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Convention South

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Rendezvous South 2019
(pg. 7)

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Meetings Climate For 2019:

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New & Trending
In The Industry

Event Planner's Guides To
Kentucky & Georgia

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AUTUMN BEAUTY

Bright fall colors set off the Cumberland River Bridge near the 1,657-acre Cumberland Falls State Resort Park in southern Kentucky. The park's main meeting venue, the historic Dupont Lodge is perched high above the river, which rushes over a boulder-strewn gorge to form the 125-foot-wide cascade known as Cumberland Falls, or the "Niagara of the South." A major waterway of the Southern United States, the 688-mile-long river drains almost 18,000 square miles, flowing west from a source in the Appalachian Mountains to its confluence with the Ohio River near Paducah, Kentucky, and the mouth of the Tennessee River.

EVENT PLANNER'S GUIDE TO

KY

Kentucky

D. FRAN MORLEY

With five U.S. Interstates crisscrossing the state and three major airports (Louisville International, Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport and Lexington's Blue Grass Airport), the Commonwealth of Kentucky provides an easy-to-access central U.S. location, with facilities for events in major metropolitan areas and smaller cities, as well as in quiet towns and rural areas.

Louisville

The big news in Louisville is the August 2018 reopening of the Kentucky International Convention Center (KICC) after a two-year, \$207 million expansion and renovation, according to Rosanne Mastin, marketing communications manager for the Louisville CVB (www.gotolouisville.com). The KICC now features 200,125 square feet of contiguous exhibit space, a 40,000-square-foot ballroom, 52 meeting rooms and a 175-seat tiered conference theater.

The city offers planners two main convention venues (in addition to the KICC, the Kentucky Exposition Center has 1.3 million square feet of exhibit space, 19,000-seat Freedom Hall and 47,000-seat Cardinal Stadium), new attractions on downtown's Whiskey Row and in the growing NuLu (New Louisville) District, and more than 20,000 hotel rooms in the metro area, including 3,000 new hotel rooms, according to the CVB.

This fall, The Galt House Hotel, Louisville's

only riverfront hotel, begins an \$80 million renovation to be completed in 2020 that will include upgrades to all 1,310 guest rooms and 130,000 square feet of event space. (For more information, see the Breakout Spotlight on page 48.)

The Omni Louisville Hotel opened in spring 2018 with 612 guest rooms, 226 apartments and 70,000 square feet of flexible meeting space plus other amenities, including a bowling alley, spa, and rooftop pool and bar. The 620-room Louisville Marriott Downtown completed a \$30 million renovation in summer 2018. The hotel has 50,000 square feet of event space and is connected to the KICC. The 140-room Courtyard Louisville Downtown completed a \$4 million facelift last spring, including an expanded meeting area.

Also this year, according to the CVB, in the fast-growing NuLu District, the AC Hotel by Marriott at NuLu opened with 156 guest rooms.

The hotel is within walking distance to numerous restaurants, bars and attractions, a craft brewery, the Louisville Slugger Stadium and several distilleries, including Old Forester, Rabbit Hole, Angel's Envy and Copper & Kings.

The CVB also notes other new hotels and other expansions for later this year or early 2019. The 110-room Moxy will have a street-level restaurant and bar with a rooftop terrace and event space. The Hotel Distil, which will be affiliated with Marriott's Autograph Collection Hotels, will have 205 rooms with a restaurant, rooftop bar and about 7,500 square feet of event space. The Kentucky Derby Museum will complete a major expansion this fall, adding more than 11,000 square feet of new space. The Great Hall at the museum can host up to 400 for receptions.

Other major hotels include the 393-room Hyatt Regency Louisville, which is connected by skywalk to the KICC and features ballrooms, ►

boardrooms, meeting spaces and a conference theater with tiered seating for 110. The historic Brown Hotel has 293 guest rooms and 17 event spaces for meeting groups of up to 600. The 321-room Seelbach Hilton, a landmark hotel since 1905, can seat up to 400 for dinners. The University of Louisville Conference Services offers a variety of meeting and event sites for up to 500 guests, with 12 rooms totaling more

than 16,000 square feet, plus additional outdoor event areas.

Louisville Venues

- **Crowne Plaza Louisville Airport:** 588 guest rooms; 55,000 square feet of event space; banquet capacity of 1,000
- **Louisville Marriott East:** 252 guest rooms; 21,000 square feet of event space

BREAKOUT SPOTLIGHT: The Galt House Hotel



Offering more meeting space than any other hotel in Kentucky, The Galt House Hotel in Louisville is undergoing \$80 million in upgrades and renovations that will touch every area of the city's only riverfront hotel. Renovations are scheduled to be completed in 2020. Now a Trademark Collection by Wyndham property, The Galt House Hotel offers 1,310 guest rooms and 130,000 square feet of convention space with more than 50 meeting rooms, two ballrooms and dedicated exhibit hall.

"At the core of our mission is introducing our legendary Louisville legacy to even more guests from across the world," said Scott Shoenerger, president and CEO of the A.I.J. Schneider Co., the hotel's owner. "Partnering with Wyndham gives us the high-profile size, scale and visibility to do just that. Together with Wyndham, we're excited to bring the spirited Louisville experience to life for travelers, helping them discover a slice of home in Kentucky they'll remember and

want to return to for years to come."

As Wyndham Hotel Group's largest single hotel in North America, The Galt House Hotel features seven full-service restaurants and lounges, including the Rooftop Garden and Terrace, and RIVUE, a revolving restaurant on the 25th floor that is also available for dinners, receptions and corporate functions.

Renovations include reimagined guest rooms and public spaces with fresh design, furnishings and finishes inspired by the food, bourbon, horses and colors of Kentucky: spring green, saddle brown, aged-barn red, thoroughbred blue and jockey-silk orange. The Galt House Hotel is the official hotel of both the Kentucky Derby and the Kentucky Derby Festival, where every year up to 700,000 visitors gather for a front-row seat to Thunder Over Louisville. ■

Contact: www.galthouse.com/meetings

- **The Olmsted:** 11,000 square feet of event space; theater-seating capacity for up to 500

Northern Kentucky

Directly across the Ohio River from Cincinnati, Northern Kentucky (NKY) includes the cities of Covington and Newport. Rebecca S. Banks, digital marketing manager for meetNKY, says the staff at the CVB are excited about the new Learning Center, a state-of-the-art amphitheater that opened at the Northern Kentucky Convention Center this spring. The Learning Center space has 400 permanent seats, each with a retractable tablet-sized desk and in-seat power access. In addition, the space offers high-tech connectivity capability for broadcasting and global conferencing. The riverfront convention center includes a 45,000-square-foot Event Center, 10 meeting rooms and a 17,500-square-foot ballroom.

There are 7,000 metro-area guest rooms and many of the area's hotel properties are in the midst of renovations, Banks said. "This includes Embassy Suites and Marriott at RiverCenter, our convention properties. Hotel Covington, our gorgeous boutique hotel near the convention center, has won several awards and been named to many top lists." The Marriott at RiverCenter has 317 guest rooms and 30 meeting rooms in 119,000 total square feet of function space; the Embassy Suites RiverCenter offers 226 guest rooms, 13 meeting and event rooms, and a 230-person banquet capacity; and Hotel Covington has 114 guest rooms and three event spaces that can host up to 250 people.

Other larger hotels in the Northern Kentucky area include Aloft Newport on the Levee, with 144 guest rooms and 6,000 square feet of function space; Radisson Riverfront, with 220 guest rooms and a theater capacity of 600; Holiday Inn Riverfront, with 152 guest rooms and a theater capacity of 150; and the 122-room Hampton Inn & Suites Newport, with three event spaces for up to 200 people.

The Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport (located on the Kentucky side of the Ohio River, 11 miles west of downtown Covington) is in the midst of upgrades to improve and modernize the terminal and create a new consolidated car rental facility, according to meetNKY.

Planners looking to incorporate some local flavor into an event might enjoy Northern Kentucky's new B-Line, an official gateway

to the Kentucky Bourbon Trail, which draws 1.2 million visitors statewide annually. Julie Kirkpatrick, meetNKY’s vice president of sales and marketing, said The B-Line focuses on the area’s three craft distilleries. “There are two sides to the Kentucky Bourbon Trail. There’s the main heritage trail, which are the big brands: Jim Beam, Maker’s Mark, etc. But I’m really intrigued by the rise of the craft bourbon distillery,” she said. She pointed out that The B-Line and the Bourbon Trail help people learn more about the state and its distilling culture.

Northern Kentucky Venues

- **Holiday Inn Cincinnati Airport:** 287 guest rooms; 13,000 square feet of meeting and event space
- **Cincinnati Airport Marriott:** 14,005 square feet of event space with reception capacity of 750
- **DoubleTree by Hilton Cincinnati Airport:** 176 guest rooms; can host up to 600 for receptions
- **Hilton Cincinnati Airport:** 314 guest rooms; theater-seating capacity of 400
- **Beechridge Conference Center:** 140-acre estate with 19th Century stone manor house; can host tented receptions for up to 250 people, as well as smaller corporate events and dinners
- **The Event Center at New Riff Distilling:** reception and banquet capacity for up to 150 guests
- **Newport Aquarium:** reception space for up to 1,500; Riverside Room can seat up to 240 for dinners
- **National Underground Railroad Freedom Center:** event facilities for up to 400
- **BB Riverboats:** The Belle of Cincinnati can seat up to 700 on three decks; River Queen has seating for up to 220 on two decks

Lexington

The Lexington Center recently broke ground on a \$241 million replacement and expansion project, representing the largest capital public improvement project in the city’s history, said Niki Heichelbech-Goldey, director of communications

for VisitLEX. “Exhibition space within the convention center will be increased by more than 50 percent and ballroom space by more than 40 percent,” she said. “Upon completion in November 2021, Lexington Center will feature over 200,000 square feet of flexible meeting and event space.” According to VisitLEX, the project is designed to better connect the existing 23,000-seat Rupp Arena and the convention center to downtown. Parks and plazas will provide new gathering spots, including the “Catwalk,” an exterior stair and gathering spot outside of Rupp Arena; the “Gorge,” a new outdoor event and exhibit space at the convention center; interactive water features; an extension of the Town Branch Trail; and a planned future park. The current convention center and Rupp Arena remain open throughout the construction project.

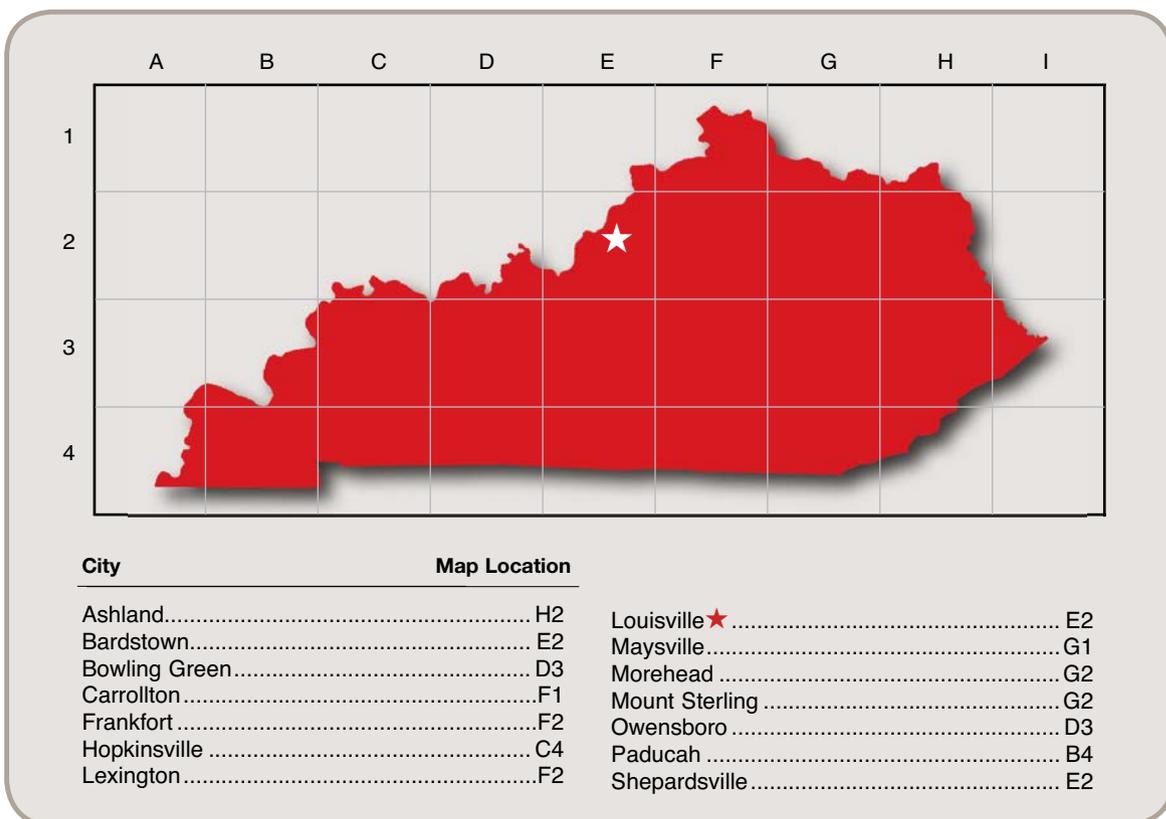
According to VisitLEX, the 366-room Hilton Lexington and the 366-room Hyatt Regency, both adjacent to The Lexington Center, combine with the center to offer planners a total of 169,000 square feet of flexible event space.

Two new Marriott hotels will open in late 2019, according to VisitLEX: The Lexington Marriott City Center and Residence Inn Lexington City Center will provide an additional 350 rooms in the heart of downtown, just a block

from Lexington Center and across the street from the new Lexington Visitors Center. Planned to open in early 2019 is a 120-room Origin Hotel at The Summit at Fritz Farm. The hotel will include 4,400 square feet of retail, a lobby restaurant and bar, and event space

Two hotels in the city have completed major renovations, according to VisitLEX. The boutique Sire Hotel – a Tapestry Collection by Hilton (formerly the Gratz Park Inn) – has 42 rooms, an outdoor terrace, and Distilled Restaurant and Bourbon Bar. The 250-room Campbell House, Curio Collection by Hilton is in the midst of a multi-million-dollar renovation that will add additional new function space. When completed in spring 2019, the hotel will offer 22,000 total square feet of meeting and event space.

Other hotels with major event space are Griffin Gate Marriott Resort & Spa, with 409 guest rooms and 28,000 square feet of function space, plus a Rees Jones 18-hole golf course; the 291-room Clarion Hotel, with 13,000 square feet of meeting and event space; the 230-room Embassy Suites UK Coldstream, with 13 meeting rooms and ballroom seating for up to 800; and Embassy Suites Lexington Green (formerly Hilton Lexington Suites), with 174 guest rooms and meeting and event space for up to 125 guests. ▶



Lexington Venues

- **Four Points by Sheraton:** 174 guest rooms; 7,500 square feet of event space
- **Ramada by Wyndham Hotel & Conference Center:** 145 guest rooms; 10 meeting rooms in 8,000 square feet of meeting space
- **21c Museum Hotel:** 88 guest rooms; gallery and event space for up to 250 people
- **Keeneland Race Course:** includes the Entertainment Center, which can accommodate up to 450 people, and smaller meeting and event spaces, most overlooking the track; historic Keene Place mansion can host seated dinners for up to 56 guests

Frankfort

Kentucky's state capital offers planners a walkable downtown, tours of the historic state capitol building and governor's mansion, the oldest continually operating distillery in America (since 1812), numerous historic sites and museums, and a newly enhanced riverfront with aquatic center, parks and boat tours, including Rockin' Thunder, a 22-passenger jet boat. The distillery, Buffalo Trace, has an event space for up to 350 people, according to Visit Frankfort. Frankfort is also home to Rebecca Ruth Candy, open since 1919 and the creator of the original bourbon balls candy.

The largest meeting hotel in the city is the 163-room Capital Plaza Hotel, with 10,000 square feet

of function space. The Thomas D. Clark Center for Kentucky History, located near the hotel, has meeting rooms and reception space for up to 200 people. The center also facilitates outdoor function space on the grounds of Kentucky's Old State Capitol Building. Berry Mansion is a historic home situated on a hill overlooking the capitol, with space for dinners, conferences and receptions.

There are approximately 850 hotel rooms in the city, according to the CVB. Hotels with limited meeting space include a Hampton Inn, with 122 guest rooms and two meeting rooms; Best Western Parkside, with meeting space for up to 80 people; and Holiday Inn Express & Suites, with event space for up to 45 people. An 88-room Home2 Suites opened this year.

Owensboro

The new Bluegrass Music Hall of Fame and Museum opens October 2018 in Owensboro. According to Dave Kirk, destination manager for the Owensboro-Daviess County CVB, the \$15.3 million facility will help Kentucky's fourth-largest city market itself as a destination.

"When we go out to book conventions and conferences, we will have another great source of entertainment to help us sell Owensboro," he said. "With the shows the bluegrass center is planning for the weekends, that will also create events in themselves that people will come to

Owensboro for. Add in that the new building is located within footsteps of great hotels and you've got a recipe for success in terms of tourism." The museum has a 450-seat theater, interactive exhibits, posters, costumes, live instrument demonstrations and the International Bluegrass Music Association's (IBMA) special Hall of Fame.

The Owensboro Convention Center is a 92,000-square-foot multipurpose facility with 44,000-square-foot exhibit hall and 48,000 additional square feet of ballroom and meeting space. RiverPark Center is a performing arts facility with a 1,500-seat auditorium and six spaces for events and meetings. The Owensboro Sportscenter

is a 5,000-seat arena with space for trade shows, meetings and receptions.

Two hotels are adjacent to the convention center downtown: the 150-suite Hampton Inn & Suites has three meeting rooms and the 123-room Holiday Inn Owensboro Riverfront features an executive meeting space and boardroom that seats up to 10. Other hotels with meeting space for up to 60 people include a 109-room Courtyard Owensboro, 63-room Comfort Suites, 100-room Fairfield Inn and 64-room Sleep Inn.

Kentucky Wesleyan College has banquet space for up to 500 people; Brescia University has a variety of spaces and can host up to 160; and Mount Saint Joseph Conference and Retreat Center can host up to 115 for dinners and up to 200 for meetings.

The Owensboro Museum of Fine Art and the Owensboro Museum of Science & History offer group rates for tours and unique event spaces.

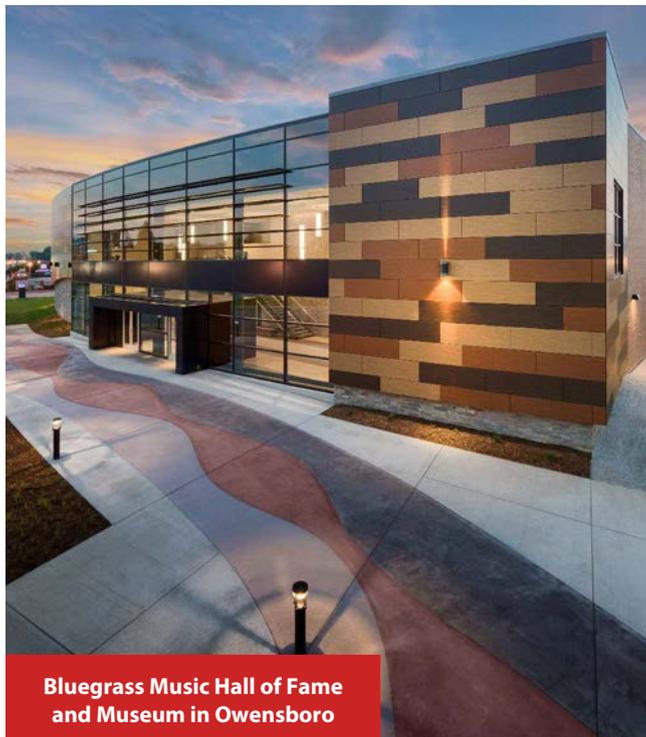
Hopkinsville

Set to open this fall, the Hopkinsville Sportsplex will be a 54,000-square-foot multipurpose complex with the flexibility to host non-sports events, according to Visit Hopkinsville. The \$5.6 million facility will have three basketball courts, an indoor soccer field, baseball batting cages, archery space, and meeting and party rooms.

In the past year, the city welcomed the Hopkinsville Towne Center, with shopping and dining options, and two new hotels. TownePlace Suites, which has a small meeting room, and a 100-room Holiday Inn, located next to the new sports complex and the James E. Bruce Convention Center. The center has 7,230 square feet of meeting and exhibit space and is adding a new 14,800-square-foot conference center, according to published reports.

Additional event venues include Valor Hall Conference & Event Center, with 10,000 square feet of meeting space and a 6,000-square-foot glass-enclosed pre-function room; and Black Patch Steak & Seafood, with meeting space for up to 80 people. Burdoc Farms, in nearby Crofton, has a variety of spaces for events, with 10 acres of trails for team-building functions. Event facilities also are available at Hopkinsville Community College, with classrooms and other spaces available for up to 150 people, and at the Hopkinsville campus of Murray State University, which can host up to 200.

Pennyrile Forest State Resort Park has 12



Bluegrass Music Hall of Fame and Museum in Owensboro

cottages and 24 guest rooms in the lodge. Two meeting rooms can accommodate between 30 and 120 people and a private dining room can seat up to 80.

Bowling Green

About one hour north of the metro Nashville area, Bowling Green is home to Western Kentucky University (WKU) and the National Corvette Museum (NCM) and Motorsports Park, which offers planners unique team-building, such as competition-style go-kart racing, as well as indoor and outdoor event facilities for up to 150 people. According to the Bowling Green Area CVB, the NCM Motorsports Park has a new program, offering corporate training through curriculum, effective communication exercises and team-building activities, built around an all-inclusive racing experience.

At WKU, planners will find classroom and auditorium space plus the Augenstein Alumni Center, with meeting rooms and a ballroom that can accommodate 250 for dinners or 300 for theater-style presentations. The alumni center is next to the 108-room Hyatt Place Bowling Green, which has additional meeting space. On WKU's South Campus, Knically Conference Center adjoins a 124-room Staybridge Suites. The center includes three multi-function ballrooms, smaller meeting rooms and an auditorium and can seat up to 1,200 for presentations or up to 650 for banquets.

Bowling Green's Sloan Convention Center is a 60,000-square-foot facility with 35,000 square feet of meeting and conference space and a ballroom that can accommodate up to 1,500 for receptions. There are 444 hotel rooms in the immediate area of the center, including the 218-room Holiday Inn University Plaza, with 4,000 square feet of meeting space; 133-room Hilton Garden Inn; and 93-room Courtyard Bowling Green.

Beth Noffsinger, public relations manager for the CVB, notes two unique venues downtown. "The Charleston has the feel of a historic Southern mansion but it's right on the square in downtown," she said. "[The] Venue [at] 939 [Adams] is in a converted tobacco factory near downtown. These are charming event spaces with so much character and would be great for a variety of meetings or receptions." The Venue at 939 Adams has a maximum capacity of 720 inside and space for an additional 320 on the outdoor patio, and The Charleston can host up to



220 people for receptions or parties.

Also downtown, the Kentucky Grand Hotel & Spa, which opened in spring 2017, has eight luxury suites ranging from 900 to 1,600 square feet, a full-service spa and 3,000 square feet of event space.

A Tru by Hilton opened in Bowling Green this summer and a new Embassy Suites is slated to open in 2019, according to Noffsinger.

Paducah

Designated by UNESCO as a Creative City of Crafts and Folk Art, one of only a handful of UNESCO Creative Cities in the United States, this western Kentucky city hosted a Creative Cities annual meeting in fall 2017, according to Laura Oswald, director of marketing for the Paducah CVB. "This first official sub-network meeting was the first of its kind in the United States and drew expert speakers, delegates and special guests from four continents," she said. "The event used more than 20 local venues and incorporated local flavor in all aspects."

Oswald noted that the CVB's Signature Experiences are proving to be prime team-building experiences. "These are designed to take you behind the scenes, below the surface and hands-on," she said. "Ideal team-building or post-meeting activities, these tours engage meeting participants in local culture and empower them to think creatively."

Paducah offers more than 2,200 guest rooms, according to the CVB. The Holiday Inn Paducah Riverfront has 123 guest rooms and a meeting room that can seat up to 125. The hotel is adjacent to the Paducah McCracken

County Convention & Expo Center, which offer a combined 110,000 square feet of exhibit and meeting space. Nearby, Walker Hall Events Center seats up to 300.

The Luther F. Carson Four Rivers Center has a main auditorium that seats 1,806 people, along with several reception and event rooms and outdoor spaces overlooking the confluence of the Ohio and Tennessee Rivers. Smaller venues include River Discovery Center, The Grand Lodge on Fifth and The 1857 Hotel, a downtown boutique hotel.

Other hotels in the city include La Quinta Inn & Suites, which can accommodate up to 150 people in theater-style seating; Courtyard Paducah, with a theater-style seating capacity of 80; Country Inn & Suites, with a 40-person meeting capacity; and Hampton Inn & Suites, with 108 guest rooms and meeting space for up to 30.

Bardstown

Settled in 1780 as Kentucky's second-oldest city, Bardstown has more than 300 buildings on the National Register of Historic Places. Known as the Bourbon Capital of the World and an official trailhead for the Kentucky Bourbon Trail, Bardstown has nine distilleries within 20 miles of downtown, with three newly opened in 2018. The city also has a rich religious heritage and is home to the Basilica of St. Joseph Proto-Cathedral, built in 1816 as the first Catholic Cathedral west of the Allegheny Mountains, the Abbey of Gethsemani and the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, a retreat center with overnight accommodations and meeting rooms. ►

The Luther F. Carson Four Rivers Center in Paducah



Kentucky's official outdoor drama, *The Stephen Foster Story*, is staged at My Old Kentucky Home State Park, home of Federal Hill, where America's first composer, Stephen Foster, was inspired to write the state's anthem. The park has indoor and outdoor event spaces that can accommodate up to 300 for a seated event or up to 350 for a reception. My Old Kentucky Dinner Train can seat up to 170 for dinners.

Other event facilities in Bardstown, according to the Bardstown-Nelson County Tourist & Convention Commission, are Kreso's and Café Mozart, which can seat up to 300 for dinners; the Bardstown Civic Center, with theater-style seating for up to 150; the historic home Wickland, with indoor and outdoor facilities for up to 150 people; Bardstown Country Club, which has two meeting rooms for up to 150 people; and the Bardstown Event Center, with two rooms with seating for between 30 and 100 people. Kurtz Restaurant and Cafe Primo each have event spaces for up to 50 people and Old Talbott Tavern can seat up to 100.

Hotels with event space include the 106-room Hampton Inn, with two meeting rooms for up to 100 people; and General Nelson Inn, with 48 guest rooms and event space for up to 150 people for dinners or 300 for theater-style events.

Shepherdsville/Bullitt County

Bullitt County and the city of Shepherdsville are just 20 miles south of Louisville International Airport. According to the Shepherdsville/Bullitt County Tourism Office, the area offers six stops

on The Wine & Whiskey Trail, including the Jim Beam American Stillhouse and four award-winning wineries.

Paroquet Springs Conference Centre is 40,000-square-foot facility with flexible space for meetings, expos or events. The 12,000-square-foot expo hall can accommodate up to 53 10' x 10' booths, up to 1,300 people for theater-style presentations or up to 684 for a banquet. Additional classroom space can seat groups of between 24 and 230.

According to the tourism office, there are more than 1,000 lodging rooms in the area, including the 84-room Best Western Shepherdsville; 79-room Comfort Inn; 66-room Baymont Inn & Suites; 84-room Hampton Inn/Brooks; and 67-room Holiday Inn Express.

Located between Shepherdsville and Bardstown, Bernheim Arboretum and Research Forest has indoor and outdoor event space to accommodate up to 150 people.

Ashland

Located in far eastern Kentucky, Ashland offers 900 area lodging rooms and is part of a 300,000-population metropolitan region that includes Huntington, W.V., and Ironton, Ohio. A new 152-room Marriott Delta Hotel is set to open by the end of this year, according to the Ashland/Boyd County Tourism & Convention Bureau, after a multi-million-dollar renovation of the former Ashland Plaza Hotel. New owners are investing more than \$17 million in the renovations to include a complete redesign of the

front entrance and lobby, upgraded rooms and a new 150-seat restaurant.

The Tourism & Convention Bureau notes a number of event facilities in the area: Ashland Community & Technical College offers classroom and other spaces, and Boyd County Community Center has space for receptions, parties and meetings. Paramount Arts Center is located in a historic theater and seats 1,400 people in the main auditorium. A rehearsal hall and two event rooms provide space for meetings and events. Located downtown in a historic building, the Highlands Museum & Discovery Center can host up to 500 people for dinners.

Hotels with limited meeting space include Holiday Inn Express & Suites, Days Inn and Best Western River Cities.

Carrollton

Located on the Ohio River about halfway between the Northern Kentucky area and Louisville, Carrollton offers planners and event attendees the opportunity to enjoy "peace and quiet away from the hustle and bustle of the big city," according to the Carrollton/Carroll County Tourism & Convention Commission. The town hosts a number of events throughout the year, focusing on music, fishing and local food favorites, and has a number of historic sites, parks and outdoor attractions. River Valley Winery features award-winning wines and a tasting room available for events.

General Butler State Resort Park and Conference Center has a 53-room lodge and 23 one- to three-bedroom cottages. According to Kentucky State Parks, the lodge dining room can seat up to 176 people and an adjacent conference center can host up to 800 people for presentations or up to 400 for banquets.

Other lodging in Carrollton, some with limited event space, includes a 64-room Holiday Inn Express and a 60-room Hampton Inn.

Maysville

Situated in east central Kentucky, Maysville is a historic Ohio River town that provides planners with ample meeting space and more than 360 metro area hotel rooms, according to Maysville-Mason County Tourism.

The Maysville Event Center, located in a historic Art Deco building downtown, is the largest event facility in the city, offering two meeting rooms in 13,000 total square feet, plus

full catering services. The Romanesque-style Cox Building, constructed in 1886 and fully renovated in 2012, has two ballrooms. The 1889 Washington Opera House seats up to 500 people for presentations.

Hotels with event space include the French Quarter Inn, with 63 guest rooms and meeting space for up to 80, and the 93-room Hampton Inn, with a meeting capacity of 40.

Morehead

Located in the foothills of the eastern Kentucky Cumberland Plateau, Morehead offers a historic downtown and more than 100 miles of hiking and biking trails in and around Daniel Boone National Forest and Cave Run Lake. Downtown, the Morehead Conference Center has 18,000 square feet of functional event

space, with three meeting rooms and two large exhibit rooms that can be combined in a variety of configurations for group events for 60 to 1,800 people. Just a few blocks away, Morehead State University has a variety of classroom and other meeting spaces. A Comfort Inn & Suites, Hampton Inn and Days Inn each offer limited meeting facilities.

Mt. Sterling & Montgomery County

Mt. Sterling hosts Kentucky's oldest festival, a four-day event that has been held every October since the late 1700s when the town was a major trading center on the central Kentucky frontier. Today, Court Days attracts more than 100,000 visitors each year who also enjoy the town's other attractions, including historic downtown

and Ruth Hunt Candies, the official candy of the Kentucky Derby. The candy company celebrated its 97th anniversary in 2018.

According to Mt. Sterling Tourism, a 77-room Holiday Inn Express with an 800-square-foot meeting room opened in summer 2018. Other hotels include a 70-room Ramada Limited Hotel & Conference Center, which can seat up to 180 for dinners, and a 61-room Fairfield Inn, with a small meeting space.

Event facilities include Clay Community Center, with theater-style seating for up to 1,000; Camp McKee, which can accommodate up to 600 for dinners or up to 900 for amphitheater presentations; Old Silo Golf Course, Restaurant & Banquet Facility, which can seat up to 250; and Gateway Regional Arts Center, with banquet seating for up to 150. ■



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