



2024 SPRING TRAVEL FORUM

May 8-9 | Somerset, Kentucky

All conference events will take place at the Center for Rural Development unless noted otherwise. Somerset is in the Eastern time zone.

TUESDAY, MAY 7

10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

**CERTIFIED KENTUCKY TOURISM
PROFESSIONAL (CKTP) PROGRAM SPRING FIELD
VISIT**
The Lavender Farm at Woodstock

With a focus on agritourism, this year's Spring Field Visit will take place at the Lavender Farm at Woodstock from 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. on May 7. Attendees will get a behind the scenes look at the farm, enjoy a "lavender" themed lunch and will partake in a Herbs de Provence class.

12:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

“ON YOUR OWN” AREA ACTIVITIES

WEDNESDAY, MAY 8

8:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

**CERTIFIED KENTUCKY TOURISM
PROFESSIONAL (CKTP) PROGRAM BREAKFAST**
Cumberland Room | Courtyard by Marriott Somerset

**Principles & Practicalities of a Productive
Partnership**

Leslie Ikerd, Executive Director, See Somerset Tourism

Michelle Allen, Executive Director, Somerset-Pulaski County Tourism

Partnerships lie at the heart of the tourism industry. And not the type that are just lip service, but that really work and produce results - and those types don't come easy. Our two Spring Travel Forum host CVBs have developed that type of partnership with each other and with their local industry and other stakeholders. During their CKTP breakfast presentation, they will discuss the basic principles they employ and the practical day-to-day ingredients of their partnership, including with their industry partners, local officials and other local organizations.

9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

“ON YOUR OWN” AREA ACTIVITIES

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

EXHIBITOR SET UP

North Hall

10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Ballrooms D-E

11:00 a.m.

REGISTRATION OPENS

Lobby

12:00 p.m. – 12:30 p.m.

TRADESHOW OPENS

North Hall

12:45 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.

WELCOME REMARKS

South Hall

1:00 p.m. – 1:45 p.m.

FOOD, TRAVEL & KENTUCKY – TIES THAT BIND

South Hall

Quita Michel, Holly Hill and Co.

Renowned Kentucky chef and restaurateur Quita Michel will offer her insights about the bonds between food and travel and reflect on the common ground she occupies with professionals in the tourism industry. Some of those commonalities are providing authentic experiences, the

behind the scenes pace and action, the importance of heritage, caring about others and our shared love of the state we all call home. Both inspiring and instructional, this session is certain to result in the outcome we also share in common – creating lasting memories.

2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

CAN KENTUCKY’S TRAVEL INDUSTRY DEFY ECONOMIC GRAVITY?

South Hall

Travis Napper, Director, Destination Partnerships, Tourism Economics

Both leisure and business travel have rebounded with impressive strength over the past year. However, economic uncertainties and persistent inflation loom large and threaten the continued recovery of travel. Travis Napper will share Tourism Economics’ latest views on the economy, the mindset of travelers, and expectations for the evolution of travel in the U.S. and Kentucky.

3:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

TRADESHOW BREAK

North Hall

3:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

TOURISM & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: BUILDING UNDERSTANDING & ACTION

South Hall

Jeff Noel, Secretary, Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development

Claude Bacon, President/CEO, Greater Owensboro Economic Development Corp.

Carter Hendricks, Executive Director, South Western Kentucky Economic Development Council

KTIA and the tourism industry were thrilled to see the Cabinet for Economic Development (CED) and the Kentucky Association for Economic Development’s (KAED) *Blueprint for the Commonwealth* with its inclusion of hospitality and tourism among the plan's priorities. This session will include leadoff remarks by CED Secretary Jeff Noel about the

Blueprint and the synergies and shared opportunities of tourism and economic development. Following those remarks he will join a panel discussion about key economic development thinking and practices, and ways that the tourism industry can become a more active contributor to both.

6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

ICEBREAKER
The Virginia

An '80s themed party at the historic The Virginia theater. ('80s attire encouraged!)

8:30 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.

AFTERGLOW
Birdie's & Barrels

THURSDAY, MAY 9

7:30 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.

BREAKFAST
South Hall

8:45 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.

EMERGING MARKET: TRANSFORMATIONAL TRAVEL
South Hall

Jillian Dickens, Head of Destination Stewardship, The Transformational Travel Council

There is a growing trend of transformational travel – people traveling to intentionally stretch, learn, and grow into new ways of being and engaging with the world.

Transformational travel is not so much about the kind of travel as it is the result of the travel. This session will explore what underlies transformational travel and how to create the conditions for your visitors and guests to harness the power of travel to positively impact their lives harness the power of travel to positively impact their lives and the people and places they visit.

9:45 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

DEI: RECOMMIT, RETREAT OR REVISE?

South Hall

Roni Weiss, Executive Director, Travel Unity

With DEI under scrutiny, and from some quarters under attack, how should the tourism industry respond? Should we maintain our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion; back away; or engage in reflection and possible re-thinking of approaches? This session will offer answers and insights to help you navigate the increasingly turbulent DEI waters.

10:30 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.

TRADESHOW BREAK

North Hall

11:15 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

SEEING THE TREES AMONG THE SOCIAL MEDIA FOREST

South Hall

Makayla Keely, Content Manager, Miles Partnership & Hayden Pigott, TikTok Platform Manager, Miles Partnership

Given the myriad of social media platforms from Meta (FaceBook / Instagram) and X (Twitter) to TikTok, YouTube Shorts and Pinterest, an ongoing tourism industry conversation revolves around which platforms to use, how to use them appropriately, how paid social advertising fits in and many other questions. This session won't tell you what to decide. Much more valuable than that – and whether you are a DMO, attraction or hotel – it will provide the information you need to make the decisions that will work best for you.

12:00 p.m. – 12:15 p.m.

CONFERENCE WRAP UP

South Hall

12:15 p.m.

TRADESHOW CLOSES

North Hall