Up-close animal interactions include a kangaroo walkabout, behind-the-scenes animal experiences, Junior's Zoo Adventure and animal encounters spotlighting unique animal ambassadors. Zoo programs promote good stewardship in caring for animals from a Biblical perspective.

Sarkisian calls Ararat Ridge a hidden gem with a diverse collection of animals. "We really want to teach people more about the amazing animals that we have in Kentucky and then also species found around the world, as well," she says.

## Kentucky Down Under Adventure Zoo

Ready for an Australian Outback animal adventure? Then gather your closest mates and head to Kentucky Down Under Adventure Zoo in Horse Cave. Kentucky Down Under educates and entertains visitors with interactive, hands-on animal exhibits. "We are an animal lover's paradise where you can get close to many of the animals you love," says Brian Dale, marketing manager.

Enter the Land of Lories aviary to feed rainbow lorikeets; just be prepared—for a sip of nectar, these colorful birds might land on your shoulder or even your head. Explore "the Outback," an open field where emus, sulcata tortoises and

kangaroos freely roam. While petting the kangaroos, look closely to spot a joey peeking from its mother's pouch.

Lemurs, dingoes and capybaras, the world's largest rodent, also make their home at Kentucky Down Under. Daily animal shows include sheep herding and up-close encounters with Luna, the talking umbrella cockatoo, and Clyde, a woma python that handlers drape around the neck of willing volunteers.

"Kentucky Down Under is a place where kids and adults can share their experiences with animals," says Dale. "Kentucky Down Under creates memories to last a lifetime."



**Animal Ambassador:** Luna

**Common name:** Umbrella crested cockatoo

**Home:** Kentucky Down Under Adventure Zoo

**Fun fact:** Luna can talk and enjoys listening to music. She is spoiled by the zookeepers—often going for golf cart rides and playing peek-a-boo with her handlers.



**Animal Ambassador:** Artie

**Common name:** Marginated tortoise

**Home:** Kentucky Reptile Zoo

**Fun fact:** Artie loves to climb and explore his habitat.

## Kentucky Reptile Zoo

The largest collection of venomous snakes in the United States—and likely the world, according to director Kristen Wiley—is found at the Kentucky Reptile Zoo in Slade. Approximately 80 different snakes are on exhibit, including taipans and all four mamba species. A collection of native Kentucky snakes promotes education and conservation of regional species.

“We are a pretty unique sort of place because we have snakes from all over the world, and we provide venom for medical research and antivenom development that is shipped all over the world,” explains Wiley, noting the zoo is working on a conservation project on Saint Lucia in the Caribbean and is currently partnering with India to further improve the country’s antivenom.

Besides venomous snakes, the Kentucky Reptile Zoo is home to large constrictors, like pythons, plus lizards, turtles and alligators.

“There aren’t very many places like us in the whole world,” says Wiley. “It’s always a good idea to try to enjoy the things that we have in our own backyard, and we’re a good example of that.”

KentuckyLiving.com

## Walk on the wild side

Visit KentuckyLiving.com for facility details and contact information, as well as links to educational wildlife worksheets and videos showcasing each destination and the animals that live there.



# Franklin, Kentucky

Discover the charm of Simpson County

Walk the line of the Kentucky and Tennessee borders in Franklin, Ky. This small town offers visitors a blend of historic charm, small-town hospitality and uniquely local experiences that make it a memorable stop for travelers exploring the region. Whether passing through or planning a weekend getaway, Franklin provides plenty to see, do and discover.

In the heart of downtown, you can visit the church where country music’s most beloved couple, Johnny and June Cash, married in 1968. Explore locally owned boutiques, antique shops, welcoming cafes and unique restaurants that capture the easygoing spirit of a classic Kentucky town. While downtown, be sure to visit the historic Old Jail and check out local art at Gallery on the Square.

Jump on the craft bourbon trail and experience Kentucky’s rich bourbon heritage at Dueling Grounds Distillery. Named for the historic duels fought in the 1800s. The distillery offers guided tours, tastings, and handcrafted spirits that showcase the craftsmanship of Kentucky’s signature industry.

Just a few minutes away is the premiere gaming site in Kentucky. The Mint Gaming Hall and Kentucky Downs Racecourse offers the largest sports book east of the Mississippi, live music, special concerts and events, upscale dining, luxury accommodations and live thoroughbred horse racing in the fall. This comprehensive entertainment resort offers something for everyone.

Franklin’s calendar is also filled with lively

community events that draw visitors throughout the year. There are free outdoor concerts during the summer months on Friday nights and car club cruise-ins on Thursday nights. The Summer Vibes Music Festival brings live music and energy to downtown each August, while the Franklin Car and Craft Show fills the streets with vintage automobiles and vendors every September. The largest sunflower fields in Kentucky bloom in August and early September and Kenny Perry’s Country Creek Golf Course is open year-round for golf enthusiasts. You may even get lucky and catch Kenny on the course.

From its historic downtown to its vibrant festivals and local flavors, Franklin, Kentucky, invites visitors to slow down, explore and experience the authentic character of Simpson County.

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## Louisville Zoo

“The Louisville Zoo is like a living classroom,” says Kyle Shepherd, media relations manager. “And there’s always something new to learn.”

Home to over 1,000 animal species, the zoo boasts three award-winning exhibits: Glacier Run, an arctic-themed habitat with polar bears, seals and sea lions; Gorilla Forest, where gorillas and a pygmy hippo reside; and the Islands, a rotating exhibit featuring orangutans, Sumatran tigers, tapirs and more.

Go wild with four VIP backstage passes for once-in-a-lifetime encounters and discover unique animals, like penguins, seals and sea lions, red pandas and Linnaeus’s two-toed sloth. A fifth pass to meet rhinos also includes a visit to the Black-Footed Ferret Conservation Center, one of only five institutions in the world dedicated to a managed system of breeding this endangered mammal.

Upcoming special events include Party for the Planet, a month-long celebration of the Earth that kicked

## Salato Wildlife Education Center

“At Salato, kids can discover Kentucky’s wild side while learning about conservation in a way that feels like an adventure,” says Jules Foster, conservation education program coordinator at the wildlife center, which is located on the grounds of the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources headquarters Frankfort.

True to their motto—“Come prowl awhile!”—Salato’s knowledgeable conservation educators bring learning to life through props and up-close encounters with live animal ambassadors in the outdoor amphitheater. Guests can meet an American kestrel, red-tailed hawk or even non-venomous snakes. “These moments of excitement are hard to replicate in a traditional classroom or on a screen,” Foster notes.



**Animal Ambassador:** Pocket Shark

**Common name:** Black-footed ferret

**Home:** Louisville Zoo

**Fun fact:** Pocket Shark is new to the zoo, and she’s a 9-month-old bundle of energy. Pocket Shark is fast, loves to climb and tries to steal her food bowl as she’s being fed by zookeeper Chris Florence, who adds that Pocket Shark is very determined.

off this month; watch for Funday Mondays and recycling weekends. In May, Wild Lights—an Asian-inspired lantern festival—is back with 20-30 larger than life lanterns illuminating the campus.

Shepherd says every day is different at Louisville Zoo—and there’s something new to see every time you visit.

Program topics vary weekly but include black bear enrichments designed by the animal care team to keep the bear’s day interesting. Help the Hellbender is an interpretive program highlighting North America’s largest salamander while guests learn about Kentucky’s hellbender population and ways to help protect this unique species. Reel Talk introduces kids and adults alike to fish commonly found in Kentucky’s waterways and explores the benefits of fishing.

Foster says a visit to Salato “gives people something to talk about long after they leave and inspires families to get involved in hunting and fishing, hobbies that can become lifelong passions.” She adds, “There is no better way to bond than that.”

## Newport Aquarium

Newport Aquarium is *not* a look-but-don't-touch experience.

"It's immersive. It's eye-level. It's hands-on," says Valerie Baker, sales and marketing director. "Kids aren't just looking into tanks as they walk past them. They're crawling through tunnels, locking eyes with sharks, touching rays and learning in real time."

Special programs include animal enrichment moments, giving visitors an opportunity see animals solving puzzles or engaging with new objects designed for mental and physical stimulation. Groups learn directly from animal experts during scheduled animal feedings, spotlighting penguins, sharks and other species. Interactive touch experiences offer supervised opportunities for kids to safely connect with marine life while learning about anatomy, habitat and conservation.

Walk across the world's first Shark Bridge—if you dare—as sharks swim directly beneath your feet. "In terms of unique animals, we call ourselves the Shark Capital of the Midwest, as we are the only place around where you can see sharks swimming," explains Baker. The aquarium is also home to shark rays, the perfect cross between a shark and a stingray. And Snowflake, a rare



**Animal Ambassador:** Denver

**Common name:** Loggerhead sea turtle

**Home:** Newport Aquarium

**Fun fact:** When Denver hatched, caretakers noticed his back flipper wasn't quite right. Because of that, he was chosen for a life under human care instead of in the open ocean. Today, he's one of the aquarium's most iconic residents, spending his days inspiring guests, snacking like a king and showing off his big personality.

white alligator, fascinates everyone.

Blending fun and education, Newport Aquarium is special because kids are learning without even realizing it, Baker says: "It feels like adventure and play, but there is real education happening. Families leave with great memories and a deeper understanding of wildlife and conservation."



**Animal Ambassador:** American black bear

**Home:** Salato Wildlife Education Center

**Fun fact:** As an ambassador for his wild counterparts, this bear doesn't have a public name. He loves to eat lettuce, and his favorite things to play with are fresh sheets and blankets.



Conservation educator Fisher Evans leads a workshop at Salato Wildlife Center. Photo: Jules Foster/KDFWR

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## Wendt's Wildlife Adventure

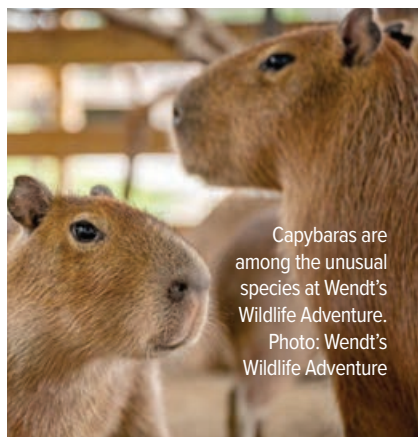
Open since 2021, Wendt's Wildlife Adventure in Carlisle is owned by husband-and-wife team Shaun and Julie Wendt, consumer-members of Bluegrass Energy. "Our goal is to educate people in a fun and engaging setting about the amazing animals of the world through up-close interactions," explains Julie Wendt. "We are continually growing and improving our grounds and exhibits to make each return visit exciting."

Wendt's Wildlife Adventure is home to many unique animals—kangaroos, capybaras, sloths, camels, zebu cattle, various reptiles, African porcupines and more. Guests can experience the Parakeet Encounter, home to hundreds of parakeets, plus some cockatiels and conures. In January, the park welcomed Tango, a 4-year-old reticulated giraffe.

Visitors can also explore Brushy

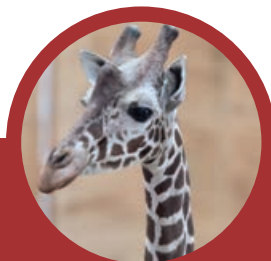
Fork Creek for freshwater critters or gem mining. History buffs will enjoy a self-guided tour of the original Daniel Boone Cabin, built by Boone and his son in 1795. There's also a gift shop, and overnight lodging is available.

"Wendt's Wildlife Adventure is a hidden gem that people are amazed exists in small-town Kentucky,"



Capybaras are among the unusual species at Wendt's Wildlife Adventure.

Photo: Wendt's Wildlife Adventure



**Animal Ambassador:** Tango

**Common name:** Reticulated giraffe

**Home:** Wendt's Wildlife Adventure

**Fun fact:** Tango is around 13 feet tall and will be about 18 feet tall when fully grown. He loves to wrap his long tongue around treats.

Wendt says. "We're just a short drive from all the major cities—Lexington, Louisville, Cincinnati—and make a perfect day trip or even an overnight getaway. Visitors are never sorry they found us." **KL**

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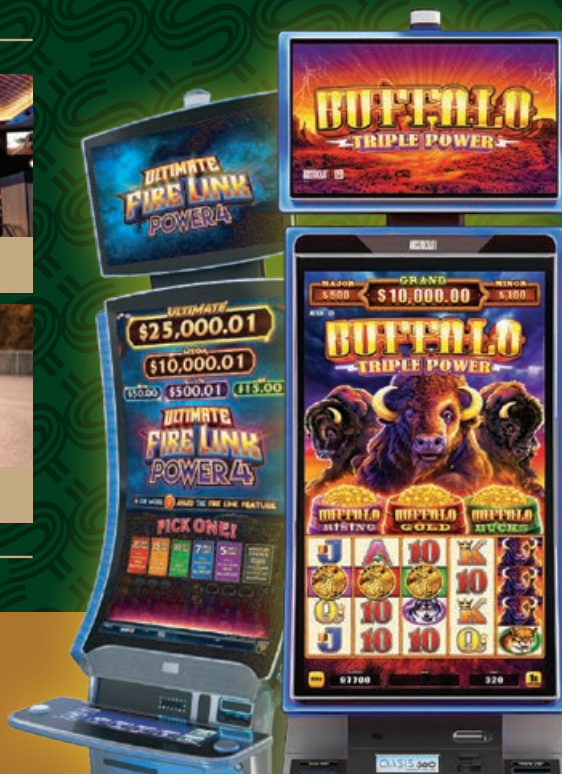


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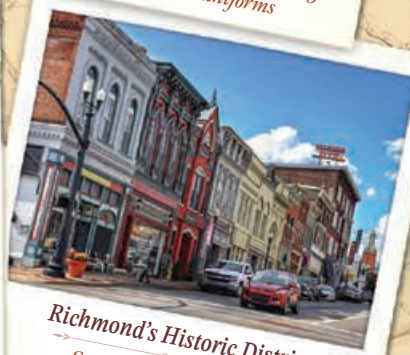
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# Renovation breathes new life into two historic Frankfort properties

## WY STAY



BY TOM WILMES

By all appearances, the abandoned warehouse in downtown Frankfort seemed destined for condemnation when Ashlyn Ackerman, head of design with Weyland Ventures, first toured the property. Built in 1879 on a steep hill along East Broadway, the brick structure showed its age. Its rear wall bowed outward from decades of seeping water, freeze-thaw cycles and the relentless vibration of trains rumbling past on nearby tracks. Inside, brickwork leaned and floors sloped noticeably off level.



The Delegate Hotel in Frankfort is the newest incarnation of an 1879 property with ties to the bourbon industry. Clockwise from top left are the hotel's Cypress and Oak bar; an interior wall showcasing original brick; a king room; a view of the hotel lobby; shrimp cocktail with a mushroom handpie in the Cypress and Oak restaurant; and an aerial view of the hotel's location in historic downtown Frankfort. Photos: Weyland Ventures



## Who was E.H. Taylor Jr.?

*Meet the “father of modern bourbon”*

Born in Columbus, Kentucky, in 1830, Edmund Haynes Taylor Jr. is widely regarded as the “father of modern bourbon” for helping professionalize and legitimize the industry. In 1869 he purchased the old Leestown Distillery, transforming it into O.F.C.—now Buffalo Trace Distillery—and installing copper fermenters, column stills and steam-heated warehouses that set new production standards. He later founded the Old Taylor Distillery, revived today as Castle & Key Distillery.

A grandnephew of Zachary Taylor and descendant of James Madison, Taylor also championed the Bottled-in-Bond Act of 1897 alongside U.S. Treasury Secretary John G. Carlisle, establishing federal quality standards for bourbon and the country’s first consumer protection law.

State and federal historic tax credits helped Weyland Ventures rehabilitate the historic structure that now houses The Delegate Hotel. Photo: Weyland Ventures

“It was in pretty rough shape,” Ackerman says. “But the bones were solid.”

That was enough for Weyland Ventures. The Louisville-based development firm specializes in unique projects, particularly the adaptive reuse of historic buildings. Its team of architects, engineers, designers and preservation specialists began transforming the building into a 46-room boutique hotel called The Delegate.

After a structural analysis, crews rebuilt nearly the entire rear wall facing the tracks. They reinforced original timber joists and inserted new concrete structural walls to stabilize the brick shell. On the facade, the team preserved and highlighted original elements, including an ornate Italianate cornice and tall arched wooden windows. A few quirks remain, however, adding to the hotel’s character.

“If you look down some of the guest corridors, where you can see the exposed brick wall, it looks like it’s leaning a little bit,” Ackerman says. “It’s almost like, ‘Hey, I haven’t had bourbon today. That doesn’t look right.’”

Rest assured the walls are sound, and in fact the sound economics of Kentucky’s bourbon industry helped make The Delegate possible. In addition to historic tax credits—a 20% state credit on qualifying rehabilitation expenses, paired with an additional 20% federal

historic tax credit—the project tapped into Kentucky tourism tax credits designed to encourage development along the Kentucky Bourbon Trail.

“That’s really the difference maker,” Ackerman says of the incentives. “The economics often don’t work without it. We’re fortunate Kentucky has such a strong historic tax credit program.”

Several projects in Weyland’s portfolio benefited from similar financing tools during development. Like The Delegate, those properties—the Bardstown Motor Lodge and the Myriad Hotel in Louisville, housed in a former disco ball factory—operate under sister company Common Bond Hotel Collection. Another boutique hotel is slated to open later this year in downtown Elizabethtown.

Adaptive reuse projects not only give new life to historic building, but they’re also often welcomed by the community, Ackerman adds: “Folks have known these buildings for many decades and are very supportive of something happening there.”

## New role for an E.H. Taylor connection

In addition to serving as a storage warehouse and at one time housing the Kentucky Buggy and Harness Co., The Delegate building also has another



bourbon connection. Through researching old deeds and fire insurance maps, the Weyland team discovered that E.H. Taylor Jr. once leased part of the property to age whiskey.

“It wasn’t until we cleaned the brick on one side of the building and uncovered a ghost sign that read ‘E.H. Taylor and Sons’ that we confirmed that, ‘Yeah, he was here,’” Ackerman says.

Taylor left an indelible mark on Frankfort and the bourbon industry. He modernized what is now Buffalo Trace Distillery and later built Old Taylor Distillery, revived today as Castle & Key Distillery. He also served as Frankfort’s mayor for 15 consecutive years.

“It’s almost like he was a force of gravity—everything moved around him,” says Nick Laracuate, lead archivist for Buffalo Trace and its parent company Sazerac. “It’s hard to track him because



Throughout its long life, the Delegate Hotel building has been a warehouse and a factory, and part of it was once leased by bourbon pioneer E.H. Taylor to age whiskey. Photo: Weyland Ventures

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Nick Laracuente, the lead archivist for Sazerac Company, is known as the “Bourbon Archaeologist.” Photo: Sazerac Company



he touched nearly everything downtown. He lived here. He had offices in the McClure Building and apparently helped lay the cornerstone for Second Street. And, of course, he was mayor. I’ve heard a story where he tried to get out of it and didn’t actually run, but he got elected anyway.”

Known as the “Bourbon Archaeologist,” Laracuente helped uncover Taylor’s long-lost 19th-century distillery ruins at Buffalo Trace, nicknamed “Bourbon Pompeii.” He formerly worked as an archaeologist with the Kentucky Heritage Council’s State Historic Preservation Office, which coincidentally was headquartered in Taylor’s former home on Washington Street.

“My office was essentially in Taylor’s bedroom,” Laracuente says.

Built in 1815, the two-story Federal-style residence was known as the “queen of the corner.” Taylor lived there in the 1870s while developing Old Taylor Distillery. Though the home had fallen into disrepair by the time the Heritage Council moved in, it retained details like ornate plasterwork and original fixtures. “The staircase is amazing,” Laracuente says, recalling that the staff gathered on its steps to take its annual holiday photo.

After the preservation office relocated, the house sat vacant for

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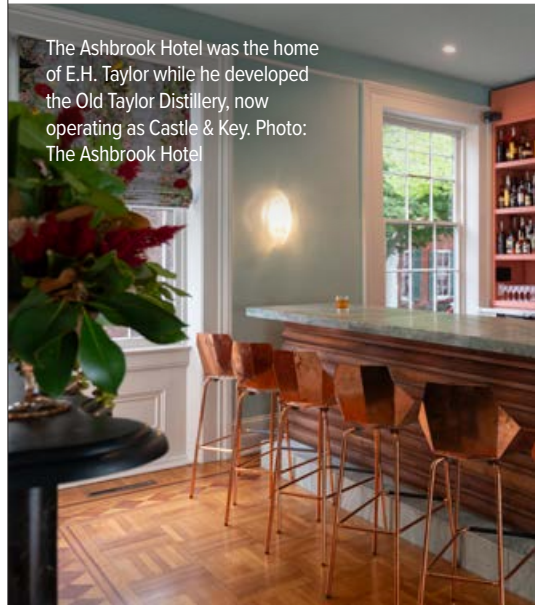
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The Ashbrook Hotel was the home of E.H. Taylor while he developed the Old Taylor Distillery, now operating as Castle & Key. Photo: The Ashbrook Hotel

more than a decade until Lexington commercial real estate broker Tyler Bromagen purchased it as his first major rehabilitation project.

“The plaster was falling off, and the roof was falling in. It was in rough, rough shape,” Bromagen says. But the stone foundation walls were 3 feet thick and the supporting timbers massive. “With an old historic building like that, you know it’s built to stand for hundreds of years. It just needed some rehab and care,” he says.

Working with an architect and Louisville-based Natalie O Design, Bromagen transformed the property into the 24-room Ashbrook Hotel and restaurant. Like The Delegate, the project relied on historic tax credits to make it financially viable.

Unexpected discoveries emerged during the restoration. What initially appeared to be pressed metal wainscoting in the library turned out to be Lincrusta, a high-end Victorian wall covering made from pressed and embossed natural materials. Upstairs, a flooring specialist determined that wide-plank boards were likely cut from ancient pine harvested from Southern swamps. “The craftsmanship is remarkable,” Bromagen says. “You can’t replicate it.”

A grand chandelier, now converted to electric, still hangs in the front entrance, where the central staircase

The 24-room Ashbrook Hotel and restaurant features original materials and historic craftsmanship. Photo: The Ashbrook Hotel



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▲ A room that once served as E.H. Taylor's library is still a gathering space at the Ashbrook Hotel. Photo: Ashbrook Hotel

remains a focal point. Just off the front foyer, next to the bar, the former library once again serves as a gathering space.

"I like to think there were a lot of bourbon deals made in that library," Bromagen says.

### Local ties

Though The Ashbrook is independently owned, its operations and restaurant are managed by Common Bond.

Like The Delegate's steakhouse-style restaurant, Cypress & Oak, both properties have evolved into gathering places for guests and locals alike. Each also emphasizes local hiring.

"We always try to find local talent who maybe is currently having to drive to Louisville or Lexington to work in higher-end hospitality and give them a chance to stay a little closer to home and flex their talent," Ackerman says.

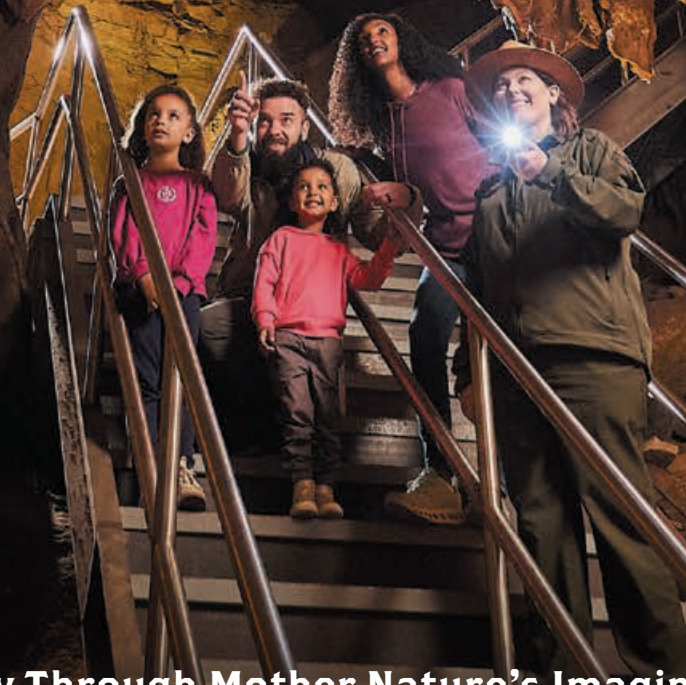
Laracuate, a Frankfort resident, enjoys returning to the site of his former office and seeing what these buildings have become. As a historian, he also can't help but consider Taylor and the way past and present intersect.

"Whenever you're walking around town, or if you stop for drinks or dinner at either one of them, it's fun to think that he was there," he says. "Walking the same streets and seeing the same views." **KL**

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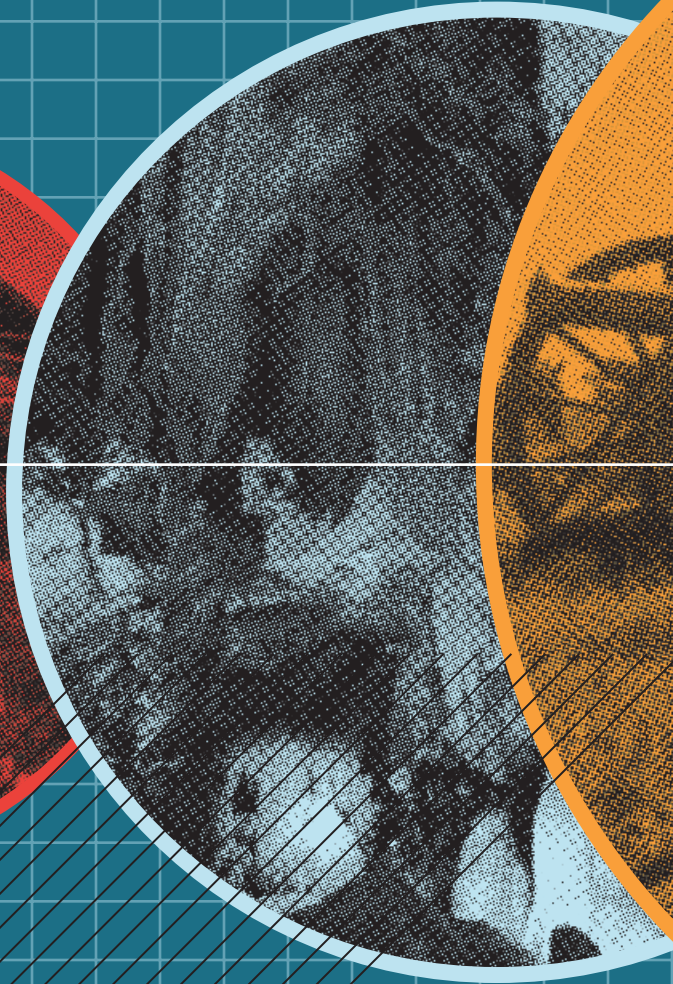
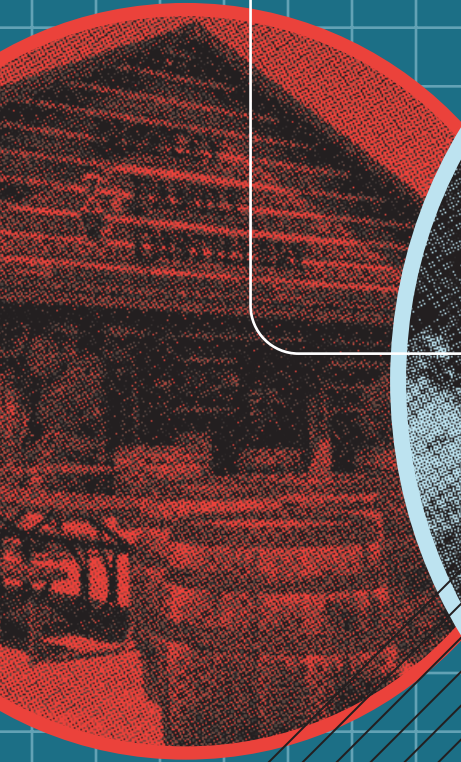
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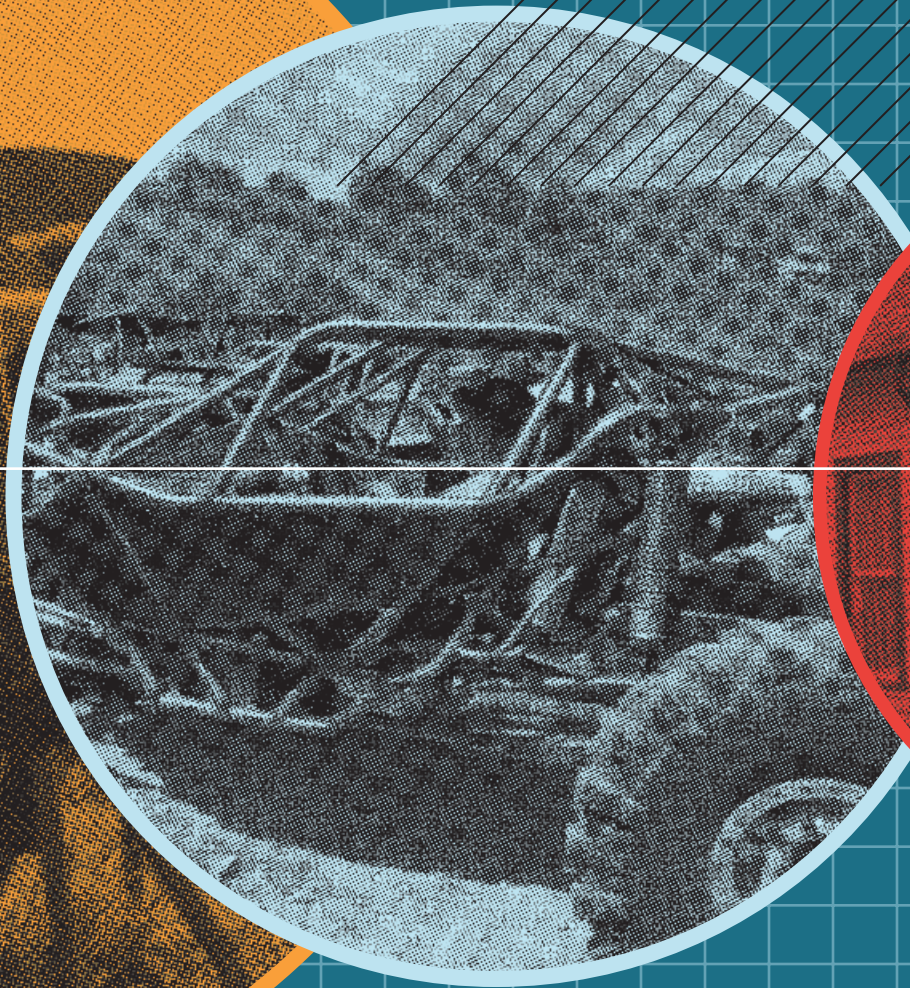
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BY KATHY WITT

### The ancient past

Your journey begins deep underground at Park City's Historic Diamond Caverns, a proud consumer-member of Warren County RECC as described by owner Christine Bragg. Discovered in 1859, the cave's glittering calcite formations—stalactites, stalagmites and flowstone draperies—have been sculpted over millions of years, and daily guided tours lead visitors through chambers where geology whispers of this ancient world.

"We are the second-oldest show cave in Kentucky and the fourth-oldest continuously visited commercial cave in the nation," says Bragg, adding that

See thousands of formations at Historic Diamond Caverns, which has a strong commitment to preservation and presentation.



the cave's formations are considered some of the nation's finest. "We are a historic landmark hiding right beneath your feet, a world-class beauty with our calcite drapery deposits."

So come for the geology, but stay for the ultimate natural air conditioning, deliciously cooling in Kentucky's sweaty summertime humidity.

"We are always enhancing our guest experience through guided storytelling that connects our 1859 roots to the modern-day wonders of the cavern," says Bragg.

### Native American history

Next, walk in the footsteps of Native American history at Mantle Rock Nature Preserve, located in Smithland in the Warren RECC service area and managed by The Nature Conservancy. A certified site on the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail, the preserve is marked by a natural sandstone arch shaped

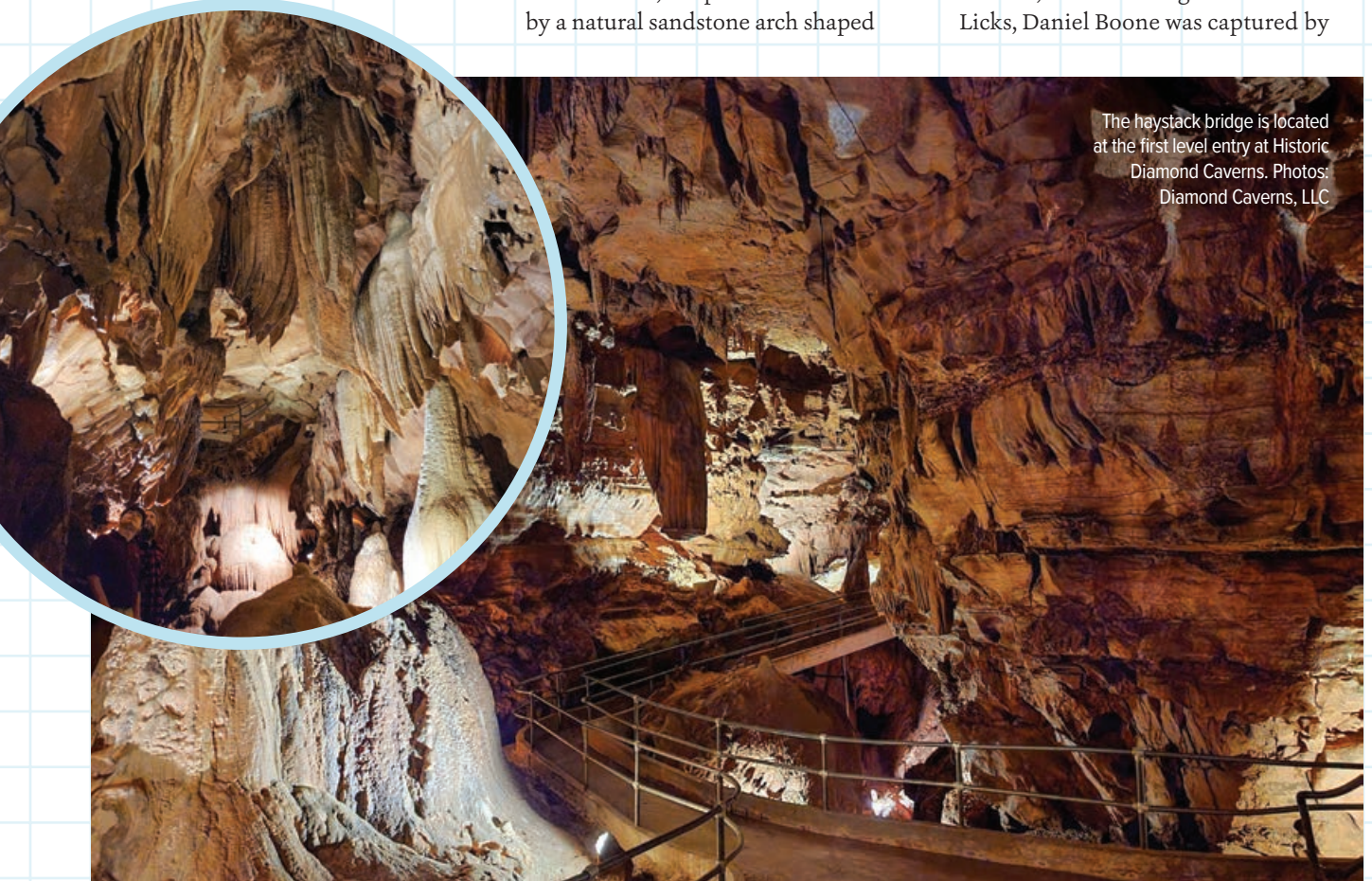
over millennia by wind and water, with upland forest and a rocky stream.

Mantle Rock rises 30 feet above the forest floor and spans 188 feet—a rugged and natural shelter characterized by fluorite deposits and bluffs. It was here, during the harsh winter of 1838-1839, that thousands of Cherokee people camped during forced removal from their homelands, waiting for the frozen Ohio River to thaw and ferry operations to resume.

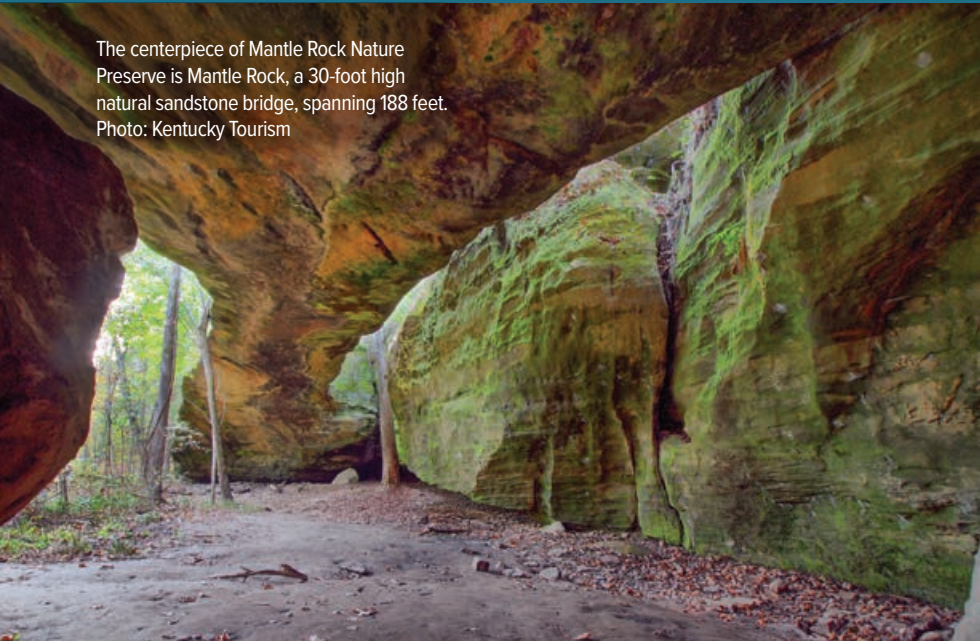
A hiking trail takes visitors along the road the Cherokee walked—the halfway point of their 800-mile journey—and to the arch framed by rare glade ecosystems and native plants. A longer Loop Trail features a historic roadbed, and a series of interpretive panels provide historical and ecological context.

### Early eXploration

In 1778, while hunting near Blue Licks, Daniel Boone was captured by



The haystack bridge is located at the first level entry at Historic Diamond Caverns. Photos: Diamond Caverns, LLC



The centerpiece of Mantle Rock Nature Preserve is Mantle Rock, a 30-foot high natural sandstone bridge, spanning 188 feet. Photo: Kentucky Tourism

Chief Blackfish, a Shawnee leader. Impressed with Boone's skills, Blackfish called Boone Sheltowee, meaning "Big Turtle" and marked Boone as an adopted son and member of his clan. The Sheltowee Trace National Recreation Trail is named in honor of Kentucky's favorite frontier explorer.

Winding through Daniel Boone National Forest is the backbone of its vast trail system, Sheltowee Trace. The trail begins on Main Street in Morehead in Rowan County and traverses 300-plus miles of rugged, forested terrain. It traces Boone's footsteps across forests and ridges that still feel untamed, from the Knob region to the Cumberland Plateau. White blazes with the image of a turtle mark the meandering trail routes for hikers.

Meanwhile, Harrodsburg's Old Fort Harrod State Park recreates Kentucky's first permanent settlement, complete with cabins, blockhouses, a working blacksmith shop and costumed interpreters who make frontier life come alive.

Explore its pioneer cemetery—the oldest cemetery west of the Alleghenies—with its crooked and weathered tombstones. Visitors also



▲ Daniel Boone, from the National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution; partial gift of the William T. Kemper Foundation and of the Chapman Hanson Foundation.

can see the humble cabin where Abraham Lincoln's parents, Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks, wed on June 12, 1806, enclosed within the Lincoln Marriage Temple, a stop on Kentucky's Lincoln Heritage Trail. In the historic Mansion Museum, find exhibits including furniture and tools used by early Kentucky settlers, and souvenirs in the gift shop.

Win a Getaway. See page 51.

Win a Getaway. See page 51.



Sheltowee Trace National Recreation Trail weaves through many scenic areas, including Cave Run Lake, Red River Gorge Geological Area, Natural Bridge State Resort Park, Laurel Lake, Cumberland Falls State Resort Park and the Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area. Photo: Kentucky Tourism

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## Bourbon beginnings

Bourbon's origin story traces back to 1789, with the discovery that charred oak barrels imparted a mellow smoothness and flavor to America's native spirit. That legacy lives on at Sparta's Neeley Family Distillery, served by Owen Electric, and on the Kentucky Bourbon Trail, where 11 generations have carried forward traditional methods—small batches, copper stills and family craftsmanship—linking today's bourbon to its frontier beginnings.

According to its website, the operation had been distilling and bootlegging illegally in Eastern Kentucky for 11 generations, but in 2015 the family business went legal when Roy Neeley built the state-of-the-art distillery. His son, Royce Neeley, president and master distiller, began working in the distillery at age 24—becoming one of the youngest distillery owners in the world.



Together they continue the family tradition of crafting authentic moonshine, including Bottled in Bond Old Pap Neeley's Reserve Kentucky Bourbon

Father-son team Royce Neeley and Roy Neeley pose with the three-chamber still. Photos: Neeley Family Distillery



**Edmonson County, Kentucky** is the back porch to **Mammoth Cave National Park**, where the Nolin River spills into the Green River and is part of Kentucky's national water trail. Backpack the backcountry of Mammoth Cave National Park or maybe experience it on horseback with guided rides at **Double J Stables and Horseman's Campground**. **Moutardier Marina Nolin Lake** is a slice of southern heaven just beckoning a warm day on the lake. The rolling hills and lush valleys lend **Park Mammoth Golf Club** and **Hickory Cabins Disc Golf** to offer scenic courses. There is a variety of dining, lodging, shopping, and adventures to be enjoyed while in **the natural place to be**.

[www.cavesandlakes.com](http://www.cavesandlakes.com)



### Time Capsule: Kentucky equine history

The Kentucky Derby Museum in Louisville immerses visitors in the thrill of “the most exciting two minutes in sports” through high-energy exhibits, historic artifacts and a 360-degree film that captures all the Derby drama.

Interactive displays explore jockey life, thoroughbred training and racing traditions. Museum admission includes a guided walking tour of Churchill Downs, where guests walk trackside, visit the paddock and experience the legendary venue that has defined Kentucky horseracing for generations.

For a behind-the-scenes experience, Visit Horse Country shares the stories of the horses, the land and the people through a variety of horse farm tours, opening the gates to farms like Taylor Made Farm in Nicholasville, served by Blue Grass Energy. The family owned and operated farm breeds, raises and races top quality racehorses.

“Guests who want to get up close and personal to horses will love the Mares and Foals Tour,” says Grace Clark-Sweet, marketing and member services coordinator for Visit Horse Country. “They’ll have the opportunity to meet momma mares and baby foals, pet and feed the horses and possibly even groom a horse.”

A leading breeding and sales operation in the thoroughbred industry, having sold over \$2 billion worth of horses at public auction, Taylor Made Farm is known for its interactive tours as well as its resident equine celebrities, including Kentucky Oaks winner Serengeti Empress and leading sire Not This Time.

HALIM/ADOBE STOCK



The Winner’s Circle exhibit at the Kentucky Derby Museum in Louisville. Photo: Kentucky Tourism



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# Cave City expands its welcome

## Bourbon momentum meets big-event capability

For decades, Cave City has been known as the welcoming gateway to Mammoth Cave National Park, drawing travelers off Interstate 65 for underground exploration and family adventure. Today, this Southcentral Kentucky community is expanding that identity. What was once primarily a convenient stopping point is evolving into a destination in its own right—one shaped increasingly by Kentucky's signature industry: bourbon.

Downtown Cave City now features tasting rooms from two respected Kentucky craft distillers: Dueling Grounds Distillery and MB Roland Distillery. Their decision to establish a presence in Cave City represents more than retail expansion—it signals confidence in the community's tourism base and long-term growth strategy.

Dueling Grounds Distillery, founded in Franklin, built its reputation on small-batch, grain-to-glass production using locally sourced grains. Named for a historic dueling site in Simpson County, the distillery blends storytelling with craftsmanship. Its Cave City tasting room introduces visitors to its bourbons and specialty spirits in an approachable, curated setting, connecting the brand to one of the most heavily traveled corridors in the commonwealth.

MB Roland Distillery, established in 2009 near Pembroke, is widely recognized for its pre-Prohibition-inspired style and hands-on distilling philosophy. The brand has long emphasized bold character, traditional methods, and deep Kentucky roots. By opening a tasting location in Cave City, MB Roland strengthens the town's emerging role within the craft spirits landscape while broadening access to its distinctive portfolio.

Momentum continues to build. In April 2026, Cave City Distilling Co. is expected to open a full production facility downtown. Unlike a tasting room alone, a working distillery adds another layer of authenticity. Visitors will not only sample spirits but also experience the production process through tours and expanded hospitality space. This step moves Cave City from a bourbon waypoint to an active participant in the state's distilling economy.

Perhaps most notably, Cave City's distilling partners are slated to join the Kentucky



*Cave City's distilling partners are slated to join the Kentucky Bourbon Trail in July 2026.*

Bourbon Trail in July 2026. Inclusion on the Trail positions the community within Kentucky's premier spirits tourism program—an itinerary intentionally followed by enthusiasts from across the nation and around the world. For a town already situated along a major interstate and adjacent to a national park, that designation creates meaningful economic synergy.

Bourbon tourism drives overnight stays, restaurant traffic, retail sales and repeat visitation. It supports local agriculture and celebrates the craftsmanship that defines Kentucky worldwide. In Cave City, bourbon complements existing attractions rather than competing with them. Families can explore the caves by day and adults can enjoy tastings in the evening. The result is a diversified visitor economy that encourages longer stays and broader spending.

Supporting this expanding hospitality footprint is another important asset: the Cave Area Conference Center. Located just off I-65, the facility provides scalable space for conferences, trade expos, banquets, and regional gatherings. As the bourbon presence grows, the Conference Center becomes a natural partner—

capable of hosting festivals, corporate meetings, industry events and large celebrations tied to the community's evolving brand.

The Conference Center's flexible exhibit hall, accessible parking and proximity to hotels allow organizers to convene significant groups without the congestion of larger metropolitan areas. Attendees can gather for programming and then easily explore downtown tasting rooms and local restaurants. This integration of meeting space and walkable attractions strengthens Cave City's appeal to planners seeking both functionality and character.

Cave City's transformation is not accidental. It reflects collaboration among entrepreneurs, civic leadership, and tourism advocates who recognize that heritage industries can power modern development. By embracing bourbon while enhancing its ability to host large-scale events, Cave City is broadening its economic base and elevating its profile across Kentucky.

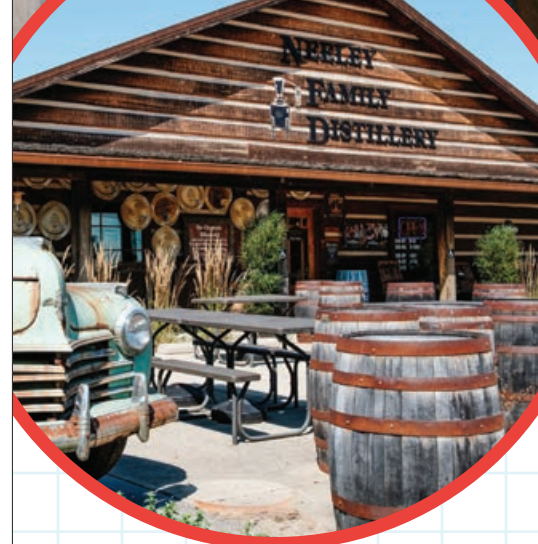
The caves may remain the original draw, but the future is being poured in tasting glasses and convened in event halls. In Cave City, tradition and forward-looking investment are working together—and the invitation to visit, gather and experience it all has never been stronger.

Win a Getaway. See page 51.

[www.cavecity.com](http://www.cavecity.com) | 270-773-8833

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Old Browny is the Neeley Family Distillery's 600-gallon Vendome copper pot still.

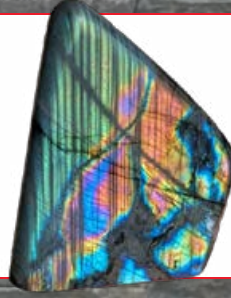


Tastings at the Neeley Family Distillery are not just about flavor—they're about heritage. Photos: Neeley Family Distillery

Barrel-Aged Moonshine, and a variety of bourbons like Neeley Bottled in Bond Four Grain Bourbon.

Take a guided tour for an insider's look at daily operations and the hand-crafted production process, concluding with a tutored tasting of eight

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Enjoy a variety of wines and a welcoming atmosphere at Fancy Farm Vineyard & Winery. Photo: Fancy Farm Vineyard and Winery

Neeley signature spirits. You also can bottle your own Neeley Family Distillery Single Barrel Bourbon straight from the cask, filling, corking and sealing a one-of-a-kind Kentucky keepsake.

## Roots of commercial wine

Established in 1799, First Vineyard Winery in Nicholasville was America's first commercial vineyard, a pioneering spirit that is honored with tours and tastings amid rolling hills overlooking the Kentucky River Valley.

"The view is breathtaking," says Bobby Carpenter, who co-owns the winery with Tom Beall. "To gaze upon the Alexander grapevines that were the same type of vine planted by (master vinedresser) John James Dufour in 1799 is awe inspiring."

Served by Blue Grass Energy and on the National Register of Historic Places, First Vineyard Winery offers, as its tagline suggests, "a taste of history" with every sip. The winery has ties to Daniel Boone, who surveyed the land; Patrick Henry, who issued the deed; and Thomas Jefferson, who in 1805 tasted the wine made with those Alexander grapes.

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▲ First Vineyard Winery in Nicholasville was the first commercial winery in the United States, having been established by state statute in 1799. Photo: First Vineyard Winery

Drop by for a taste of one of First Vineyard Winery’s dry, semi-dry, or sweet red and white wines, along with a crowd pleaser, the sweetly decadent Cherry Cordial.

In Graves County, the first winery established there is named as much for its community as for its fine wine grapes: Fancy Farm Vineyard and Winery, served by West Kentucky RECC, continues the Bluegrass state’s winemaking tradition, blending heritage with modern winemaking.

Owned by fourth-generation landowner Tom Curtsinger, the vineyard is known for its boutique winemaking spirit, growing European grape varieties in Western Kentucky soil that features an array of grape varieties: cabernet sauvignon, merlot, Sangiovese, malbec, chardonnay, viognier and Riesling.

The winery crafts small batch wines that reflect the region’s warm climate, while

the cozy tasting room with wood-spindled wraparound porch and farmhouse décor creates a relaxed setting for those who like to linger over their favorite wine.

“When folks arrive, they tell us they feel like they’re old friends,” says Curtsinger. “And that they’ve found the best new hideaway getaway.”

### Civil War era

The Perryville Battlefield State Historic Site, served by Inter-County Energy, preserves the grounds where Kentucky’s largest and bloodiest Civil War battle unfolded on October 8, 1862. As one of the most unaltered battlefields in the United States, Perryville presents visitors with the same sweeping panoramas the soldiers of the Union and Confederate armies saw on the fateful day they clashed.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 44

# COLUMBIA-ADAIR COUNTY, KENTUCKY

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In Columbia–Adair County, families trade traffic for country roads and screen time for lake time. Here, adventure unfolds naturally on the water, around the square and beneath wide Kentucky skies.

At the center of it all is Green River Lake, a playground for every age. Kids cast their first fishing lines for bass and bluegill while parents soak in peaceful morning views. Boaters spend the day tubing, skiing and cruising miles of open water, launching from Holmes Bend Marina. What makes the experience even more special? Green River Lake is the only major lake in Kentucky with no shoreline management. Its completely natural, undeveloped shoreline means uninterrupted scenery, protected wildlife and a true back-to-nature atmosphere that families can explore together.

Off the water, Columbia’s historic square invites strolling and discovery. Stop by Nanwood Market for charming finds and unique gifts, then browse the fun, fashion-forward pieces at Gypsee Jolee. It’s the kind of small-town shopping where conversations are friendly and treasures are unexpected.

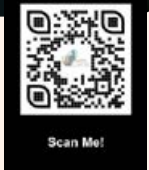
History comes alive here, too. Families can tour the 1803 Trabue-Russell House, visit the home of celebrated author Janice Holt Giles and hear stories tied to frontier legend Daniel Boone, reminders that adventure has always been part of this region’s spirit. Lindsey Wilson University also adds a youthful energy and year-round activity from cultural performances and athletic events, bringing added vibrancy and character to this close-knit community.



And when it’s time to eat, Columbia delivers comfort with character. Start the morning with breakfast at Happy Cow Cafe. Grab a laid-back country-store lunch or pull up a seat at Moore’s Pool Room for a burger locals proudly call one of the best in Kentucky. Then wind down with a hearty steak dinner at Black Stallion Steakhouse.

As the sun sets over the lake and campfires begin to glow, families gather, stories are shared and memories are made.

In Columbia–Adair County, adventure feels real, the pace feels right and family time comes naturally.



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The Perryville Battlefield State Historic Site preserves the grounds where the Union and Confederate armies clashed on October 8, 1862. Photos: Perryville Battlefield State Historic Site

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 42

Standing in the hush of open prairie and grasslands, with monuments recalling the stories of the soldiers and civilians caught in the conflict, one can almost sense the ghosts of that long-ago conflict—and in fact, the park offers Ghost Walks in the fall.

Miles of hiking trails marked with cannons and dozens of interpretative signs detailing the battle invite visitors to explore the land. Many of the fallen remain unknown, resting in mass graves or beneath simple markers that reflect the battle's scale and hurried burials.

“The Perryville Battlefield has two Congressional Medal of Honor recipients, Pvt. John Durham of the 1st Wisconsin Infantry, and Pvt. William Surles of the 2nd Ohio Infantry,” says Park Manager Bryan Bush.

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General Hal Moore Museum is located at the National Civil War Battles of the Western Theater Museum complex on Museum Row in Bardstown. Photo: Visit Bardstown



## Time Capsule: Kentucky at War

The General Hal Moore Museum, located within the National Civil War Battles of the Western Theater Museum, covers conflicts from the American Revolution to World Wars I and II to present-day conflicts, focusing on the contributions of Kentuckians.

Located on Bardstown's Museum Row, it is named for Bardstown native Harold G. Moore, a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, a hero of the Vietnam and Korean wars and co-author of the 1992 bestselling book, *We Were Soldiers Once...and Young: Ia Drang – The Battle That Changed the War in Vietnam*.

The collection includes the general's uniforms and boots, flags, medals, photographs and other memorabilia, plus Moore's director's chair from the filming of the 2002 movie based on his book, *We Were Soldiers*, starring Mel Gibson.

History is imprinted in the grounds of Blue Licks Battlefield State Resort Park in Carlisle. It is the site of the last battle of the Revolutionary War—a quiet rise of meadow and timber where Kentucky militiamen made their last stand, and the remains of an ancient buffalo path, found along the park's Buffalo Trace hiking trail.

Daniel Boone came through the area on a salt-making expedition and was captured by Shawnee Indians along with his hunting party. A hike along the Licking River Trail takes visitors near the site. In the park's nature preserve, floraphiles might spy the rare, wispy and federally protected Short's goldenrod, a bright yellow flower that stands up to 2 feet tall and blooms August through November. The Pioneer Museum adds another chapter with its Native American and pioneer artifacts and mastodon bones.

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## 2026 TRAVEL ISSUE



▲ Skill levels on the ATV trails at Mine Made Adventure Park and Campground range from beginner to advanced, with markers to designate each trail. Photo courtesy of participants of the ATV Park and Campers

Take a guided tour. See the wildflowers, birds and butterflies at Perryville, which is also a wildlife refuge. Visit the Perryville Battlefield Museum with its Civil War display and pop into the Museum Store for a book on the subject, including Kenneth Noe's comprehensive *Perryville: This Grand Havoc of Battle*.

This summer, on July 4, the Sons of Union Veterans of Kentucky will celebrate the 250th Anniversary of the United States at Perryville Battlefield. (More info at [KentuckyLiving.com](http://KentuckyLiving.com).)

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**Berea College, Doris Ullman Galleries,** 101 Chestnut St., Berea; (859) 985-3000, berea.edu, berea.edu/doris-ullmann-galleries.

**Bill Monroe Homeplace,** 6210 U.S. 62 East, Beaver Dam; (270) 298-0036, ohiocounty.com/billmonroe.

**Blue Licks Battlefield State Resort Park,** 10299 Maysville Road, Carlisle; (859) 289-5507, parks.ky.gov.

**Fancy Farm Vineyard and Winery,** 115 Hayden St., Fancy Farm; (270) 623-8787, fancyfarmvineyardandwinery.com.

**First Vineyard Winery,** 5800 Sugar Creek Pike, Nicholasville; (859) 948-4208, firstvineyard.net.

**Historic Diamond Caverns,** 1900 Mammoth Cave Parkway, Park City; (270) 749-2233, diamondcaverns.com.

**Visit Horse Country** (859) 963-1004, visithorsecountry.com: Taylor Made Farm, 2765 Union Mill Road, Nicholasville; (859) 885-3345, taylormadefarm.com.

**Kentucky Derby Museum,** Churchill Downs, 704 Central Ave, Louisville; (502) 637-1111, derbymuseum.org.

**Mantle Rock Nature Preserve,** 1800 Lola Road, Smithland; (270) 557-9835, kentuckylakegateway.com; nature.org (search on Mantle Rock).

**Mine Made Adventure Park and Campground,** 750 Sutton Memorial Drive, Leburn; (606) 634-5012, minemadepark.com.

**General Hal Moore Museum at the National Civil War Battles of the Western Theater Museum,** Museum Row, 310 E. Broadway St., Bardstown; (502) 349-0291, civilwarmuseumbardstown.com.

**Sheltowee Trace Trail National Recreation Trail,** State Route 377, Morehead; (606) 780-4342, visitmorehead.com.

**Neeley Family Distillery,** 4360 State Route 1130, Sparta; (859) 609-3641, neeleyfamilydistillery.com.

**Old Fort Harrod State Park,** 100 S. College St., Harrodsburg; (859) 734-3314, parks.ky.gov.

**Perryville Battlefield State Historic Site,** 1825 Battlefield Road, Perryville; (859) 332-8631, parks.ky.gov.



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TEAM KENTUCKY

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Pull into an RV site equipped with water, electricity and Wi-Fi; book one of eight cozy cabins; or pitch a tent, choosing from 109 campsites in a wooded setting. A year-round paradise in Eastern Kentucky, the park is managed by County Judge-Executive Jeff Dobson and the Knott County Fiscal Court. It offers a family-oriented campground for a laid-back and care-free vacation, where swapping stories around the campfire, drinking in the beauty of the hills of Eastern Kentucky and traversing the trails are what's on the itinerary.

### The birth of bluegrass

The 1940s brought the sound of bluegrass music to the world stage. Learn the story on Jerusalem Ridge in Beaver Dam at the Bill Monroe Homeplace, site of the childhood home of the Father of Bluegrass and a historic musical touchstone that has become a pilgrimage site for music fans around the world.

Tour guides welcome visitors to step back in time at the Bill Monroe Homeplace in Beaver Dam. Photo: Cody Chinn



Served by Warren RECC, the homeplace is staged for the period Monroe lived there, from 1917 to 1929, and is filled with replicas of the family's belongings, along with a few original pieces.

"The home was restored using 70% of original material, and those walls have music in them," says Jody Flener, executive director at the Ohio County Tourism Commission. "You'll see the woodburning stove in the boys' room, Bill's mother's rocker in the girls' room, her butter churn in the kitchen, and the ironing board where (Malissa Vandiver Monroe) stood many hours to instill the importance of a good appearance in her son."

Visit the home March through November. Bring a lawn chair for live bluegrass music during Pickin' on The Porch, 6–8:30 p.m. on the second Saturday each month, May to October.

### The fight for civil rights

Continue the journey into the 1960s and Kentucky's role in the struggle for Civil Rights and social justice at Lincoln Hall in Berea. A stop on the U.S. Civil Rights Trail, Berea College was among the first integrated colleges in the South, and Lincoln Hall, erected 1885-1887 and named in honor of President Abraham Lincoln, symbolizes its commitment to equality.

Lincoln Hall originally housed classrooms, a laboratory and the college library. Its architectural style, according to Berea archivist Tim Brinkley, is reminiscent of buildings on the campus of Harvard University. Today it is an administrative office building and, while not open to the public, you can enjoy the historic building from the outside. Afterward, head over to the college's Doris Ullman Galleries for an enriching way to experience the campus.

Showcasing more than 16,500 pieces of artworks and artifacts from around the world in a collection that spans about 5,000 years, the galleries present



A stop on the U.S. Civil Rights Trail, Lincoln Hall at Berea College was built with 581,000 bricks that were manufactured on campus.

Students hand-dug the footings; and the foundation is made of locally quarried sandstone. Photo: Berea College Records/Berea College Photographic Archives

rotating exhibits of contemporary visual artists. It is also home to the Berea College Art Collection, which was established in 1935 as a teaching collection.

Featured are paintings, prints and photographs by European and American masters and contemporary artists as well as contemporary ceramics and Asian arts. Significant pieces include works by Rembrandt, Renaissance paintings from the Samuel H. Kress Collection, Japanese woodblock prints and over 3,000 photographs by gallery namesake, Doris Ullmann (1882-1934), a photographer famous for her portraits of the people of Appalachia.

In addition to rotating exhibitions, the venue hosts gallery tours, hands-on workshops and artist talks, and guest lectures.

From the ancient formations of Historic Diamond Caverns to the Civil Rights legacy of Berea, Kentucky's history is a journey through time. Each stop along the way, from battlefield and distillery to vineyard and historic home, adds a layer of depth and character to the state's identity. **KL**

# WIN

a getaway for 4  
in Louisville!

Provided by Louisville Tourism

ENTER ONLINE AT [KENTUCKYLIVING.COM](http://KENTUCKYLIVING.COM) BY MAY 15, 2026



## Package includes:

2-night stay at The Galt House

### BREAKFAST:

Biscuit Belly  
Wild Eggs

### LUNCH/DINNER:

Bristol Bar & Grille

**Choice of OLE Hospitality Group:** Bourbon & Burgers, La Bodeguita De Mima, Taco Luchador, Steak & Bourbon or Guaca Mole Modern Mexican

### LOCAL EXPERIENCES:

Belle of Louisville  
Evan Williams Bourbon Experience  
Frazier Kentucky History Museum  
Kentucky Derby Museum  
Louisville Slugger Museum & Factory  
Muhammad Ali Center

*Subject to Availability-Details and Restrictions Apply*



NO PURCHASE NECESSARY. To enter, visit [www.KentuckyLiving.com](http://www.KentuckyLiving.com) for a chance to win. Open to persons age 21 or over in the Continental United States, except for employees or immediate family members of *Kentucky Living*, Kentucky Association of Electric Cooperatives, Kentucky's electric co-ops and their respective divisions, subsidiaries, advertising, and promotion agencies. Prizes subject to change and may be subject to U.S. taxes; a Form 1099 will be issued the following year, where applicable. Prize value approximately \$1,200. One entry per person, drawn by random; odds of winning depend upon number of entries received. We are not responsible for entries that are lost, misdirected, or delayed. Entries must be received by MAY 15, 2026.

# 142 KENTUCKY



**BEATTYVILLE**  
**APPALACHIAN MEMORIES & STORYTELLING FESTIVAL**  
 MAY 15TH & 16, 2026

QR CODE

LEE COUNTY TOURISM  
 Eastonville, KY  
 TEAM KENTUCKY

(606) 464-5038



**2026 BANANA FESTIVAL**  
 SEPTEMBER 12-19 2026

The Banana Festival is a fun filled week with great talent, food, and tons of Banana Pudding. Saturday, after the parade we will serve a 1 ton Banana Pudding to the public.

**Downtown Fulton, KY & South Fulton, TN**  
 visitfultonky.com | 270-472-9000



**BLUEGRASS ON THE BLUFF**  
 CB KY

**FREE JUNE 6**  
**COLUMBUS BELMONT STATE PARK**

SOUTHERN WHEELHOUSE LEGACY ROUSTERS ...AND MORE!  
**JAM SESSIONS, RIVER AND MUSIC HISTORY, LOCAL FOOD AND FAMILY FUN!**

VISIT FACEBOOK EVENT FOR MORE INFO  
 TEAM KENTUCKY



**EAST MAIN MARKET**  
 122 East Main St. Leitchfield, KY  
 Summer Concert Series  
 2nd & 4th Saturday - June-August

**FREE ADMISSION**  
 Vendors  
 Food Trucks  
 Beer Garden  
 OUTDOOR EVENT BRING A CHAIR

TEAM KENTUCKY  
 VisitLeitchfield.com



**Town Square Leitchfield, KY**  
**3rd Saturday in July**  
 9:00 A.M. (C.D.T.)

FREE EVENT-NO ENTRY FEE  
 FOOD TRUCKS  
 VENDORS  
 CHILDREN RIDES  
 CONCERT AFTER CONTEST  
 Over \$14,500 in Prize Money  
 Top 10 Places in each Fiddle Category Paid

TEAM KENTUCKY

**2026 FLY-IN** August 3rd-9th  
**AT THE FALLS**

One of the nation's largest gatherings of paramotorists/paragliders. Pilots enjoy the view of beautiful Rough River Lake and are invited to take in all Breckinridge County has to offer!

www.freedomflightacademy.org  
 Rough River Dam State Resort Park  
 Falls of Rough, KY 40119

BELONG IN BRECKINRIDGE



**63rd Annual Franklin Car & Craft Show**

Sept. 19, 2026  
 8 a.m. until 3 p.m.

Downtown Franklin, KY  
 270-586-3040  
 www.visitfranklinky.com



TEAM KENTUCKY

**Carter County Shrine Club Fun Horse Show**

June 6, 2026, 2 PM  
 Gates open at 11 AM

606-255-0483  
 155 Samuel L. Waggoner Memorial Dr., Olive Hill, Ky

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ **2026** ★ ★ ★ ★ ★  
**ELIZABETHTOWN FESTIVAL SCHEDULE**

**ETOWN WINE FEST**  
 MAY 9

**SHAKESPEARE IN THE PARK**  
 MAY 22

**LOUISVILLE ORCHESTRA IN THE PARK**  
 JUNE 26

**LAWN PARTY**  
 JUNE 10 | JULY 8 | AUG 12 | SEPT 9

**CRUISIN' THE HEARTLAND**  
 JULY 30, 31 & AUGUST 1

**HEARTLAND HARVEST FEST**  
 SEPTEMBER 26

**CHRISTMAS IN THE PARK**  
 NOVEMBER 25-JANUARY 1, 2027

**FOR INFO VISIT ETOWNEVENTS.COM**




**TRI-STATE FARM SHOW**  
 Union County, Ky

Friday 9AM - 6PM AUGUST 28 | Saturday 9AM - 6PM AUGUST 29

**FREE ADMISSION**  
 VENDORS  
 TRACTOR PULLS  
 LIVE MUSIC  
 FOOD TRUCKS

UNION COUNTY EXPO CENTER | STURGIS, KY  
 www.unioncountyky.org

QR CODE

**CALVERT CITY'S AMERIBRATION**

**CELEBRATE AMERICA 250 ON KENTUCKY LAKE ON JULY 4**  
 calvertcityky.gov

JESS HAWKINS/ADOBE FIREFLY

# FESTIVALS → → →

## Fine Arts & Fine Crafts Show

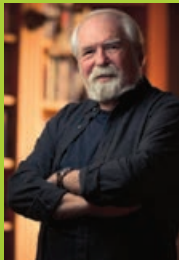


Saturday, May 16, 2026 9 a.m. — 4 p.m. CT

Featuring Fantasy and Science Fiction Artist Larry Elmore

Free Admission & Parking

James D. Beville Park  
200 Veterans Way,  
Leitchfield  
270-259-4000



[gcaartinthepark.org](http://gcaartinthepark.org)  
Sponsored by Leitchfield Tourism

**KENTUCKY SHEEP & FIBER FESTIVAL**  
MAY 16-17, 2026  
Sculpture Park • 10th & 11th Sts. • 1000  
MASTERSHIP STATION PARK, LEITCHFIELD, KY

**LIVE IN LIBERTY MUSIC FESTIVAL**  
5th Annual Saturday, May 23rd  
DOWNTOWN LIBERTY  
Live in Liberty Music  
606-706-7777  
AMERICA TEAM KENTUCKY 250

**35th Annual Carter County Shrine Club Bluegrass Festival**  
July 16, 17, & 18, 2026  
[shrinersbluegrassfestival.com](http://shrinersbluegrassfestival.com)  
Shriners 1301 Eastwood & Wagonwheel Memorial Drive Olive Hill Ky

**BLUEGRASS, BREW & BBQ FESTIVAL**  
Grand Rivers, KY  
April 24 & 25 [granddrivers.org](http://granddrivers.org)  
ADVANCE TICKETS ONLINE \$25  
\$35 AT THE GATE

**WHITE SQUIRREL ARTS FEST**  
[whitesquirrelartsfest.com](http://whitesquirrelartsfest.com)  
FREE Event!  
Historic Shake Rag District & White Squirrel Brewery  
BOWLING GREEN, KENTUCKY  
APRIL 25  
LIVE MUSIC  
ARTISTS  
AUTHORS  
FOOD TRUCKS

**Roots & Rhythm Festival**  
JUNE 6th, 2026 | 10M CST  
CHARLES BLACK CITY PARK  
MORGANTOWN, KY  
MUSIC WORKSHOPS • CRAFT & FOOD VENDORS • TOURS TO ARNOLD'S GRAVESITE  
SPECIAL GUEST STAR  
**THE KODY NORRIS SHOW**  
FORMER FOR A FULL DAY OF MUSIC, HERITAGE AND A COMMITMENT AS HE CELEBRATE THE LEGACY OF A WORLD SHIELD, THE INFLUENCER WHO HELPED SHAPE THE SOUND THAT ROOTS & RHYTHM MUSIC BECAME  
FREE ADMISSION | FAMILY FRIENDLY | BRING YOUR OWN LA AND CHAIR

**Summer Vibes Music Festival**  
Aug. 22, 2026 | 1-10 p.m.  
Live bands with headliners Quiet Riot and Hinder, food trucks, beer garden  
Downtown Franklin Kentucky  
270-586-3040  
[www.summervibesfranklinky.com](http://www.summervibesfranklinky.com)  
FRANKLIN TEAM KENTUCKY

**Balloons & Tunes!**  
BALLOON GLOW, MUSIC AND FOOD TRUCK FESTIVAL  
SATURDAY, JULY 25, 2026, 5 - 11 P.M.  
Falmouth, KY | [pendletoncountytourism.com](http://pendletoncountytourism.com)

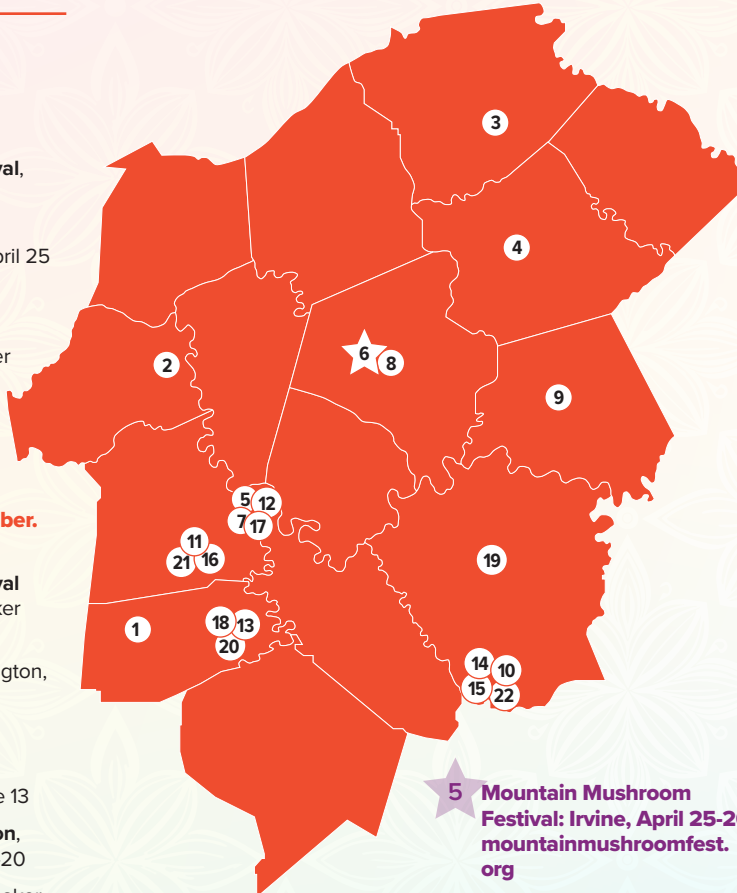
**34th ANNUAL MOUNTAIN MUSHROOM FESTIVAL**  
Irvine, KY April 25 & 26  
Morels • Ky Agate, Gem & Mineral Show  
Parade • Car Show • 5K/2K  
Grandstand Music • A&C  
Kids activities • Food Court  
606-723-2554  
[www.mountainmushroomfest.org](http://www.mountainmushroomfest.org)

# KENTUCKY FESTIVALS



## BLUEGRASS

- 1 **Perryville in Bloom**, Perryville, April 18
- 2 **Spring Fling Art Festival**, Lawrenceburg, April 18
- 3 **Cynthiana Art & Wine Festival**, Cynthiana, April 25
- 4 **Paris Story Fest**, Paris, May 8–10
- 5 **Equine Festival**, Shaker Village, May 9
- 6 **Kentucky Sheep & Fiber Festival: Lexington**, May 16–17, [kentuckysheepandfiber.com](http://kentuckysheepandfiber.com)
- 7 **Chamber Music Festival of the Bluegrass**, Shaker Village, May 22–24
- 8 **Railbird Festival**, Lexington, June 6–7
- 9 **Beer Cheese Festival**, Winchester, June 13
- 10 **L & N Day**, Berea, June 13
- 11 **Juneteenth Celebration**, Harrodsburg, June 18–20
- 12 **Vintage Dad's Day**, Shaker Village, June 20
- 13 **Great American Brass Band Festival**, Danville, June 25–27
- 14 **Summer Craft Festival**, Berea, July 10–12
- 15 **Berea LearnShops**, Berea, July 10–19
- 16 **Fun & Sun Fest**, Harrodsburg, July 17
- 17 **Shaker Village Craft Fair**, Shaker Village, Aug. 1–2
- 18 **Soul of Second Street Festival**, Danville, Aug. 7–8
- 19 **Hops & Vine Festival**, Richmond, Aug. 8
- 20 **Balloons Over the Bluegrass Hot Air Balloon Festival**, Danville, Aug. 9



- 21 **Pioneer Days**, Harrodsburg, Aug. 13–15
- 22 **Celtic Festival**, Berea, Aug. 13–16

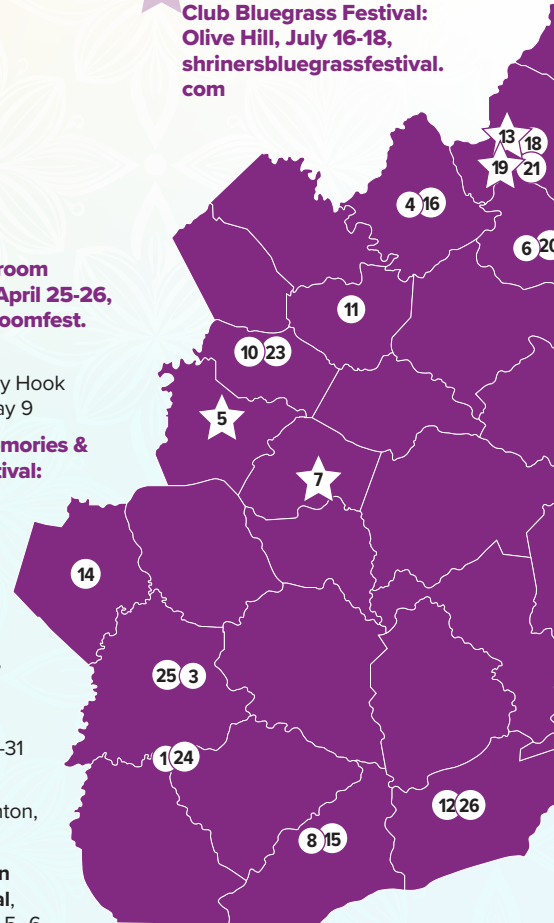
## EASTERN

- 1 **Colonel Fest**, Corbin, April 10–11
- 2 **Hillbilly Days**, Pikeville, April 16–18
- 3 **Redbud Ride**, London-Laurel County, April 18
- 4 **Morehead Kentucky Proud Expo**, Morehead, April 24–25

- 5 **Mountain Mushroom Festival: Irvine**, April 25–26, [mountainmushroomfest.org](http://mountainmushroomfest.org)
- 6 **Bridge Day**, Sandy Hook (Laurel Gorge), May 9
- 7 **Appalachian Memories & Storytelling Festival: Beattyville**, May 15–16, [visitleecountyky.com](http://visitleecountyky.com)

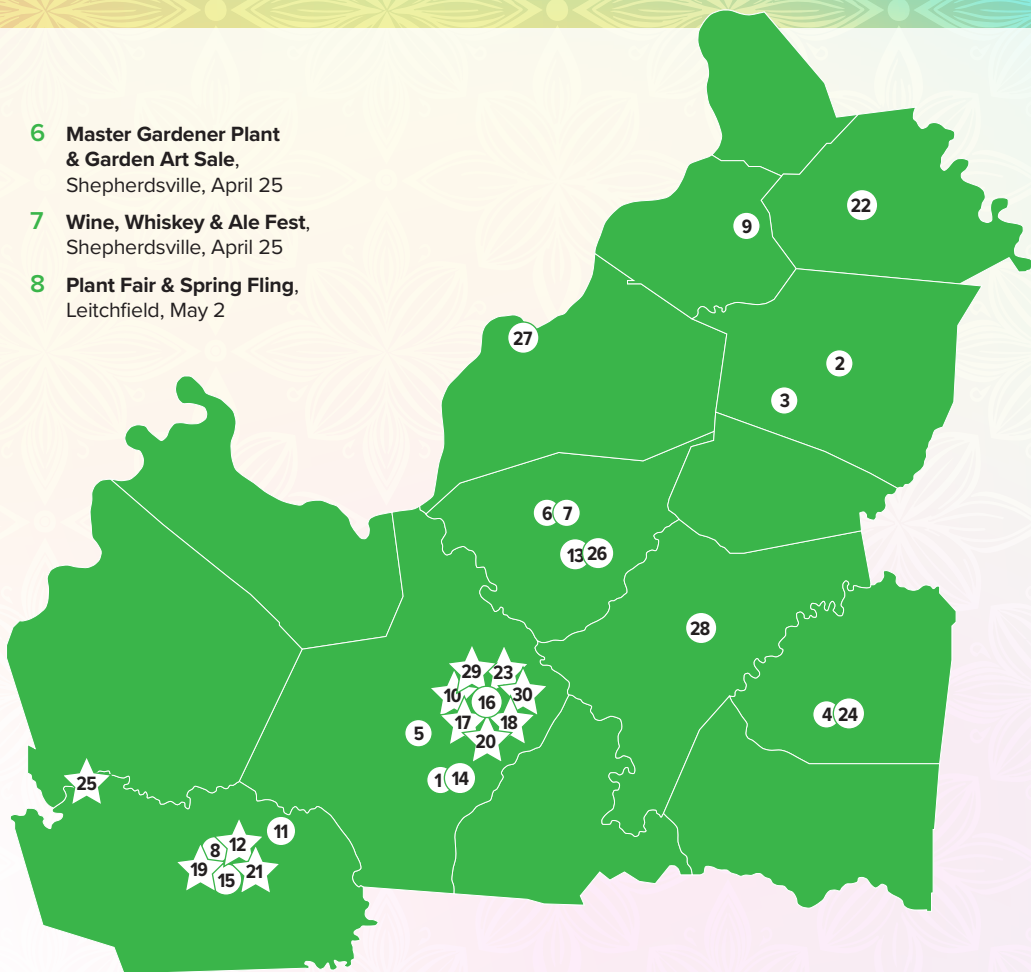
- 8 **Kentucky Mountain Laurel Festival**, Pineville, May 21–24
- 9 **Memory Days**, Grayson, May 28–31
- 10 **Red River Gorge Bigfoot Fest**, Stanton, May 30
- 11 **Menifee Mountain Memories Festival**, Frenchburg, June 5–6

- 12 **Poke Sallet Festival**, Harlan, June 5–7
- 13 **Carter County Shrine Club Fun Horse Show: Olive Hill**, June 6, [cartercountyshrineclub.com](http://cartercountyshrineclub.com)
- 14 **Kentucky Blues Music Festival**, Mt. Vernon, June 6
- 15 **Laurel Cove Music Festival**, Pineville, June 11–13
- 16 **Rudy Fest Bluegrass Festival**, Morehead, June 20–27
- 17 **Summer Motion**, Ashland, July 2–4
- 18 **Olive Hill Homecoming**, July 4
- 19 **Carter County Shrine Club Bluegrass Festival: Olive Hill**, July 16–18, [shrinersbluegrassfestival.com](http://shrinersbluegrassfestival.com)



- 20 Minnie Adkins Day**, Sandy Hook, July 19
- 21 Appalachian Settlers Weekend at Carter Caves State Resort Park**, Olive Hill, July 24–26
- 22 Van Lear Days**, Van Lear, July 31–Aug. 1
- 23 Corn Festival**, Stanton, Aug. 1–3
- 24 NIBROC**, Corbin, Aug. 5–8
- 25 Laurel County Homecoming**, London, Aug. 28–30
- 26 Dog Days Festival**, Harlan, Aug. 29

- 6 Master Gardener Plant & Garden Art Sale**, Shepherdsville, April 25
- 7 Wine, Whiskey & Ale Fest**, Shepherdsville, April 25
- 8 Plant Fair & Spring Fling**, Leitchfield, May 2



## NORTH CENTRAL

- 1 Alpaca Spring Fling**, Glendale, April 11
- 2 Dogwood Artisan Showcase**, Shelbyville, April 18
- 3 Highway 55 Yard Sale**, Finchville, April 23



- 4 Green Festival**, Springfield, April 25
- 5 KY 86 26-Mile Yard Sale**, Cecilia, April 25

- 9 Railfest**, La Grange, May 8–9
- 10 E-Town Wine Fest: Elizabethtown**, May 9, [etownevents.com](http://etownevents.com)
- 11 Clarkson Park Springfest**, Clarkson, May 10
- 12 Art in the Park: Leitchfield**, May 16, [gcaartinthepark.org](http://gcaartinthepark.org)
- 13 BloomFest**, Bernheim Forest & Arboretum, May 16
- 14 Glendale Spring Fest**, Glendale, May 16
- 15 Jump Into Summer Festival**, Leitchfield, May 16
- 16 Master Gardener Plant Fair**, Elizabethtown, May 16
- 17 Shakespeare in the Park: Elizabethtown**, May 22, [etownevents.com](http://etownevents.com)
- 18 Lawn Party: Elizabethtown**, June 10, July 8, August 12, September 9, [etownevents.com](http://etownevents.com)

- 19 East Main Market: Leitchfield**, June 13 & 27, July 11 & 25, August 8 & 22, [visitleitchfield.com](http://visitleitchfield.com)
- 20 Louisville Orchestra in the Park: Elizabethtown**, June 26, [etownevents.com](http://etownevents.com)
- 21 Twin Lakes National Fiddler Championship: Leitchfield**, July 18, [twinlakesfiddler.com](http://twinlakesfiddler.com)
- 22 Henry County Harvest Showcase**, New Castle, July 25
- 23 Cruisin' The Heartland: Elizabethtown**, July 30–August 1, [etownevents.com](http://etownevents.com)
- 24 African American Heritage Festival**, Springfield, July 31
- 25 Fly-In at the Falls: Falls of Rough**, August 3–9, [freedomflightacademy.org](http://freedomflightacademy.org)
- 26 CONNECT**, Bernheim Forest & Arboretum, Aug. 15
- 27 Kentucky State Fair**, Louisville, Aug. 20–30

- 28 Buttermilk Days**, Bardstown, Aug. 27–29
- 29 Heartland Harvest Fest: Elizabethtown**, September 26, [etownevents.com](http://etownevents.com)
- 30 Christmas in the Park: Elizabethtown**, November 25–January 1 2027, [etownevents.com](http://etownevents.com)

Stars denote festival advertisers.

If we missed your festival, let us know! Find more festivals and events online. Locations marked on map are approximate and may be shifted to show multiple events in the same city.

This listing includes festivals taking place April through August, as well as festival advertisers throughout the year. September festivals will be included on the festivals map in the September issue.

# KENTUCKY FESTIVALS



## NORTHERN

- 1 **Old Washington Festival**, Maysville, April 4
- 2 **Smoke on the River BBQ Fest**, Covington, May 8–10



- 3 **Peony Spring Festival**, Warsaw, May 16
- 4 **U.S. 25 Yard Sale**, Walton–Williamsburg, June 5–6
- 5 **Art in the Garden**, Augusta, June 6
- 6 **Italianfest**, Newport, June 11–14
- 7 **Taco & Margarita Festival**, MainStrasse Village, June 19–21
- 8 **Maysville Uncorked! Wine and Art Festival**, Maysville, June 20
- 9 **Skeeterfest**, Williamstown, July 11
- 10 **Bacon, Bourbon and Brew Festival**, Newport, July 17–19
- 11 **Riverfest Days**, Augusta, July 17–19
- 12 **Glier's Goettafest**, Newport, July 24–27; July 31–Aug. 3
- 13 **Balloons & Toons: Falmouth, July 25**, [pendletoncountytourism.com](http://pendletoncountytourism.com)
- 14 **Highway 127 Yard Sale**, Covington–Static, Aug. 6–9

- 15 **Great Inland Seafood Festival**, Newport, Aug. 13–16
- 16 **Oktoberfest**, Maysville, Aug. 14–15

## SOUTH CENTRAL

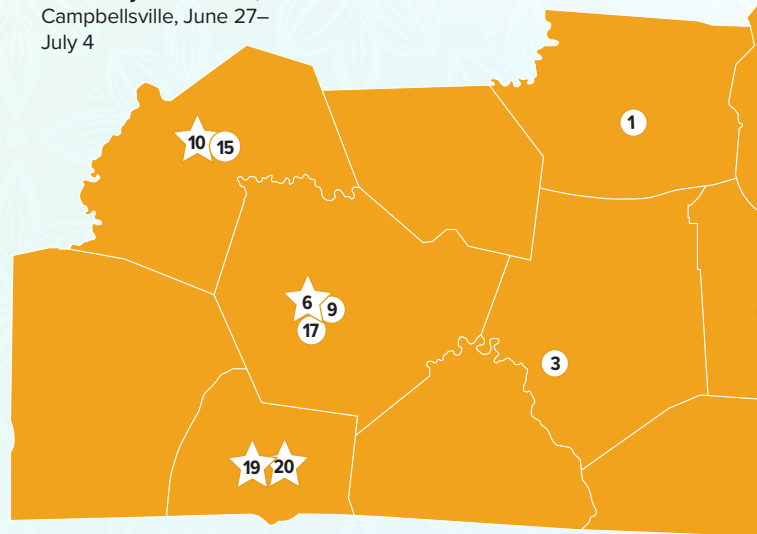
- 1 **Cherry Blossom Festival**, Munfordville, April 11
- 2 **Foodstock**, Somerset, April 18
- 3 **Derby Dog Festival**, Lucas, April 25
- 4 **Somernites Cruise**, Somerset, 4th Saturdays, April 25 thru October 24
- 5 **Spring Plow Day**, Campbellsville, April 25
- 6 **White Squirrel Arts Fest: Bowling Green, April 25**, [whitesquirrelartsfest.com](http://whitesquirrelartsfest.com)
- 7 **Kentucky Yoga Festival**, Edmonton, May 15–17
- 8 **Live in Liberty Music Festival: Liberty, May 23**, [facebook.com/liveinlibertymusic](http://facebook.com/liveinlibertymusic)

- 9 **Duncan Hines Days**, Bowling Green, May 31–June 6
- 10 **Roots & Rhythm Festival: Morgantown, June 6**, [facebook.com/morgantown-tourism-commission](http://facebook.com/morgantown-tourism-commission)

- 15 **Green River Catfish Festival**, Morgantown, July 2–4
- 16 **Master Musicians Festival**, Somerset, July 17–18
- 17 **PossAbilities Expo**, Bowling Green, July 18
- 18 **Lake Cumberland Bluegrass Festival**, Russell Springs, Aug. 21–22

- 11 **Blazin' Bluegrass Spring Festival**, Whitley City, June 11–13
- 12 **PlayThink Festival**, Edmonton, June 17–21
- 13 **Lake Cumberland 250**, Somerset, June 25–July 4
- 14 **4th of July Celebration**, Campbellsville, June 27–July 4

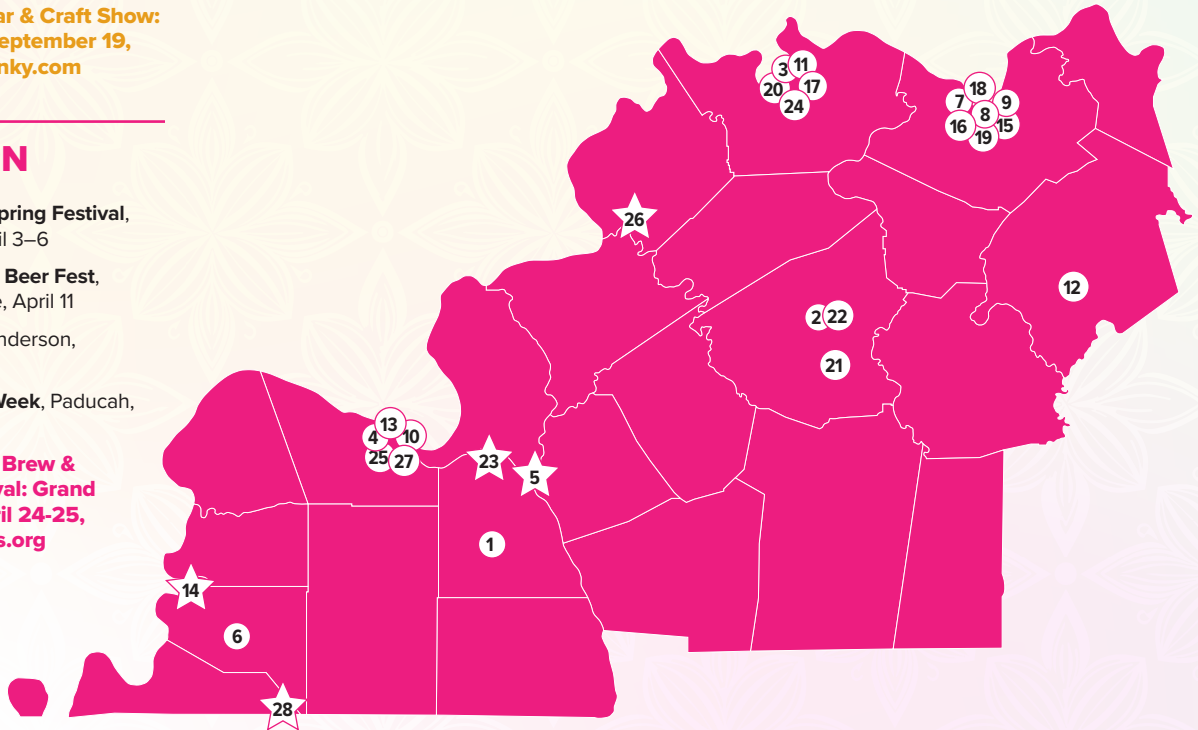
- 19 **Summer Vibes Music Festival: Franklin, August 22**, [summervibesfranklinky.com](http://summervibesfranklinky.com)



**20 Franklin Car & Craft Show:**  
Franklin, September 19,  
[visitfranklinky.com](http://visitfranklinky.com)

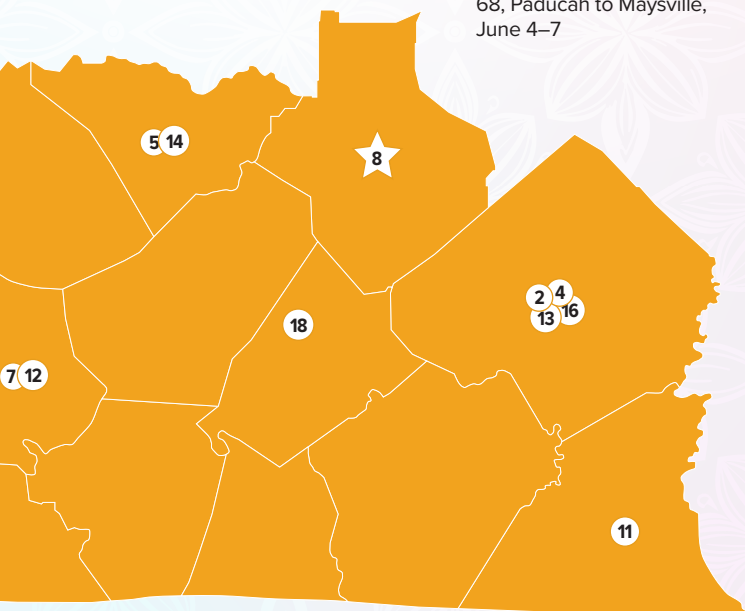
## WESTERN

- 1 Tater Day Spring Festival,**  
Benton, April 3–6
- 2 Western KY Beer Fest,**  
Madisonville, April 11
- 3 Tri-Fest,** Henderson,  
April 17–19
- 4 AQS Quilt Week,** Paducah,  
April 22–25
- 5 Bluegrass, Brew & BBQ Festival: Grand Rivers, April 24-25,**  
[grandrivers.org](http://grandrivers.org)



- 6 Spring Chicken Festival,**  
Clinton, April 24–25
- 7 WKBG Annual Plant Sale and Vendor Festival,** Owensboro,  
April 25
- 8 Highway 54 Spring Yard Sale,** Owensboro–Leitchfield,  
April 30–May 1
- 9 BBQ & Barrels,** Owensboro,  
May 8–9
- 10 Lower Town Arts & Music Festival,** Paducah, May 8–9
- 11 Summerfest,** Henderson,  
May 16
- 12 Strawberry Festival,** Beaver Dam, May 21–25
- 13 400 Mile Sale,** State Route 68, Paducah to Maysville,  
June 4–7

- 14 Bluegrass on the Bluff: Columbus, June 6,**  
[kygro.com](http://kygro.com)
- 15 Porchfest,** Owensboro,  
June 13
- 16 Strawberry Festival,**  
Owensboro, June 13–14
- 17 W.C. Handy Blues & Barbecue Festival,**  
Henderson, June 17–20
- 18 Dazzling Daylilies Festival,**  
Owensboro, June 20
- 19 ROMP Music Festival,**  
Owensboro, June 24–27
- 20 Highway 41 Yard Sale,**  
Henderson to Guthrie,  
June 26–27
- 21 Morton's Gap Coalfield Festival,** Morton's Gap,  
June 26–27
- 22 4th Fest and Praise in the Park,** Madisonville, July 3–5
- 23 Ameribration: Calvert City, July 4,**  
[calvertcityky.gov](http://calvertcityky.gov)
- 24 Bluegrass in the Park Folklife Festival,** Henderson,  
Aug. 7–8
- 25 Eighth of August Celebration,** Paducah, Aug. 8
- 26 Tri-State Farm Show: Sturgis, August 28-29,**  
[unioncounty.org](http://unioncounty.org)
- 27 Dragon Boat Festival,**  
Paducah, Aug. 29
- 28 Banana Festival: Fulton, September 12-19,**  
[visitfultonky.com](http://visitfultonky.com)



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# Flowering flowers

*Creeping phlox offers a wide spread of color*

**CREeping PHLOX**, also known as moss phlox, is known for its vibrant, saturated color when it blooms each spring. Depending on variety, flowers can be pink, blue, white or even striped. Flowering occurs in mid to late spring, with flowers covering the entire plant.

This low-growing perennial groundcover is only 4 to 6 inches tall, but it can spread over 18 inches. It prefers a moist but well drained site, and to get established, it needs to be watered regularly after planting. Avoid planting creeping phlox in wet areas or areas where winter snow is piled up near drives and walks.

Creeping phlox will naturalize and sprawl around other perennials. It is suitable for the front of a border or a rock garden, and it helps control erosion by draping over rock edges and walls. Phlox is deer resistant, and its flowers are attractive to pollinators, including bees and butterflies.

For the best growth and flowering, plant phlox in full sun to part shade. Its foliage is fine or needle-like, mimicking moss, and some varieties, like Emerald Blue, can be reliably evergreen.



PHOTOS: SHELLY NOLD

Creeping phlox blooms just once a year, but it is bright and beautiful, and a good sign that spring is here once again. **KL**

**SHELLY NOLD** is a horticulturist and owner of The Plant Kingdom. Send stories and ideas to her at The Plant Kingdom, 1000 E Market St., Louisville, KY 40206.

## ASK THE gardener



*What can we plant on a steep, cleared bank that will stay low and take over? It faces east and will get morning to midday sun.*

—Marley and Ted Beckmann

**A** Replacing the trees on your slope with a groundcover will help stabilize the soil surface. Here are a few options: wild ginger, Allegheny spurge (native *Pachysandra*), creeping phlox, crested iris, foam flower and Christmas fern. These native species are low-maintenance and suitable for slopes, and they can help with erosion control once their root systems are established. Plant in a diamond pattern to help manage water flow and leave the tree stumps to provide temporary soil stabilization as groundcovers establish their roots. All new plantings will require regular watering during the first growing season to establish a healthy root system.

» Angie Oakley



KATARZYNA/ADOBE STOCK

### Have a gardening question?

Go to [KentuckyLiving.com](http://KentuckyLiving.com), click on Home & Garden, then "Ask the Gardener."

READER  
*recipe*

Springtime Sweets

**Carrot Cake****Submitted by Linda Overbee**  
**Consumer-member of Jackson Energy**  
**Cooperative**

Linda made this cake for her mom several times a year, and it was always a favorite. Cream cheese frosting makes it the perfect springtime dessert.

**4 eggs**  
**2 C sugar**  
**1½ C self-rising flour**  
**2 Tbsp cinnamon**  
**1 Tbsp vanilla**  
**2 (4 oz) jars of baby food carrots**  
**1½ C chopped pecans**

**For the icing:**  
**8 oz cream cheese, softened**  
**1 stick of butter**  
**1 lb powdered sugar**

Preheat oven to 325°. Whisk together the first five ingredients in a large bowl. Stir in the baby food carrots and chopped pecans. Mix well and pour into greased and floured 9×13-inch baking pan. Bake 45 minutes. Meanwhile, mix all icing ingredients in bowl with hand mixer until creamy and smooth. Spread on cooled cake. Sprinkle top with more chopped pecans. Serves 20.



## A Southern spring spread

*From Sunday supper to Easter feast*

**APRIL ALWAYS FEELS** like a breath of fresh air. We've made it out of the depths of winter, even if Kentucky spring weather sometimes says otherwise—so open up those windows, air out the house and gather around the table. We are trading hearty winter meals for dishes that still have comfort but feel a little lighter and a little brighter.

Whether it's a cozy Sunday supper this month or an Easter feast, both of these recipes are perfect additions to your table, keeping things simple and homemade. Enjoy bringing a taste of Southern comfort to your spring table, one delicious bite at a time.

### Chicken Pot Pie Casserole

**3 Tbsp butter**  
**1 medium onion, diced**  
**1 C celery, diced**  
**2-3 garlic cloves, minced**  
**3 Tbsp flour**  
**1½ C whole milk**  
**1½ C chicken broth**  
**¾ tsp salt**  
**½ tsp thyme**

**½ tsp basil**  
**½ tsp white pepper**  
**¼ tsp pepper**  
**⅛ tsp nutmeg**  
**3 C cooked chicken breast, cubed**  
**1 C frozen peas and carrots**  
**1 pie crust, homemade or store-bought**  
**1 egg, for egg wash**

Preheat oven to 375°. Melt butter in a large pot over medium heat and saute onion and celery until soft, about 5 minutes. Add garlic and cook 1–2 more minutes. Stir in flour and cook 2–3 minutes, coating vegetables. Gradually whisk in 1/2 cup milk, then stir in remaining milk and chicken broth until smooth. Reduce heat to medium-low. Stir in spices, cooked chicken and frozen peas and carrots. Simmer 5 minutes. Pour into a greased 9x9-inch baking dish. Top with pie crust. Crimp crust edges, cut slits for steam and brush with egg wash. Bake 35–40 minutes, until crust is golden and filling bubbles. Let cool 10 minutes before serving. Serves 6.

**HEATHER BILYEU**, raised in Southern Kentucky, is the owner and voice behind the food blog, *Fueling a Southern Soul*.

**SEE**  
**VIDEOS**  
at [KentuckyLiving.com/Cook](http://KentuckyLiving.com/Cook)



Go to [KentuckyLiving.com/submit-a-recipe](http://KentuckyLiving.com/submit-a-recipe)



# Family ties

*The Farmboy in Morgantown is a family effort*

JOEL SAMS



**SKYLER MOORE** may be the owner of The Farmboy Restaurant in Morgantown, but he says his grandmother, Diane Parker, is the real boss.

“If she says jump, I say, ‘How high?’” Skyler says with a laugh. He bought the restaurant from the previous owner, a relative, in 2022, to maintain a family connection that goes back to 1968. He was just 23 at the time, and had no restaurant experience, but he was confident he could figure it out. “The first six months were pretty rough,” he admits, but his family rallied around, and the community gave him “a lot of leeway” during the initial learning curve.

Diane, who has worked at the restaurant for about 40 years, says customers were relieved when the business got a new lease on life. “Everybody was happy because they didn’t want something else to go in there,” she says. “They wanted it to stay The Farmboy.”

A laid-back gathering spot, The Farmboy Restaurant serves classics like biscuits and gravy, pancakes, sandwiches, burgers, fried fish, chicken strips (recipe below) and homemade pies and cakes.

Now 26, Skyler is grateful for the support of his family, especially Diane, who serves at the restaurant daily, and his sister, Conley Moore, who manages social media and helps wherever needed. Skyler credits the Morgantown community for the restaurant’s success, giving back through fundraisers, donations and coaching junior pro basketball.

“I try to give back to the community because without them, I would be nothing,” he says.

Served by Warren RECC, The Farmboy Restaurant is located at 635 West G L Smith St. in Morgantown, open 5 a.m.–8 p.m. Monday through Saturday, 6 a.m.–3 p.m. on Sunday.

WADE HARRIS



## The Farmboy Homemade Chicken Strips

Serves 4-6

- 2 ½ lb chicken breast, cut lengthwise into ½-inch strips**
- 4 C whole buttermilk**
- 7 C all-purpose flour**
- 2 Tbsp lemon pepper**
- 1 ½ Tbsp cayenne pepper**
- 4 Tbsp Cajun seasoning**
- 2 Tbsp salt**
- 2 Tbsp pepper**
- Canola or vegetable oil for deep frying**

Add chicken strips and buttermilk to large bowl. Mix and let marinate for 30 minutes. When ready, add oil to deep skillet or fryer and heat to 350°. While oil heats, add dry ingredients to separate bowl and mix well. When oil is hot, toss chicken strips in flour mixture one by one, making sure to completely coat each strip. Carefully add battered chicken strips to fryer, working in batches to avoid overcrowding. Cook until chicken is golden brown and at least 165°, about 7–8 minutes. Let cool for five minutes before serving.



SKYLER MOORE

# Electrify your lawn care



*What are the advantages of using electric-powered lawn equipment?*

**MIRANDA BOUTELLE** writes on energy efficiency for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

**A** Electric lawn equipment has seen drastic improvements in cost, motor efficiency and battery power in recent years. From hedge and string trimmers to leaf blowers, chainsaws and push and riding mowers, there are lots of options for electric lawn equipment.

Electric equipment is quieter than its gas-powered counterparts and typically needs less maintenance. There's no more mixing fuel, changing spark plugs or worrying about gas going bad over the winter. Advances in rechargeable battery technology eliminate having to lug around a heavy extension cord to get your work done.

Opt for equipment with brushless motors. They are more efficient, more powerful and have a longer lifespan than traditional brushed motors. A brushless motor typically costs more but is worth the improved efficiency. A brushed motor



transfers electricity using physical brushes, which can wear down over time, and the equipment runs hotter and noisier. A brushless motor uses less friction, making it more powerful, extending the lifespan and letting you get more done on a single charge.

## Care and maintenance

Like gas-powered lawnmowers, battery-powered equipment requires proper care for maintenance, charging and disposal. Always use the manufacturer's original

▲  
When you buy the same equipment brand with the same battery type, you can easily swap batteries among different pieces of equipment. Photo: Miranda Boutelle/Pioneer Utility Resources

charging equipment, charge batteries on hard surfaces away from anything flammable and store chargers in a cool, dry place.

Most manufacturers recommend charging batteries only until they reach full capacity instead of leaving them on the charger until you are ready to use them. This helps prevent damage to the battery from overcharging and heat buildup, and reduces potential fire hazards. Unplug chargers when not in use to avoid energy waste.

Old or damaged batteries should be recycled at a big-box store or at a county or city waste management site. **KL**

## BATTERY BRANDING

Most popular lawn equipment brands offer battery-powered options, along with newer brands that specialize in electric tools. If you need multiple tools, buying the same brand with the same battery type enables you to swap batteries between different pieces of equipment. That also means fewer battery chargers to store or keep on your workbench.

# Avoid downed power lines

*Stop and plan before proceeding*

## CONSIDER OVERHEAD POWER LINES

as you would a closed road that requires a detour. If you're driving and come upon downed power lines, stop and think through your next actions.

Power lines can fall during strong winds. Utility poles can topple, or trees and broken limbs can fall and take power lines down with them. Vehicles that crash into poles can also bring power lines to the ground. When you see a power line out of place, never touch or approach it. The result could be deadly. Your best course of action is always to steer clear and call for assistance.

The overhead power lines that run along county roads generally carry 7,200 volts of electricity. Fatalities can occur when someone makes contact with a live wire of only a couple hundred volts.

Here are some tips from the Electrical Safety Foundation International to stay safe around downed power lines:

- If you see a downed power line, move away from it. Keep a distance of at least 35 feet, as the ground around downed



NOLIN RECCALTAMAHIA/EMC



### GARRETT ADDINGTON

is Risk Management Coordinator at Kenergy

**YEARS IN THE INDUSTRY:** 28 in safety and environmental work; 16 with Kenergy

### WHEN I'M NOT WORKING I'M:

Attending church with my family, traveling and seeing America, watching soccer and baseball, and spending time with my loved ones. I enjoy living in a small town and being involved with many aspects of rural Kentucky.

## *In case of contact*

If your vehicle contacts a downed power line while you're inside, stay inside the car. Call 911 or honk your horn to get help, but tell those rendering aid to stay away from the vehicle.

If you must exit the vehicle for life-threatening reasons, jump out and away from it, never touching the vehicle and the ground at the same time.

Make sure to land with your feet together and touching, then shuffle away with your feet touching until you reach a safe distance. Never attempt to get back in a vehicle that is in contact with a power line.

Source: *ESF.org*

power lines may be energized.

- Don't touch anything that is touching downed power lines.
- Assume all downed power lines are live. They don't have to be arcing, sparking or humming. They can be as quiet as they usually are and still be deadly.
- If you see someone in direct or indirect contact with a downed line, do not touch the person. You could become energized as well. Call 911 for assistance.
- Never attempt to move a downed power line or anything else in contact with it, even with an object such as a broom or a tree branch. Nonconductive materials like wood or cloth can conduct electricity if even slightly wet.
- Don't step in water near downed lines.
- Never drive over a downed power line. **KL**

# Test your home for radon

*Add air safety to your spring to-do list*



HOLDEN/ADOBE STOCK

## AS YOU TACKLE SPRING

cleaning and home projects this season, add one more task to your list: Test your home for radon.

Radon is a gas that forms naturally when uranium in soil and rock breaks down. It can seep into homes through cracks in floors and walls, and once inside, the dangerous gas can build up to high levels. You cannot see, smell or taste it—and yet, radon is the leading cause of lung cancer among people who do not smoke.

Testing for radon is an important step for your health. Any home, regardless of style, age or location, can

have elevated radon. The only way to know if you have a radon problem is to test for it—but despite the risk, only 13 of every 10,000 homes in Kentucky are tested each year.

Fortunately, radon tests are simple and low-cost or often free, and Kentuckians have several ways to take action to protect themselves, their family and pets. Digital radon detectors can be borrowed for free from certain public libraries through the Radon on the RADAR project. Digital detectors also might be available to borrow from your county Cooperative Extension Office. You can

purchase do-it-yourself radon test kits from local home improvement stores or from the American Lung Association, or even hire a certified radon measurement professional to test your home.

Experts recommend that you take action to lower radon in your home if your radon level registers at or above 4 picocuries per liter. Certified radon mitigation professionals can install systems that lower radon levels. To find searchable directories of qualified contractors, visit the websites of the National Radon Proficiency Program ([nrpp.info/pro-search](http://nrpp.info/pro-search)) or the

National Radon Safety Board ([nrsb.org/for-professional](http://nrsb.org/for-professional)).

Planning to build a new home this year? Ask your contractor about using radon-resistant new construction techniques to minimize radon entry.

As you care for your home this spring, take a simple step to keep it healthy and safe—test for radon and protect your family and pets from lung cancer. **KL**

**STACY STANIFER, PH.D.**, is a member of BREATHE, a multidisciplinary research and outreach initiative within the University of Kentucky College of Nursing.



# Local color

From woolly worms to PossumFest, these Kentucky festivals are one of a kind

BY MEGHAN CAIN-DAVIS



Mr. Peel, the Banana Festival's mascot, rides in the Banana Festival parade, chauffeured by Mike Gunn and Joyce Gray. Photo: Fulton County Tourism

**FROM FUZZY CATERPILLARS** and elusive marsupials to bananas, chickens and wild mushrooms, some Kentucky communities have transformed the unusual into points of pride. These unique festivals showcase small-town creativity and community spirit, while drawing visitors from across the country.

That sense of community is especially important, since these unique festivals rely almost entirely on community members who donate time and talent to keep traditions alive year after year. Long before the first parade float rolls, volunteers are

at work setting up stages, organizing contests and coordinating vendors.

## Mountain Mushroom Festival, Irvine

Held in downtown Irvine, the Mountain Mushroom Festival celebrates Appalachian heritage and culture, and the folk tradition of hunting for morel mushrooms and the Kentucky agate gemstone, says Francine Bonny, who chairs the Mountain Mushroom Festival.

Morel growth is based on weather and ground temperature being



consistently warm, so spring is peak morel season, she says. That’s why, since 1991, the festival has run during the last full weekend in April.

A highlight is the mushroom market, where hunters sell their finds. Last year about 300 pounds of wild mushrooms were sold at \$75 to \$100 per pound. The market is cash only.

Agate hunting is another draw, with participants guided through local creekbeds. Advanced registration is required. The Southeast Kentucky Gem, Mineral and Fossil Club hosts a Kentucky Agate, Gem and Mineral Show during the festival.

More than 200 vendors line downtown with juried arts and crafts, educational programs, inflatables, a petting zoo and a food court. Events include cooking demonstrations, the Fungus 5K/2K Run/Walk, a parade, quilt show, the car show and the Oleika Shriners’ Engineer Train.

“We hope visitors see a friendly, good community of people who love it here,” Bonny says.

Bronwyn Hazelwood, 2025 Possum Queen, traveled from San Antonio to compete for the crown. Photo: London-Laurel County Tourist Commission



### PossumFest, Cumberland

Cumberland’s PossumFest “is a vibe,” says Julie Pitts, with the PossumFest Planning Committee.

The quirky festival started in 2022 when three women-owned small businesses in the area came together to offer their community a fun experience after being cooped up during the COVID-19 pandemic. They decided to host a big block party with an opossum theme.

Though they initially were met with resistance, “people love opossums,” Pitts says. She notes attendees have traveled from as far away as Australia, added the festival to bucket lists and even gotten opossum tattoos during their visit.

The possum theme runs deep with a mullet contest, a watermelon eating contest, and the Possum Queen pageant. Two wildlife rescue organizations bring ambassador opossums, and more than



Bert Smith holds champion morel during the 2024 Mountain Mushroom festival. Photo: Mary Reed

### PLANNING YOUR FESTIVAL WEEKEND

Don’t just attend these festivals—arrive early or stay late to explore beyond the main event. Host towns feature historic downtowns, local restaurants and nearby outdoor attractions. Short-term rentals, local inns and hotels are in and around each town.

Check festival schedules in advance to be sure to catch parades, contests and headline performances. Since parking is a premium in these downtowns, many festivals offer free shuttle services. Although most vendors take credit cards, there may be unexpected cash-only activities, so bring some cash, as well.



◀ Tonya Poindexter of Wilderness Trail Wildlife Center stands with the Ambassador Opossum she brought to the festival. Photo: PossumFest

170 artisan vendors line Main Street alongside live music.

“The music is great and the contests are an absolute draw,” says Pitts. “People love it. They can eat, shop, sit and stay all day right here on Main Street.”

### Banana Festival, Fulton

In far western Kentucky, Fulton celebrates an unlikely fruit connection.

“You don’t think of bananas when you think of Kentucky,” says Kenney Etherton, Fulton’s tourism director.

In the 1800s, the Illinois Central Gulf Railroad and the Fulton Ice Plant made the town a re-icing stop for bananas

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◀ The world's largest banana pudding is displayed during the Banana Festival parade. After the parade, attendees can try a free sample of banana pudding. Photo: Fulton County Tourism

shipped from South America to New Orleans and distributed nationwide. At one point, 70% of the bananas consumed in the United States passed through Fulton.

Since the 1960s, downtown has hosted the banana-themed celebration, featuring food, contests like the Amazing Banana Race scavenger hunt and banana eating competition, carnival, games, car show, live entertainment, a parade and Mr. Peel—a smiling, walking banana.

A signature attraction is the world's largest banana pudding, displayed during the parade and later served. More than 40 cases of bananas and 20 cases of pudding go into the dessert, Etherton says.

“Our heritage of community, railroads and bananas come together for this

KentuckyLiving.com

### Festival fun

The train that takes Woolly Worm Festivalgoers up and down Main Street in Beattyville is much faster than the racing caterpillars! Watch a video at KentuckyLiving.com, where you'll also find a links to videos of the Cluckin' Struttin, Crowin' Contest at the World Chicken Festival and “Ernest T. Bass” at the PossumFest in Cumberland.

festival,” he says. “We hope people will see how we’ve changed and progressed, but still have a small, hometown feel.”



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## Featured festivals

### Mountain Mushroom Festival

Court Street and Broadway, Irvine [mountainmushroomfest.org/](http://mountainmushroomfest.org/), (606) 723-2554

Celebrate the meaty morel where the “Bluegrass kisses the Mountains,” April 25–26. The parade theme is the “Marvelous Morel.” Free admission, but prices vary for some activities. Free parking and free shuttle.

### PossumFest

Main Street, downtown Cumberland [tricitieaskymainstreet.com/possumfest](http://tricitieaskymainstreet.com/possumfest), (606) 589-5151

Honor everyone’s favorite “trash cat” at the 5th annual PossumFest, September 4–5. Hours: 10 a.m.–8 p.m. Free admission, but prices vary for some activities.

### Banana Festival

Pontotoc Park downtown and Kentucky-Tennessee state line, Fulton

[visitfultonky.com/about-1](http://visitfultonky.com/about-1), (270) 472-9000

Celebrate Kentucky’s unique connection to bananas, September 12–19. The week includes a Kids Day and Faith & Family Night. Free admission, but prices vary for some activities.

### World Chicken Festival

Main Street, downtown London [chickenfestival.com](http://chickenfestival.com), (606) 878-6900

September 24–27, the World Chicken Fest celebrates Laurel County’s legacy with chicken. Admission is free, but some activity prices vary.

### Woolly Worm Festival

Main Street, downtown Beattyville [vittleecountyky.com/woolly-worm-festival](http://vittleecountyky.com/woolly-worm-festival), (606) 464-5038

Go to the races—the woolly worm races—October 23–24. Free admission, but prices vary for some activities.

## More unique Kentucky festivals

### Tater Day Festival

Court Square and H.H. Lovett Park, Benton [taterdayky.com](http://taterdayky.com), (270) 205-2727

“Yam it up” at the Tater Day spring festival,

April 3–6. Events include a demolition derby, rural heritage celebration, adopt-a-pet day, a classic auto show, fireworks, a dog show and a corn hole tournament. Admission is free but some activity prices vary.

### Beattyville Appalachian Memories Festival

Downtown Beattyville [appalachianmemoriesfest.com](http://appalachianmemoriesfest.com), (606) 464-5038

On May 15–16, celebrate the people, stories, skills and traditions that shaped Appalachian life, like its homesteading history, self-reliance and moonshine. On tap are live music, storytelling, the Beattyville Bourbon and Moonshine Still Show, a Jug Art Show and Contest, and a Better than Bourbon Beard contest. Free admission, but prices vary for some activities.

### Red River Gorge Bigfoot Fest

Stanton City Park, Stanton [rrbigfoot.com](http://rrbigfoot.com), [info@rrbigfoot.com](mailto:info@rrbigfoot.com)

On May 30, try to spot that elusive big guy while listening to renown guest speakers, exploring vendors, eating delicious food and watching a cryptic costume contest at the Red River Gorge Bigfoot Fest. There are also some interesting contests like the Best Bigfoot Howl and the Best Cryptic Tattoo. Free admission, but prices vary for some activities.

# KENTUCKY DOWN UNDER ADVENTURE ZOO

Kentucky Down Under Adventure Zoo, located off Interstate 65, Exit 58, in Horse Cave, offers a one-of-a-kind experience that brings the wonders of Australia to the heart of Kentucky. This family-friendly destination is far more than a typical zoo—it’s an immersive adventure designed to spark curiosity and create unforgettable memories for visitors of all ages.

Guests can explore the hilltop grounds on foot or by convenient golf cart rental, making the park easily accessible for both young explorers and older sightseers. Families are welcome to bring their own food and non-alcoholic beverages, making it simple to turn a visit into a full day of fun. School field trips are especially popular, offering students valuable hands-on learning and unforgettable up-close animal encounters. Find more information at [kentuckydownunder.com/groups](http://kentuckydownunder.com/groups).

Animal lovers quickly discover why Kentucky Down Under is a must-see attraction. Visitors can step inside interactive habitats, hand-feed

vibrant rainbow lorikeets in the lively aviary and meet friendly kangaroos, capybaras and other fascinating animals in the petting zoo. Educational animal shows provide insight into habitats, behaviors and diets—all while offering memorable photo opportunities. These personal interactions transform a simple outing into a meaningful experience that fosters appreciation for wildlife and conservation.

As guests journey through the park, they’ll hear the unmistakable laugh of the kookaburra—often called the bushman’s alarm clock—the chatter of exotic birds, and the distinctive howl of dingoes. The wide-eyed night (owl) monkey, the only truly nocturnal primate, remains a fan favorite. Calvin the camel is always eager for attention and has become a guest favorite. Adventure continues underground at Mammoth Onyx Cave, located on the property and included with admission. Visitors can also enjoy gemstone mining for an added hands-on experience.

Kentucky Down Under Adventure Zoo is just an awesome family experience—it’s a destination where exploration, education and excitement come together. For families seeking adventure and animal enthusiasts eager for something extraordinary, this is an experience not to be missed.



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### FESTIVAL FASHION WATCH

From chicken hats in London to banana costumes in Fulton, themed attire is half the fun at these festivals. At PossumFest, mullets and opossum ears are encouraged. Festival-themed merch is also available, including T-shirts celebrating each festival's theme. At the Banana Festival in Fulton, visitors stop by the Banana Cabana for T-shirts and memorabilia.

▲ The 84 Lumber Chicken Invasion raises money for the London Rotary Club. Photo: London-Laurel County Tourist Commission

### World Chicken Festival, London

In the late 1980s, London leaders looked for a way to attract visitors. They chose to honor Kentucky Fried Chicken founder Colonel Harland Sanders and his nephew, Lee Cummings of Lee's Famous Recipe Chicken, says Travis Shortt, director of public relations and events for the London-Laurel County Tourist Commission.

Today, the World Chicken Festival features a parade, concerts, cooking demonstrations and chicken-themed contests. Painted chicken feet on the pavement lead to the world's largest stainless steel skillet, which fries chicken throughout the weekend.

Two stages anchor the event. The Stage of Stars features rock on Friday, country on Saturday and gospel on Sunday. The Sanders Stage hosts chicken trivia, a Colonel Sanders



**Corbin, KY**  
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Win a Getaway. See page 51.



Win a Getaway. See page 51.



▲  
A look-alike contest during the World Chicken Festival pays homage to the original chicken king, Col. Harland Sanders. Photo: London-Laurel County Tourist Commission

look-alike contest, karaoke, an egg drop and a hot wing eating contest. There's also the Whiskers and Beard and Rooster Tail Mullet contests and the Cluckin' Struttin' and Crowin' Contest.

Food vendors must partner with a nonprofit and share proceeds. Shortt, a Jackson Energy consumer-member, says last year the festival provided \$145,000 to 42 nonprofits.

"So many people come from all over the country to be vendors. The outside world sees how powerful this festival is," he says.

**Woolly Worm Festival, Beattyville**

On the weekend after the third Monday in October, Appalachian music fills downtown Beattyville, as an announcer makes the all-call for another woolly worm race. Crowds gather as each woolly worm is hooked to a string and placed on the square-shaped raceway. Nearly 200

Win a Getaway. See page 51.

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▲ Visitors can purchase or bring their own woolly worm to participate in a race during the Woolly Worm Festival. Photo: Beattyville/Lee County Tourism

caterpillars compete, with winners advancing to the championship at 4 p.m. Sunday.

“The championship winner is the worm that predicts winter,” says Dedra Brandenburg, tourism director for Beattyville/Lee County.

According to folklore, if the black bands on the woolly worm are larger than the brown ones, winter will be harsher, explains Brandenburg, a Jackson Energy consumer-member.

The festival also includes a parade, live music, arts and craft vendors, a car show, youth pet show and food booths. What began as a small gathering now draws more than 30,000 visitors each year.

“It’s kind of a homecoming,” Brandenburg says.

**MEGHAN CAIN-DAVIS** is a freelance writer, mother and fitness instructor in Kentuckiana. She loves writing about her adventures in Kentucky and around the world.

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Win a Getaway. See page 51.



## Wheel man

Paul Wells has carefully researched and painstakingly restored an extensive collection of vintage bicycles. A consumer-member of Inter-County Energy Cooperative, his passion for two wheels began in the 1970s while working at a bike shop and racing. His intimate knowledge created an appreciation for the craftsmanship and care that had been the hallmark of bicycle construction for almost a hundred years.

"I fell in love with the art of the hand-crafted steel bicycle, the mitered steel tubes, the hand-cut lugs, the precision brazing and each craftsman's personal touch," explains Wells, who lives in Berea.

His collection, which he has accumulated over four decades, includes some rare and

unique artifacts. Its value lies in preservation and educational significance. Spanning the 20th century, the collection demonstrates some of the most important innovations and evolutions in the sport.

Wells has at least one bicycle from each decade of 1900 to 2000; from all major frame materials, namely steel, aluminum, titanium and carbon fiber; and from the major countries of manufacture, including Spain, Mexico, Canada, Germany, Japan and China. A 1953 French Liberia is shown in the inset above.

The oldest bicycle is a 1901 Cleveland, manufactured in the United States. It's got a steel frame, leather seat, cork handgrips, wooden wheel rims and rubber tires.

The most recent piece in the collection is a reproduction 1999 Trek. It's bright blue and emblazoned with the logo of the U.S. Postal Service, the sponsor for a team that won the Tour de France that year.

Accurately restoring the historic cycles and finding the appropriate components is part of the fun—and challenge—for Wells. It took him over a year to identify the make and model of one he found as a bare frame. It takes eight weeks to rebuild and form damaged and warped 100-year-old wooden tire rims.

"It's about more than just bicycles," he says. "There is a whole culture behind it—the love of cycling, the craftsmanship, the history and the people."

Story and photos: Kim Kobersmith

# EVENT CALENDAR



RYAN S. ADKINS

## 1 CHERRY BLOSSOMS

Munfordville's Cherry Blossom Festival brings the community together for a fun, relaxing day. The April 11 event, 8 a.m.–4 p.m. on the Courthouse Square, features food trucks, tasty treats, craft booths and other vendors with one-of-a-kind finds. Bounce house and other fun activities for the kids. Also that day: Dawg Dash, a 5K fundraiser for Animal Rescue Kare in Hart County (Facebook: ARK for Hart). For festival info, visitmunfordville.com, (270) 524-4752.

## 2 SIP AND SHOP

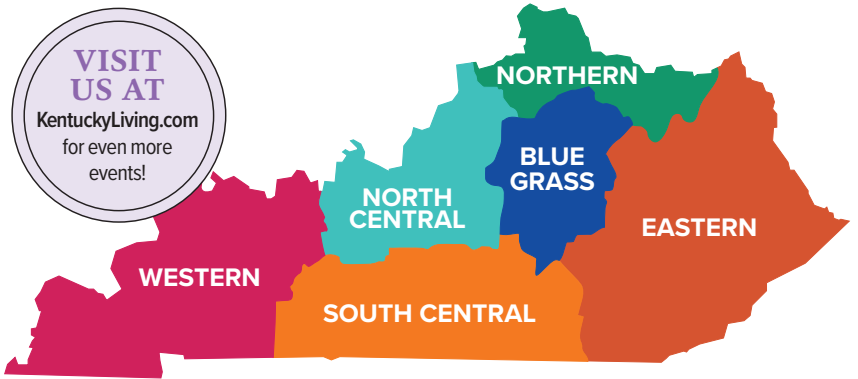
The weather is warming and Perryville has spring fever, celebrating Perryville in Bloom, April 18, 10 a.m.–4 p.m. in its downtown and Baril Park. Soak up the spring atmosphere by browsing vendors in the park or checking out local shops on historic Merchant's Row. Take a tasty sip along the Mocktail Trail, where participating vendors offer creative nonalcoholic shooters like lavender lemonade. For more info, downtownperryville.com, (859) 332-1862.

## 3 EVERY CHILD

Families of children with disabilities from Butler and surrounding counties get connected with resources, education and empowerment when Butler County High School hosts All In for Every Child Celebration, 8 a.m.–noon, April 18 (welcome banner shown). Organizations ranging from First Steps and autism centers to physical and occupational therapy are on hand to help children at all developmental levels, birth through adulthood, thrive. For more info, (270) 526-2204, ext. 9040.

## 4 LUCKY LADY

Help Grayson's Community Garden grow at Ladybug Release & Pollinator Day, April 25. Kids can release live ladybugs into the garden, discover native plants and friendly garden insects, explore pollinators at hands-on learning stations and even become young Garden Guardians. Plus fun activities like crafts and observation scavenger hunt. Adults can participate in the free family event, which includes garden tours, too. Starts at 9 a.m. For details, bcfccenter.org, (606) 585-4394.



**BLUEGRASS**

**THURSDAY, APRIL 2**

**Houston Ballet II**, (877) 448-7469, Norton Center for the Arts, Danville

**TUESDAY, APRIL 7**

**Waveland's Tea Tuesday**, 14th, 21st, 28th, (859) 272-3611, Waveland State Historic Site, Lexington

**SATURDAY, APRIL 11**

**The Seven Wonders: A Tribute to Fleetwood Mac**, (877) 448-7469, Norton Center for the Arts, Danville

**FRIDAY, APRIL 24**

**WTYA Spring Showcase**, 27th, (859) 873-0648, Woodford Theatre, Versailles

**Serial Killers with Dr. Scott Bonn**, (877) 448-7469, Norton Center for the Arts, Danville

**THURSDAY, APRIL 30**

**Tea and Talk: Waveland's Perennial Garden**, (859) 272-3611, Waveland State Historic Site, Lexington

**SUNDAY, APRIL 26**

**Parkinson's in Motion 5K**, (859) 338-7430, London-Laurel County Farmers Market, London

**NORTH CENTRAL**

**SATURDAY, APRIL 4**

**Uncorked Express**, (502) 549-5470, Kentucky Railway Museum, New Haven

**TUESDAY, APRIL 7**

**Spring Break Express**, 9th, (502) 549-5470, Kentucky Railway Museum, New Haven

**SATURDAY, APRIL 11**

**Kentucky Railway Museum's Train Show and Sale**, (502) 549-5470, St. Catharine Gymnasium, New Haven

**MONDAY, APRIL 13**

**NouLou Chamber Players: From Village to Parlor**, (615) 417-2110, Oxmoor Farm, Louisville

**SATURDAY, APRIL 18**

**Outlaw Express**, (502) 549-5470, Kentucky Railway Museum, New Haven

**Dogwood Artisan Showcase**

(502) 641-1920, Shelby County Fairgrounds, Shelbyville

**FRIDAY, APRIL 24**

**Spring Plant Sale**, thru 25th, (502) 241-4788, Yew Dell Botanical Gardens, Crestwood

**SATURDAY, APRIL 25**

**Trivia on the rails**, (502) 549-5470, Kentucky Railway Museum, New Haven

**The Bluegrass Creative Society Art & Craft Show**, (502) 641-1920, Nunnlea House, Louisville

**NORTHERN**

**SATURDAY, APRIL 4**

**Flamingo Spring Fling Month**, 3-4th, 10-11th, 17-18th, 24-25th, (606) 756-2183, Augusta

**EASTERN**

**FRIDAY, APRIL 10**

**Recycled/Found Object Art Market**, (879) 771-0946, Rowan County Arts Center, Morehead

**Cornbread & Chaos**, (606) 886-1341, Prestonsburg

**SATURDAY, APRIL 11**

**Morehead Mystical Market**, (859) 771-0946, Old Post Office, Morehead

**Spring Clean Up Day**, (606) 878-6900, London-Laurel County Farmers Market, London

**SATURDAY, APRIL 18**

**Northern Terminus Hike**, (606) 780-4342, Sheltoewe Trace National Recreation Trail, Morehead

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22**

**Earth Day Hike**, (606) 286-7009, Carter Caves State Resort Park, Olive Hill

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TEAM KENTUCKY

Win a Getaway. See page 51.

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**2026 Events**

**Cornbread & Chaos**  
April 10, June 12 & August 14, 2026

**Bluegrass Mountain Cup**  
June 27-28, 2026

**Star City Day**  
July 4, 2026

**Battle of Middle Creek Reenactment**  
September 10-12, 2026

**N1 Bikes KY Road Racing Series**  
September 19-20, 2026

**Jenny Wiley Festival**  
October 7-10, 2026

**KRF Arm Drop Dragz**  
October 23-24, 2026

**1 Million Lights Drive Thru Display**  
November 26 - December 31, 2026

Win a Getaway. See page 51.

**SATURDAY, APRIL 11**

**Triple Crown Doll Club Annual Show & Sale**, (812) 438-2499, Hebron Lutheran Church

**TUESDAY, APRIL 14**

**Spring Blooms Walk**, (859) 384-4999, Boone County Arboretum, Union

**SATURDAY, APRIL 18**

**Spring at the Vineyards Craft Show**, (513) 525-4157, Verona Vineyards

**SUNDAY, APRIL 19**

**Burlington Antique Show**, (513) 922-6847, Boone County Fairgrounds

**SATURDAY, APRIL 25**

**Camel Color 5K**, (859) 635-4161, Campbell County High School, Alexandria

**SOUTH CENTRAL**

**FRIDAY, APRIL 3**

**Liberty Friday Night Cruisers Car Show**, (606) 303-8999, Courthouse Square, Liberty

**SATURDAY, APRIL 4**

**Cars and Coffee: Corvette Showcase**, (270) 528-6003, Cave City

**FRIDAY, APRIL 10**

**Roy Dale Memorial Barrel Race (IBRA)**, thru 11th, (859) 559-2662, Central Kentucky Ag Expo Center, Liberty

**THURSDAY, APRIL 16**

**Wild Horse Adoption by Bureau of Land Management**, thru 18th, (769) 366-4821, Central Ky Ag Expo Center, Liberty

**SATURDAY, APRIL 18**

**Spur A Spring Fun Show Series**, (859) 779-0397, Central Kentucky Ag Expo Center, Liberty

**Native and Heirloom Plants Fest**, (606) 679-6361, UK-Pulaski County Extension Office, Somerset

**The Bolo Mules**, (270) 629-4263, The Grove: Outdoor Venue & Drinkery, Glasgow

**FRIDAY, APRIL 24**

**Moonlight and Magnolias**, thru 26th, (270) 361-2101, Plaza Theatre, Glasgow

**SATURDAY, APRIL 25**

**Somernites Cruise Car Show & Cruise**, (606) 872-2277, Somerset

**WESTERN**

**SUNDAY, APRIL 12**

**Sunday Seminar: Native Plants**, (270) 584-9017, Mahr Park Arboretum, Madisonville

**SATURDAY, APRIL 18**

**Flourish Women's Conference**, (270) 821-9283, Madisonville First General Baptist Church

**SUNDAY, APRIL 19**

**Chamber Music Recital: Eykamp String Quartet**, (270) 821-2787, Glema Mahr Center for the Arts, Madisonville

**MONDAY, APRIL 20**

**Let the Earth Breathe**, (270) 298-3790, Ohio County Public Library Annex, Hartford

**THURSDAY, APRIL 23**

**Fancywork: Needlework, Quilting, and Crafts in the 1800s**, (270) 442-2510, McCracken County Public Library, Paducah

**FRIDAY, APRIL 24**

**Pigtails & Cowlicks Spring Consignment Sale**, thru 25th, (270) 687-8800, Owensboro Convention Center

**Dr Suess's The Cat in the Hat**, (270) 450-4444, The Carson Center, Paducah

**SATURDAY, APRIL 25**

**Guided Hike: Trees**, (270) 584-9017, Mahr Park Arboretum, Madisonville

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Win a Getaway. See page 51.

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 4-8 P.M.  
**APRIL 25**  
 10 A.M. - 4 P.M.

Win a Getaway. See page 51.

**CALL BEFORE YOU GO** as event days can change. **SUBMIT ALL EVENTS ONLINE AT KENTUCKYLIVING.COM.** For FREE print listing consideration of Kentucky events, submit two months in advance, **by May 1 for the July issue.**

**TO ADVERTISE YOUR EVENT IN PRINT, CALL (800) 595-4846**



1



2



3



4

**1 BEACH DAY**

Holly Hurt enjoys a family day at the beach. Photo submitted by great-grandmother Rita Mounce, a Jackson Energy consumer-member from East Bernstadt.

**2 FAIR TO BEHOLD**

Beth Ross, Upton, captured this beautiful sunset moment while waiting in line for food at the Meade County Fair. Ross is a consumer-member of Meade County RECC.

**3 SPRING BLOOMS**

A purple leaf plumb tree bursts into spring blossom in Garrard County. Photo by Deborah Spencer, Lancaster, a consumer-member of Inter-County Energy.

**4 FITS, THEREFORE SITS**

The dish may be small, but it's big enough for an even smaller kitten. Margie Bell caught the moment on her front porch in Monticello. She is a consumer-member of South Kentucky RECC.

**SEND US YOUR SNAP SHOTS!** We're looking for spring photos.

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Visit **KENTUCKYLIVING.COM** and click on **CONTESTS** to submit photos.

# KENTUCKY kids



## Homework help

When doing homework, plan to take short breaks to stretch, get a drink of water or move around.

## STATE IT! PURPLE CONEFLOWER



The purple coneflower is native to Kentucky and grows throughout Eastern North America. This wildflower attracts pollinators such as bees and butterflies and can reach heights of up to 47 inches. It grows in dry open woods, prairies and grasslands.



## Did You Know?

Rabbits are super jumpers and can leap around 2 to 3 feet high in a single hop!

## Green Team Tip

Use both sides of paper before recycling it. Save the blank side for notes, drawings or homework to help reduce waste and save trees.

— Keely Crenshaw, age 11

Send us your green team tips!



Enter KIDS Contest

Submit a Green Team Tip or Joke online at [KentuckyLiving.com](http://KentuckyLiving.com): Magazine/Submissions for a chance to win a prize!

## Show what you know

How does your family help protect the environment? Small actions that help us “go green” can add up in a big way. Use the web address above to share your ideas with other kids.



## Tell us a joke!

How do flowers whistle?

They use their “tulips!”

— Mabel Curley, age 10



# GREAT OUTDOORS

## Turkey time

*Remembering my first turkey hunt*

**WHEN I GOT OUT** of the Army in 1992, I came home to find all of my friends buzzing about their new outdoors obsession—turkey hunting.

We had always been excited by an upcoming season, whether spring crappie fishing or fall deer hunting, but I could tell turkey hunting was something special by the stories my buddies told.

Wild turkeys are native to North America, but they suffered devastating population decline and were nearly extinct by the early 1900s due to habitat loss and overhunting. But

thanks to careful habitat improvement, scientific research and advocacy from groups like the National Wild Turkey Federation, turkey numbers recovered. And in 1991, the year before I got out of the Army, every state with a wild turkey population opened a spring hunting season.

It felt like forever before my first hunting season rolled around. My buddies only made it harder with their campfire tales. While I waited, I purchased a seat, calls and a fancy turkey vest—but not a gun, because I wanted to take my first turkey with my grandfather's shotgun.

Opening morning finally came. The pre-dawn air was chilly, with light winds. During the dark drive to the hunting grounds, I drank hot coffee and listened to my friends' stories of previous hunts, and we caught up on what I had missed while I was overseas.

When we arrived, they showed me where to sit and set up the decoys about 20 yards away. Then we settled into the dark stillness of the morning. A gobbler sounded off in the distance, and as the sun crested the horizon, we heard him hit the ground, gobbling. Soon, other birds joined in the march toward our decoys. My friend began to call lightly.



Soon I heard a whisper: “Here they come, get ready.” It was only then that I realized that, from my vantage point sitting in a slight depression, I could only see about 20 yards. My buddies could see the turkeys coming from 100 yards out—but I was still in the dark.

“They’re almost in range,” my friend whispered. “Are you ready?”

But of course I wasn’t—I couldn’t see. Forced to wait, we sat motionless as 13 gobblers strutted very close. Several made distinctive noises that hunters know as spitting and drumming. It was an awe-inspiring display.

I harvested my first gobbler that morning. My friends jumped up, excited but puzzled. I explained how my low vantage point had limited my vision until the turkeys came in close.

The range of the shot quickly became irrelevant as we stood around a beautiful bird and high-fived. It was an unforgettable morning—reconnecting with my friends, experiencing an amazing species up close and making memories that have lasted decades. We began reliving that hunt almost before it was over. Around us, the woods awoke and the chill turned to a warm breeze. **KL**

**KEN MCBROOM**, an outdoors writer/photographer, created [RamblingAngler.com](http://RamblingAngler.com). McBroom grew up in Lynchburg, Tennessee, and now lives in western Kentucky.

▶ April is turkey time in Kentucky, the perfect time to enjoy the great outdoors. Photo: Ken McBroom

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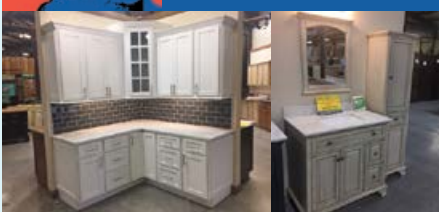
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# Cleaning up Kentucky

Whitney Lewis leads by example



**BYRON CRAWFORD** is Kentucky's storyteller—a veteran television and newspaper journalist known for his colorful essays about life in Kentucky. Contact Byron at [KentuckyLiving.com](http://KentuckyLiving.com): About/People.

**YOU MAY SEE HER** paddling a faded blue kayak, or on foot along the shoreline, picking up trash at a lake or stream near you.

Her name is Whitney Brooke Lewis, and cleaning up Kentucky's streams and lakeshores is her passion.

She leads a nonprofit, social media-generated movement, Cleaner Kentucky Inc., which has spread across the state among more than 8,000 volunteers who've picked up well over 1 million grocery bags of trash. Another million bags are expected to be filled by year's end.

It all began in 2023 as Whitney was gathering driftwood and rocks for use in her handcrafted art creations—SunKYst Sticks and Stones.

"I'm thinking, 'If I'm here picking up rocks and driftwood, I can pick up a bag of trash, too. I can give back to Earth a little bit.'"

Now, the 39-year-old mother of two daughters, resident of rural Nelson County and consumer-member of both Salt River Electric and Nolin RECC can hardly believe the support from Kentuckians and others who've responded to the waterway cleanup challenge that she organized as an observance of Earth Day on April 22, her birthday.

Numerous media have spread her story across Kentucky and beyond. The Nevada maker of the Grappler pick-up tool that she uses featured a story on its website about the success of her campaign.

Whitney alone has collected more than 31,300 bags of litter that she hauls to a landfill in her 20-year old SUV or the 1998 Ford F-150 with nearly 280,000 miles, which was donated by a friend. She receives no government help, but has managed to support her effort so far through donations, residuals from a retirement fund and income from sales of her hand-crafted stone and driftwood art.

Volunteers send her their photos with the total number of bags they've filled each week.



Plastic grocery bags are most often used in the cleanup because, she says, "everybody has an abundance of them."

"Kentucky's going to be the cleanest state in the country," she says.

Volunteers from other states have contacted her about the campaign and have given her hope that the waterway cleanup will spread well beyond Kentucky.

In 2023 she was honored with the Beautify the Bluegrass Governor's Award, given by the Governor's office in partnership with Kentucky's electric cooperatives and *Kentucky Living*. Other encouragement for her effort often comes in the most unexpected moments. Early in the campaign, she was picking up litter near one of the boat ramps at Cedar Creek Lake in Lincoln County at dusk one evening when a fisherman approached with a piece of trash.

"He said, 'I thought I'd better pick this up and bring it over to you. I just threw this down over there earlier this afternoon.'"

Soon, other fishermen were helping.

"They got into their vehicles and turned on their headlights and started picking up trash," Whitney recalls. "I drove home that night with a trunk full of very smelly trash ... and a heart full of hope." **KL**



HEATHER BLYEU



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