



2014 Summer Top Festivals & Events

W.C. Handy Blues & Barbecue Festival, Henderson, June 7-14. This free music festival is a celebration of the life and music of former resident W.C. Handy, "Father of the Blues", and showcases some of the nation's best blues artists. This week long festival kicks off with a community barbecue and a Mardi Gras-style Street Strut Parade the second weekend in June. It continues the following Wednesday through Saturday with nonstop performances by nationally known blues bands on a riverfront stage.

More information: www.handyblues.org or 270.826.3128

12th Annual Holley NHRA National Hot Rod Reunion, Beech Bend Raceway, June 12-14. Bowling Green is a hotbed for hot rodder and they're rolling back into town for the 12th Annual Holley NHRA National Hot Rod Reunion at Beech Bend Raceway. Named one of the 10 Premier US Events by Painless Performance & Street Rodder Magazine, the reunion includes activities at the drag strip and Holiday Inn University Plaza hotel all day Thursday, Friday and Saturday. The reunion will be full of celebrations and features classic events like the Show 'N Shine, drag racing, exhibition runs, honorees reception, a parade of champions and Cacklefest.

More information: www.museum.nhra.com or 317.281.5049.

Bluegrass in the Park Folklife Festival, Henderson, August 8 - 9. The Ohio riverfront is the setting for this annual event, one of the largest, free bluegrass festivals in the country. Enjoy two days of bluegrass music, Kentucky craftsmen and children's activities. You can also watch cyclists on the Pickin' and Pedalin' Bike Tour and talented pole vaulters at the Jammin' and Jumpin outdoor street vault event.

More information: www.bluegrassinthepark.org or 270.826.3128.

Freedom Fest, Murray, July 4-5. Freedom Fest is an Independence Day celebration that is in its 27th year in Murray. The event was created as a way for families and adults to enjoy the holiday without having to spend a large sum of money. The festival remains free today. The two-day event kicks off Friday with a free concert, a street fair with 40+ vendors and a beer garden. Thousands of people from all over the region and state bring their lawn chairs to Murray's Central Park and includes free kids' activities, pony

rides, a petting zoo, inflatables, live music and several vendors. The festival comes to a conclusion at this event with western Kentucky's largest fireworks display. The weekend also includes two races, a golf tournament, sidewalk sales and a veteran's remembrance ceremony. Freedom Fest is the largest festival in Murray and is widely known for its great music, family-friendly atmosphere and amazing fireworks.

More information: www.tourmurray.com or 270-759-2199

Great American Brass Band Festival, Danville, June 5-8. The Great American Brass Band Festival will celebrate its 25th year in beautiful downtown Danville, Kentucky. This one-of-a-kind event is committed to preserving brass band music through performance and education. The 25th year celebration kicks off Thursday with a Chautauqua Tea followed by a Gallery Hop through historic downtown. Friday brings an educational component with the Brass Symposium featuring festival founder, George Foreman, giving a history of the festival. Friday evening, enjoy the music and Cajun food and drinks at the New Orleans style street party known as Bayou & Brass, or take in the family fun at the Great American Balloon Race. Saturday morning bands parade down Main Street to kick off a day full of free outdoor concerts downtown and at historic Centre College. The Great American Picnic on Saturday evening is the highlight of the festival. Picnic tables are decorated by patrons using elaborate and colorful themes while others bring lawn chairs and settle in for a magical evening of brass music under the stars. Sunday brings a relaxing day with a community church service, free concerts and the Brand Finale at the Norton Center.

More information: www.gabbf.org or 859.319.8426.

Heartland Festival in the Park, Elizabethtown, August 22 - 23. It is probably safe to say that E-town must be doing something right to be planning the 31st year of the Heartland Festival in the Park. What more could you ask for in a festival that offers over 100 vendors, canoe races, stunt performers, carnival rides, balloon glow, a parade and more food than you can imagine. Where else can you go and sit beside a beautiful lake and listen to a chart topping entertainer/band for the cost of a parking pass?

More information: www.heartlandfestivalinthepark.com or 270.765.6121.

Keeneland Concours d'Elegance, Lexington, July 17-20. Keeneland Concours d'Elegance is a four-day event celebrating the automobile and "all things Kentucky". Part of the festivities include a bourbon distillery tour, black tie optional gala, hangar bash at Blue Grass Airport and a 75-mile tour of the Bluegrass with stops at a historic

site and legendary horse farm. On Saturday, during Keeneland Concours d'Elegance, there are special exhibits, a silent auction, fashion show, and regional food the entire family can enjoy. This year's featured marquee is and will feature a "Winner's Circle Reunion," the last ten year's best exhibitors.

More information: www.keenelandconcours.com or 859.422.3329.

Lake Cumberland Bluegrass Festival, Russell Springs, August 15 -16. If you go to only one Bluegrass festival this year...make it this one! The Lake Cumberland Bluegrass Festival is proud to feature local, regional and national bluegrass musicians in a fun, family friendly atmosphere. Two days of the best Bluegrass bands...and all in one location. The festival has played host to JD Crowe & The New South, Marty Raybon & Continental Divide, just to name a few. The event is held at the Indian Hills Resort KOA, which overlooks beautiful Lake Cumberland with lots of room for everyone! This is the music festival of the season so don't miss out!

More information: www.lcbluegrass.org or 270.566.1488.

Master Musicians Festival, Somerset, July 11-12. Named as the Southeast Tourism Society's (STS) Shining Example of the Year in 2013 and twice named as an STS Top Twenty Event, the Master Musicians Festival is a premier event in the Lake Cumberland region and beyond. This festival has remained true to its roots, paying special tribute to "Master Musicians" who have devoted much of their lives to preserving their musical heritage and whose contributions have had a significant effect in their musical genre. Musicians such as Willie Nelson, Howard Doc Watson, Odetta Vassar Clements, Guy Clark and J. D. Crowe have entertained thousands. In addition to the headliners, the festival brings some of the best new and upcoming artists, as well as local talent offering great music for everyone's taste. Over the past 21 years, the festival has averaged 3,000 – 6,000 attendees. The festival has tremendous community support, with an all-volunteer/working board of directors. Over 150 volunteers from across the county and many public/private partnerships work together each summer to ensure that the festival is a continuing success for the thousands that come to Somerset every year to see and hear true Master Musicians perform their magic

More information: www.mastermusiciansfestival.org or 606-676-0865

ROMP: Bluegrass Roots & Branches Festival, Owensboro, June 26-28. This 11th annual festival brings three days of bluegrass music to Owensboro. Thursday will bring jamming and storytelling at the International Bluegrass Music Museum. Thursday,

Friday and Saturday will feature concerts by some of the best performers in the bluegrass to Yellow Creek Park. Nightly after-Parties keep the music going until the early morning hours. This year's lineup includes Ricky Skaggs, Sam Bush, Old Crow Medicine Show, Del McCoury, Doyle Lawson and many more. Camping is available in Yellow Creek Park.

More information: www.rompfest.com or 270.926.1100.

Sandy Lee Watkins Songwriters Festival, Henderson, July 30 – August 2. Early August, Nashville songwriters and country music fans gather for this fun music event. Held in various downtown locations, guests are invited to hear the stories behind their favorite tunes. The intimate music setting is perfect for songwriters to share their lyrical inspiration with fans.

More information: www.sandyleesongfest.com or 270.827.9420.