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Kentucky Tourism Industry Generated \$14.5 Billion in 2016

The economic impact of tourism has grown to more than \$14.5 billion in 2016, Department of Tourism Commissioner Kristen Branscum announced today. Kentucky's tourism industry has experienced the strongest overall economic impact growth rate the state has seen since 2005. All nine of the state's tourism regions registered gains again in 2016.

The 2016 Economic Impact of Kentucky Tourism Report shows an increase in tourism spending in McCracken County with direct tourism expenditures totaling \$226.8 million with a total economic impact of \$356.6 million in 2016, an increase of \$5.1 million over 2015. This tourist spending contributed to a total economic impact of \$923.7 million across the 14-county Kentucky Western Waterlands region.

Kentucky Department of Tourism Commissioner Kristen Branscum announced the figures on Monday in Paducah at the Paducah Commerce Center to kick off Kentucky Tourism Week.

"A vibrant tourism industry, means a vibrant Kentucky," Commissioner Kristen Branscum said. "The natural beauty of our state provides unlimited opportunities for visitors to experience recreation or leisure activities around every corner. The economic impact numbers for 2016 reinforce the fact that the tourism industry is a vital economic driver for Kentucky."

"Spending by visitors has strengthened Paducah's economy by creating jobs, supporting local businesses from restaurants to lodging and generating tax revenues to support our community," Mary Hammond, Paducah Convention & Visitors Bureau Executive Director.

Kentucky's tourism industry generated \$14.5 billion in economic impact during 2016, an increase of over five percent from \$13.7 billion in 2015. The industry supported nearly 193,000 jobs and generated more than \$1.5 billion in tax revenue, with \$195.1 million going directly to local communities. The full tourism economic impact study is available at <http://bit.ly/2qEcNKU>.

The Kentucky Department of Tourism continues to build upon Kentucky's signature tourism industries of horses, bourbon, music, arts, outdoors and culinary to reach new audiences and present Kentucky as a top-level destination for visitors internationally and domestically.

To learn more about Kentucky tourism, visit kentuckytourism.com.

The Paducah Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) is the official Destination Marketing Organization for Paducah and McCracken County. The CVB exists to create new economic opportunities through destination marketing, management and tourism development. For more information, visit www.Paducah.Travel.

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