

Kentucky Tourism Revenues, Occupancy Rates Dramatically Higher

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Has become \$10.1 billion industry

Hotel room revenue, a key indicator of the strength of the entire tourism industry, grew 10 percent in Kentucky for the first three quarters of 2007 - substantially greater than the national average of 7 percent. During the same period, the percentage of occupied rooms in Kentucky grew 3.1 percent, compared with zero growth in the nation as a whole. The research was performed by Smith Travel Research, the lodging industry's leading information and data provider.

'To have a growth rate exceeding 3 percent is amazing,' said Governor Fletcher 'We laid the foundation for growth with the 'Kentucky Unbridled Spirit' branding campaign, and then implemented an aggressive research-based tourism marketing strategy. This growth shows our efforts have been phenomenally successful.'

Governor Fletcher credited several factors, including the 1 percent transient room tax approved by the 2004 Kentucky General Assembly, plus more aggressive marketing efforts by the Kentucky Department of Tourism and local tourism organizations. Much of the revenue generated by the tax is being reinvested in local community marketing efforts.

'We've given the communities more of the resources they need to attract visitors, and they have done a great job developing new, expanded and innovative marketing programs,' Governor Fletcher said. 'This growth means that next year these communities will have even more to invest as they market their advantages to potential visitors worldwide.'

In the past three years, tourism in Kentucky has increased 23.8 percent and now adds more than \$10.1 billion annually to the state's economy. Under Governor Fletcher, Kentucky has begun strategically marketing itself as an 'adventure tourism' destination, capitalizing on the spectacular natural areas of eastern Kentucky, and has won the right to play host to two major international sporting events - the 2008 Ryder Cup and the 2010 Alltech FEI World Equestrian Games.

More than 176,000 Kentuckians owe their jobs to tourism, a gain of some 6,000 jobs in three years. Tourism-related jobs pay more than \$3.3 billion in salaries and nearly \$1 billion in local, state and federal taxes.

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