

Special Events and Attractions

Every year, Tennessee airports welcome hundreds of thousands of visitors from multiple states and countries for a wide variety of special events and attractions. These events and attractions range from local music festivals to amusement parks, and their visitors generate billions of dollars in economic impact to communities throughout the state.

Bonnaroo – Bringing Thousands of Music Fans to Southern Tennessee

Bonnaroo, an annual four-day music and arts festival, draws tens of thousands of visitors to Manchester every June. In 2019, the event sold out with over 80,000 attendees traveling from across the country and globe. Approximately 75 percent of attendees travel from out of state to attend the event. Airports serving the Manchester area include Nashville International Airport (BNA), McGhee Tyson Airport (TYS), and Tullahoma Regional Airport/William Northern Field (THA). Every June during Bonnaroo, the traffic at Tullahoma Regional Airport/William Northern Field doubles, including a reported 136 percent increase in jet traffic in 2019. In the same year, jet traffic also increased at Lovell Field (CHA) by over 22 percent and at McGhee Tyson Airport by over 20 percent during Bonnaroo. It is estimated that nearly one in four Bonnaroo attendees earns in excess of \$75,000 per year, and attendees spend an average of \$35 per day outside of the festival.

On average, on-site spending coupled with ticket sales contribute about \$1 million annually to Coffee County's economy. On a larger scale, Bonnaroo is estimated to have a \$52 million impact on the state and \$26 million impact on Coffee County. The impacts of Bonnaroo extend beyond airport operations and local economies. Nashville International Airport supports Bonnaroo charitable efforts by hosting an annual Bonnaroo-themed skylight exhibition in conjunction with the Bonnaroo Works Fund and Arts at the Airport organizations.



Photo: Shannon McGee, Huntsville, USA - Clean Vibes, Bonnaroo 2015

Dollywood – More Than a Theme Park

Hailed as Tennessee's most visited tourist attraction, the Dollywood amusement park provides entertainment and amenities for more than two million visitors every year. Dollywood features more than 50 rides and attractions, provides numerous vacation amenities, and hosts multiple annual festivals. During peak season, jet traffic increases by approximately 25 percent at nearby McGhee Tyson Airport when compared to non-peak season times. Similarly, jet traffic increases approximately 90 percent at Gatlinburg-Pigeon Forge Airport (GKT) during the peak tourism season. The annual direct economic impact of Dollywood is \$1.8 billion, and the park is credited with creating more than 23,000 jobs for the region. The amusement park itself is Sevier County's largest employer, employing more than 4,000 people.

Photo: McDoobAU93



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Country Music Association Awards (CMAs) and CMA Fest – Nashville’s Biggest Events

The Country Music Association Awards (CMAs), also known as “Country Music’s Biggest Night,” draws the attention of 11.3 million television viewers and 15,000 attendees every year. Those in attendance include high-profile artists and celebrities, including Willie Nelson, Keith Urban, and Carrie Underwood. During the week of the 2019 CMAs, jet traffic operations at nearby John C. Tune Airport (JWN) increased by nearly 50 percent and increased at Nashville International Airport by approximately 25 percent.

In addition to the CMAs, the Country Music Association also organizes the longest running country music festival in the world every June—the CMA Music Festival (CMA Fest). The CMA Fest is Nashville’s largest annual tourism event. Attendees travel from all 50 states and 37 countries to experience performances by hundreds of artists during the four-day event. In 2017, Nashville International Airport set the record for the highest number of total daily passengers at the airport in the day following the CMA Fest, with more than 25,000 passengers departing from the airport. Additionally, jet traffic at Nashville International Airport increases by more than 20 percent during the month of June. CMA Fest visitors contribute \$65 million of direct spending in Nashville during the event.



Overview

Every year, hundreds of thousands of visitors pass through Tennessee airports as they travel to special events and attractions located across the state. These events and attractions generate billions of dollars in economic impact for communities across the state and continually attract visitors from across the country and world.