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Gov. Beshear: Kentucky Tourism Generated \$14.3 Billion in Economic Impact, More Than 97,000 Jobs in 2024, Making It the Best Year on Record

*Kentucky tourism achieved third consecutive record year of economic
impact*

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (June 11, 2025) – Today, building on the New Kentucky Home initiative, Gov. Andy Beshear announced that 2024 marked a new record year for Kentucky tourism, with \$14.3 billion generated in economic impact supporting 97,394 jobs, as tourism remains a key piece of the commonwealth's booming economy.

The Governor joined state tourism leaders at the Louisville Slugger Museum & Factory to celebrate the third straight record-breaking year for tourism in Kentucky.

"Kentucky's tourism industry is experiencing the biggest historic winning streak we've ever seen. Thanks to the hardworking people in this industry and Team

Kentucky's ongoing investment in tourism, we're welcoming more people to our New Kentucky Home and celebrating three straight years of record-breaking economic impact," said **Gov. Beshear**. "This win is more than just numbers; it's about families creating lasting memories and our communities thriving. Together, we will keep this momentum going and showcase what makes Kentucky so special."

According to a study by Tourism Economics, 80 million travelers visited Kentucky in 2024. Those travelers spent a total of \$10.1 billion across the state, a 3.8% increase over 2023. The breakdown of spending is as follows:

- \$2.6 billion on food and beverage,
- \$2.4 billion on lodging,
- \$1.9 billion on transportation,
- \$1.9 billion on retail, and
- \$1.3 billion on recreation and entertainment.

"Tourism is an integral part of Kentucky's economy, creating jobs, building tax revenue and infusing energy into communities across the commonwealth," said **Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet Secretary Lindy Casebier**. "These numbers emphasize tourism's important role in our state and reflect the dedication and hard work of tourism and hospitality professionals throughout Kentucky. As more and more travelers discover the incredible attractions of our state, we look forward to welcoming many additional folks to our New Kentucky Home in the future."

"The tourism industry in Kentucky remains hard at work creating unparalleled experiences and lasting memories for travelers," said **Tourism Commissioner Mike Mangeot**. "We're thrilled that more visitors than ever are choosing to make Kentucky part of their travel plans. Every decision to explore our attractions, dine

in our restaurants, stay in our hotels and shop in our communities is an investment in the people and places that make Kentucky a one-of-a-kind destination.”

“This record-breaking growth means more guests seeing The Big Bat, more energy in downtown Louisville and more opportunities to grow our team and create lasting experiences,” said **John Hillerich IV, president & CEO of Hillerich & Bradsby Co., which owns and operates Louisville Slugger Museum & Factory**. “Since opening the museum in 1996, we’ve seen nearly 7 million guests visit us. We couldn’t be more proud to be part of what makes Kentucky unforgettable, and we’re grateful for the continued investment that keeps our tourism industry strong.”

Brooke Vaughn, owner and founder of Please & Thank You, emphasized how tourism helped elevate her local business: “Louisville tourism helped put Please & Thank You on the map, attracting national acclaim for our hospitality and the title of Best Cookie Shop in the USA.”

Cleo Battle, president and CEO of Louisville Tourism, highlighted the importance of investing in tourism and the impact a strong industry has on the state: “A robust tourism industry is vital to enhancing the state of Kentucky. As the commonwealth’s largest city, Bourbon City plays a pivotal role in attracting visitors from around the globe with our rich history, iconic attractions, bourbon culture, culinary buzz and world-renowned events and festivals. This influx of tourists drives local and regional economic growth by supporting area businesses and creating jobs. Louisville’s tourism industry generates \$4.4 billion in economic impact, supporting 28,460 tourism industry jobs in Jefferson County alone. These numbers underscore the critical importance of continued investment in tourism marketing, infrastructure and workforce development to ensure Louisville and Kentucky remain a premier destination and economic engine.”

To see a full list of economic impact and jobs by county, click [here](#).

Kentucky's impressive economic success over the last five years is a direct reflection of the Beshear administration's continued investments in the tourism industry.

To capitalize on Kentucky's historic economic momentum and record-breaking tourism success, Gov. Beshear [announced](#) New Kentucky Home, a strategic initiative to further drive economic investment, attract and retain talent and increase tourism across the commonwealth.

Last year, the Governor announced that 2023 was the best year on record for tourism, with \$13.8 billion in economic impact and 95,222 jobs. This followed a record-breaking 2022 when he announced that tourism had generated more than \$12.9 billion in economic impact and secured 91,668 jobs in Kentucky that year.

In January, Gov. Beshear [announced](#) that [87 tourism marketing organizations across 80 counties](#) are receiving \$2 million through the Regional Marketing and Matching Funds Program.

In December 2024, Gov. Beshear [announced](#) that the commonwealth achieved another historic milestone, marking a new record with 10 new tourism development projects set to generate an estimated \$256 million in private investment. These projects also are expected to create 1,696 jobs once operational.

The state's bourbon and spirits industry recorded its [best year](#) for growth in 2022, with over \$2.1 billion in new investments and approximately 700 new jobs for Kentucky residents. The sector followed with a strong 2023, including \$713.8 million in new investments and 229 full-time jobs. Since the start of his administration, Gov. Beshear has announced roughly 100 new location and expansion projects within the bourbon and spirits sector, contributing to over \$4.2 billion in new investments and more than 1,800 full-time jobs for Kentuckians.

In 2022, Gov. Beshear [announced](#) \$75 million in ARPA funding to boost the state's tourism industry and economy. Previously, the Governor dedicated [\\$5.3 million in federal funding](#) to 103 tourism and destination marketing organizations in 88 Kentucky counties.

Since the beginning of his administration, Gov. Beshear has announced more than 1,100 private-sector new-location and expansion projects totaling over \$35 billion in announced investments, creating more than 60,500 jobs. This is the highest investment figure secured during the tenure of any governor in the commonwealth's history and \$14 billion more than the next highest total.

In addition, 33 tourism development projects totaling an estimated investment of \$1 billion have received final approval. Once operational, these projects will create roughly 4,825 jobs. This is the highest investment figure secured during the tenure of any governor in the commonwealth's history.

About Louisville Slugger Museum & Factory

A premier attraction in Louisville, the Louisville Slugger Museum & Factory has drawn over six million guests to its storied halls. Displaying the world's largest baseball bat and a vault showcasing over 3,000 original bat models, the museum invites guests to experience baseball lore up close and see how the iconic bat is made from start to finish. Families, schools and groups enjoy award-winning tours, interactive exhibits and personalized bats. The museum was just recently named one of USA Today's Top 5 Attractions for Sports Fans Readers Poll. For more information on the museum and hours, please visit sluggermuseum.com.

For more information and to view the full economic impact report, please visit: kentuckytourism.com/industry.

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