



Tourism Helps Local Economy to the Tune of \$58,925,274 Million by Katie Fussenegger, CTP

With its beautiful saddlebred horse farm tours, iconic and varied restaurants and outstanding shopping venues, Shelbyville, Simpsonville and Shelby County give visitors many reasons to visit our community, known for its small-town charm and world-class equestrian events.

The role of the ShelbyKY Tourism Commission & Visitors Bureau is to encourage guests to stay overnight and visit our restaurants, shops and attractions. With National Travel and Tourism Week getting underway May 2 to 10, it is a good time to look at the role of tourism and its economic impact on our community.

The economic impact study of tourism for 2014 has just been released by Governor Steve Beshear and Tourism, Arts and Heritage Secretary Bob Stewart. Statewide, this amounted to more than \$13.1 billion. The economic impact figure was a 4.4 percent increase from 2013.

The annual survey also showed that tourism was responsible for 179,963 jobs in Kentucky in 2014 – an increase of 4,217 jobs from the previous year. These jobs generated more than \$2.9 billion in wages for Kentucky workers, an increase of nearly \$123 million from the previous year.

Tourism generated \$1.37 billion in tax revenues for local and state governments in 2014, an increase from \$1.31 billion in 2013. Seven of the nine tourism regions, including the Bourbon, Horses & History Region, showed gains for 2014. Direct travel expenditures in Shelby County grew from \$53,938,140 million in 2013 to \$58,925,274 million in 2014, a 9.2 percent increase, putting Shelby County above state average. Tourism saves Kentucky Households an average of \$1,167 each year in Kentucky taxes.

Locally, recent tourism investments, restaurants and attractions include:

- The new Outlet Shoppes of the Bluegrass, which opened in Simpsonville in August 2014, is already planning an expansion.

- A new restaurant, Harvest Coffee & Cafe, opened downtown and is offering locally sourced menus, monthly four-Course Farm-to-Table Harvest dinners and a weekly “Pay-What-You-Can” program.

- ShelbyKY’s behind-the-scenes Saddle Horse Farm Tours have expanded to the point they are now offered only to groups of 15 or more and families overnighing in Shelby County.

- A new Runners’ event – A “Mini Triple Crown” of marathons – is taking place in Shelby County: 5K Monster Dash, October; Turkey Trot, November; and Santa Paws 5K, December.

Additionally, new attractions planned for Shelby County – Jephtha Creed Distillery and Diageo Distillery – will add even more shine to the community as an attractive tourism destination as well as greatly improve the area’s quality of life.

There are so many things that make Shelbyville, Simpsonville, and Shelby County a great destination to promote, but most of all; the people that visitors get to interact with make their travel experience one to remember. We thank all of our hospitality and tourism partners for their part in creating ShelbyKY a tourism destination, especially this week, National Travel and Tourism week!