

Consideration for Rural Tourism Development in Morehead, Kentucky



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Objectives

1. Assess the available resources/amenities in Rowan County in respect to rural tourism.
2. Identify 5 successful tourism areas which are comparable to natural resources of Morehead, Kentucky.
3. Assess the factors that make the businesses successful in the identified tourism areas.

Methodology

1. Both primary and secondary data in quantitative and qualitative forms was collected and used in the examination of what factors contribute to the overall success of a tourism attraction.
2. Quantitative data was collected from tourism websites; objectives were obtained through research of other similar projects.
3. Morehead's strengths and weaknesses were assessed based on the comparable sites.

Kentucky Tourism Statistics

Tourism is the world's largest industry.

Visitors in Kentucky spent nearly \$8.0 billion in 2019.

Tourism- sustained jobs generated a total income of \$3.1 billion in 2019, employing over 95,000 people.

Tourism jobs include highly skilled, highly paid technical, managerial and professional positions; entrepreneurial opportunities; and employment for lesser skilled and young workers.

Kentucky tourism is a thoroughly statewide industry, that is large, diverse, and consists largely of small businesses.

*Statistics recorded by the Kentucky Travel Industry Association

Morehead, Kentucky

Morehead Tourism

Facebook Likes: 7,354

Instagram Followers: 2,089

Major Attractions:

Cave Run Lake

Lockegee Rock

Sheltowee Trace

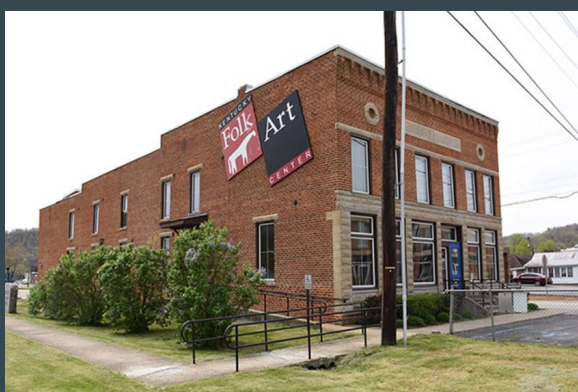
Twin Knobs

Morehead State University

Morehead Conference Center

Number of Businesses/Attractions: 83

Number of Hotels & Airbnb Listings: 12 Hotels, 19 Airbnbs



Morehead 
ARTS & EATS
FESTIVAL

Strengths and Weaknesses in Morehead Tourism

Strengths

- Outdoor attractions such as Cave Run Lake, Lockegee Rock, Twin Knobs, Sheltowee Trace, and Twin Knobs
- Proximity to other local Kentucky tourism attractions, such as Red River Gorge and Kentucky Horse Park
- Close proximity to the interstate
- Large college presence due to Morehead State University

Weaknesses

- Lack of available hotel rooms
- Lack of nightlife in downtown Morehead
- Early store closing hours
- Limited access to Uber and Lyft services
- Businesses have early closing hours on weekends
- Lack of signage makes navigating the community difficult
- Morehead is a weekend town- limited amount of attractions to occupy visitors for longer periods of time



Opportunities and Threats in Morehead Tourism

Opportunities

- Willingness of businesses and consumers
- Potential successful locations
- Historical tourism
- Several outdoor tourism opportunities to emphasize

Threats

- Competition with larger areas that offer more within close distance to Morehead, such as Lexington
- Instability of the tourism market in Eastern Kentucky

Comparable Tourism Attractions to Morehead, Kentucky

1. The Red River Gorge

Facebook Likes: 64,420

Instagram Followers: 3,573

Yearly Visitors: 500,000

Major Attractions:

Daniel Boone National Forest

Climbing

Hiking

Ziplining

The Gorge Underground

Location: Stanton, Kentucky

Number of Businesses/Attractions: 16

Number of Lodging & Airbnbs Listings: 17 Lodging, 158 Airbnbs



2. Evans Orchard

Facebook Likes: 62,784

Instagram Followers: 6,441

Major Attractions:

Pick Your Own- Apples, Pears, Strawberries, Blueberries, Sunflowers, Pumpkins

Gift Store & Market

Cafe

Hayrides

Playground

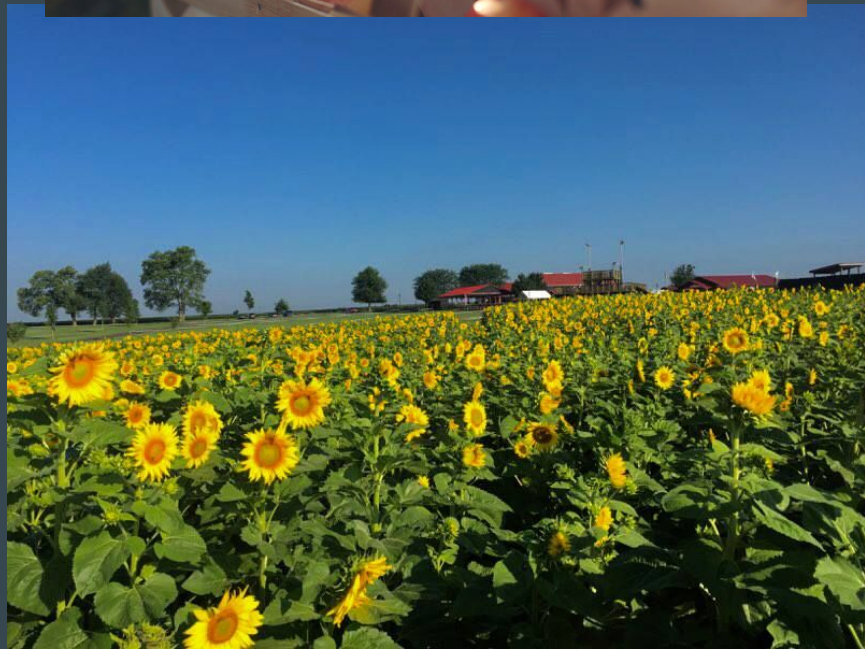
Petting Zoo

Event Rental Space

Location: Georgetown, Kentucky

Number of Businesses/Attractions: 103

Number of Hotels & Airbnbs: 22 Hotels, 44 Airbnbs



3. Kentucky Horse Park

Facebook Likes: 166,447

Instagram Followers: 47,100

Yearly Visitors: Over 500,000 visitors from around the world

Major Attractions:

Museum

Horse Shows and Equestrian Events

Food Options

Gift Shop

Pony and Trail Rides

Location: Lexington, Kentucky

Number of Businesses/Attractions: 997

Number of Hotels & Airbnb Listings: 75 hotels, 300 Airbnb Listings



4. Wild Turkey Distillery

Facebook Likes: 676,766

Instagram Followers: 109,000

Major Attractions:

Tastings

Museum

Tour of the Distillery

Gift Shop

Location: Lawrenceburg, Kentucky

Number of Businesses/Attractions: 52

Number of Hotels & Airbnbs: 3 Hotels,



5. Newport Aquarium

Facebook Likes: 183,537

Instagram Followers: 35,100

Major Attractions:

Exhibits

Activities- Touch Pool, Shark Bridge

Event Hosting Option

Gift Shop

Food

Location: Newport, Kentucky

Number of Businesses/Attractions: 2,413

Number of Hotels & Airbnbs: 79 Hotels, 300 Airbnbs



Factors that Contribute to Successful Rural Tourism Development

1. Proximity to available lodging
2. Transportation options- Uber/Lyft services
3. Additional area attractions and restaurants
4. Attraction's marketing and social media presence
5. Attraction providing a variety of services- activities, events, gift shop, and food availability- to draw customers in and keep customers at the attraction longer

Recommendations for Morehead Tourism Development

1. Encourage tourists to spend multiple days in Kentucky as it helps local economic development.
2. Target more out of state and international guests.
3. Increase collaboration among various tourism attractions and provide a larger tourism offer package.
4. Implement collective advertising campaigns amongst businesses.
5. Seek funding or investors to provide additional lodging available to tourists.
6. Encourage local businesses and attractions to offer extended opening hours.
7. Develop additional businesses or events that would further contribute to Morehead nightlife.

Concluding Statement

In conclusion, Morehead has an established base that can be built upon to further development of tourism in the community. Individuals and businesses are capable of collaborating to create additional opportunity, revenue, and growth in Morehead. Through the comparison of attractions in the state of Kentucky, it is evident that these goals are reachable with the investment of time and resources.

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