



2024 KENTUCKY TRAVEL INDUSTRY ANNUAL CONFERENCE

November 13-15, 2024 | Covington, Kentucky

SCHEDULE

All conference events will take place at the Northern Kentucky Convention Center unless noted otherwise in the schedule. Covington is in the Eastern time zone.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 13

7:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

REGISTRATION & HELP DESK

Main Lobby (First Floor)

8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

VOLUNTOURISM EVENT

DCCH Center for Children and Families

Since 1848, DCCH Center for Children and Families has been committed to developing connected, compassionate, and healing for all they serve. DCCH's flagship residential treatment facility houses 32 children, ages 8-14 years old, who have been placed into the care of the state due to abuse or neglect. It costs DCCH \$508 a day per child to give these kids round-the-clock, wrap-around services. The state reimburses DCCH \$336 a day per child, leaving DCCH with a shortfall of \$5,000 a day or over \$2,000,000 a year.

The 66-acre property in Ft. Mitchell Kentucky, features a residential program, therapeutic foster and adoption services, outpatient therapy, equine therapy, targeted case management, soccer fields, a flea market, and fairgrounds. They service children from all 120 counties in the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

DCCH Center for Children and Families is very excited for the opportunity to have KTIA members come out and provide breakfast, educational opportunities thanks to local partners, play games, arts and crafts and interact with their residential kiddos. As we join them as a "Heart Healer" for some of

Kentucky's most vulnerable, please consider donating personal care items including toothbrushes, toothpaste, shampoo and conditioner, body wash, lotion, deodorant, eye care, feminine care, underwear and socks.

9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

TRADESHOW SET UP

Event Hall II (First Floor)

12:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

CITY TOURS

Behind-the-Scenes Cincinnati Reds Experience

Go behind the scenes of "America's favorite pastime" with America's oldest professional baseball team, the Cincinnati Reds. Established in 1869 as the Red Stockings, the team called a number of fields home before building Great American Ball Park in 2003. Boasting unparalleled views of the Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky skylines, this riverfront stadium pays tribute to the Reds' and city's rich history with player statues, an attached Hall of Fame and steamboat-style Power Stacks that shoot off fireworks from center field every Reds win. Have lunch in the exclusive Executive Super Suite before taking a VIP stadium tour, swinging for the fences in the batting cages and encountering a few surprises along the way.

Bourbon & Backdrops: A Journey Through History, Art, and Scenic Splendor

Explore one of Northern Kentucky's most vibrant neighborhoods! Start the day with a leisurely 1-mile guided walking tour of Covington's historic sites, public art and iconic Roebling Bridge before lunching at the new Opal Rooftop restaurant, famed for its excellent cocktails, spectacular city views and chef-driven, fire-grilled menu — cooked on an exclusive open-fire cooktop (the only one of its kind within a 2-hour radius). Then sip on history at Revival Vintage Spirits, a bottle shop and tasting room serving and selling rare vintage spirits collected from around the world. Co-owner Brad "Dusty" Bonds — aka the "Indiana Jones of Vintage Spirits" — will lead you on a "through the decades" tasting, featuring a flight bourbon, distilled and bottled in different time periods. You will have time to browse their one-of-a-kind bottle shop before you leave.

Enchanted Afternoon at Fabled Brew Works & special visit to shop The Painted Tree

Step inside a storybook at Fabled Brew Works, the Northern Kentucky craft brewery and meadery whose taproom has been transformed into a fairytale forest. Half-timbered facades, packed potion storefronts and thatch-roofed cabins line the walls while fluffy ceiling clouds, animal familiars and wallpapered pages of classic fantasy novels round out the enchanting experience. Offering more than thirty bold beers and meads on tap — like "Pixie Potion" (pink lemonade Berliner weisse), "Hoptimus Prime" (oat cream IPA) and "Fee," "Fi," "Fo," "Fum" (a series of dessert-inspired ice cream sours) — there is something for everyone. On this excursion, wizards and witches of every ilk will enjoy lunch, a tour and tasting before going head-to-head in a rousing game of whimsical trivia.

After, head to The Painted Tree boutique in Crestview Hills to shop for unique handmade gifts and decor.

4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

BOWLING FOR BOURBON

Velocity

7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

ICEBREAKER OPENING RECEPTION

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 14

7:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

REGISTRATION & HELP DESK

Main Lobby (First Floor)

8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.

SILENT AUCTION

Madison Lobby (Second Floor)

8:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.

OPENING BREAKFAST

Event Hall I (First Floor)

Speaker: Josh Hopkins – Actor

9:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

TRADESHOW BREAK

Event Hall II (First Floor)

10:00 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.

GENERAL SESSION

Event Hall I (First Floor)

Courage in the Storm

The conference’s opening general session features Kentucky native Stephanie Decker, a double amputee who lost her legs as she protected her children during a devastating tornado that destroyed her family’s Indiana home. But Stephanie’s story doesn’t end with her injuries. Rather,

that's where it begins. She will share advice and inspiration for taking on and overcoming challenges and how humor, teamwork, and setting goals can be used to overcome any obstacle. And along the way she'll include how her Kentucky roots contributed to her empowerment in overcoming her disability.

Speaker: Stephanie Decker – Stephanie Decker Foundation

11:00 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Agritourism's Bountiful Harvest for Kentucky Tourism

This session will explore the many facets of the Kentucky Proud Agritourism Program and the opportunities it presents for the tourism industry in rural parts of the state, as well as urban areas. Included will be a review of programs managed by the Kentucky Department of Agriculture, services available to DMOs and other industry sectors, and advice for the development and marketing of agritourism visitor experiences.

Speaker: Sharon Spencer – Director, Direct Farm Marketing Division, Kentucky Department of Agriculture

Group Tours: Ready, Aim, Serve!

Attracting group tours requires effective marketing and negotiations with tour operators by DMOs, hotels and attractions. But the secret sauce is the service the groups receive once their tour is underway. Moderated by one of Kentucky's most knowledgeable group tour attraction executives, this session will feature a discussion with two experienced tour directors who will provide information, insights and advice for serving tour groups. There are a multitude of tour service do's and don'ts and you'll learn about both during this session.

Speakers:

- *Moderator: Eddie Lutz – Sales Director, Sales & Promotions, Ark Encounter*
- *Stacy Barry – Owner, Sharin' the South Tours*
- *Annette Trotter – Co-Owner & Vice President, Turner Coaches*

Meeting the Needs of Travelers with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) proscribes accessibility requirements. But in very practical terms, what is travel really like for people who have a disability, such as Stephanie Decker as a double amputee, and how can their needs be met by the tourism industry? Stephanie will share personal experiences she has encountered during her travels and offer advice for serving guests and visitors who have disabilities.

Speaker: Stephanie Decker – Stephanie Decker Foundation

Should Influencers Be in Your Owned Media Mix?

Some in the tourism industry swear by influencers and some swear about them. This session will help you understand the basics of using influencers and if doing so is right for you. And whether you are already using influencers or are considering doing so, you will learn about paid vs. unpaid influencers, how to vet prospects, the importance of aligning the use of an influencer with your KPIs, contractual considerations and establishing deliverables you need from an influencer. An additional feature will be a discussion of volunteer "ambassadors" and the pluses and minuses of that type of influencer.

Speaker: Kristin Luna, Owner/Content Creator, Odinn Media, Inc.

11:45 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

COMMISSIONER & AWARDS LUNCHEON

Event Hall I (First Floor)

1:30 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

TRADESHOW BREAK

Event Hall II (First Floor)

2:00 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.

GENERAL SESSION

Event Hall I (First Floor)

Discovering the Untold Wonders of Travel

Kentucky and beyond are filled with undiscovered treasures waiting to be explored. From quirky local spots to awe-inspiring hidden wonders, these lesser-known destinations offer stories and experiences that captivate both locals and visitors. Curious about what lies off the beaten path? This session will reveal how to unlock the potential of these overlooked travel jewels, guiding you on how to identify them and use them to fuel your wanderlust and creativity—starting right in your own backyard.

Speaker: Dylan Thuras – Co-Founder and President, Atlas Obscura

3:00 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Critical Collaboration: Hotels & DMOs

There is no partnership in the tourism industry more important to success than the one between hotels and their DMO. However, all too often, that partnership is not as fully developed as it should be in terms of collaboration, communication and joint initiatives. This session will explore ideas and

opportunities for DMOs and their hotels in developing stronger and more mutually beneficial relationships.

Speakers:

- *Cleo Battle – President & CEO, Louisville Tourism*
- *Lance George – Vice President, Sales & Marketing, AJS Hotels*
- *Amanda Dyson-Thornton – Executive Director, Georgia Association of Convention & Visitors Bureaus*

Scoring with Sports Tourism

Sports tourism continues to be a hot topic for the Kentucky tourism industry and not just for DMOs. Hotels and attractions also want in on this important market. This session will provide an overview of the market, current trends, and practical advice to local stakeholders on accessing and serving the sports tourism market.

Speaker: Cole McKeel – Vice President of Partnerships, Huddle Up Group

The Simple Power of Podcasts

During this session, you will learn why podcasts are the most accessible form of owned media, yet one of the most effective for DMOs, attractions and others in the tourism industry. Adam Stoker will explain how podcasts can cultivate communities, how easily they can be produced and how to maximize their effectiveness, including how to repurpose evergreen podcast content. Adam will also offer ideas on how to utilize others' podcasts to your benefit.

Speaker: Adam Stoker – Co-founder, President and CEO of Relic & host of the Destination Marketing Podcast

Tourism Development Incentive Program Answers & Opportunities

Did you know that Kentucky is one of the only states to offer an incentive for tourism development projects? This session will provide an overview of the types of projects that qualify, the application process and how developers can receive the incentive. Most importantly, it will help you gauge the potential for you and your partners to reap the benefits from the program and grow your tourism economy.

Speakers:

- *Nancy Turner – Deputy Commissioner, Kentucky Department of Tourism*
- *Kimberly Gester – Director of Tourism Development, Kentucky Department of Tourism*

4:00 p.m. – 4:45 p.m.

TRADESHOW RECEPTION

Event Hall II (First Floor)

6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

GALA RECEPTION

Madison Lobby (Second Floor)

7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

GALA DINNER

Event Hall I (First Floor)

9:00 p.m. – 11:00 p.m.

NIGHTCAP PARTY

Ballroom C (Second Floor)

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 15

7:00 a.m.

REGISTRATION & HELP DESK

Main Lobby (First Floor)

8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

NETWORKING BREAKFAST

Event Hall I (First Floor)

9:15 a.m. – 9:45 a.m.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Event Hall I (First Floor)

9:45 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

GENERAL SESSION

Event Hall I (First Floor)

Elections Matter...for the Tourism Industry

In recent years we've experienced the impact legislation and policies at the national and state levels can have on our industry. Our panel of experts will discuss the tourism industry implications of the presidential and Congressional elections and Kentucky's legislative races. And looking into their crystal balls, they will discuss what lies ahead.

Speakers:

- Sara Osborne (Moderator) – MML&K Government Solutions
- Erik Hansen – Senior Vice President of Government Relations, U.S. Travel Association

- James Higdon – MML&K Government Solutions

10:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

TRADESHOW BREAK

Event Hall II (First Floor)

11:00 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.

GENERAL SESSION

Event Hall I (First Floor)

Bring Your A-Game: How You Can Increase Your Leadership Effectiveness in Any Situation

Have you ever heard that everything rises or falls on leadership? Set in a tourism industry context, this session will show four critical historical leadership lessons that will improve your performance, and if you are leading a team, help them bring their A-Game.

Speaker: Mike Robertson, VP Brand Partnerships, Director of Culture, MediaOne North America

11:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

CLOSING SESSION

Event Hall I (First Floor)