



Commonwealth of Kentucky
Office of the Governor

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5 ‘Best Small Towns in America’ Include 2 from Kentucky

*Bardstown, Murray in top 5; Danville a finalist in Rand McNally-USA Today
‘Best of the Road’*

FRANKFORT, Ky. (July 19, 2012) – The Kentucky towns of Bardstown and Murray have been named to a list of the “five best small towns in America” by Rand McNally and USA Today.

Another Kentucky town, Danville, was among 30 finalists selected out of nearly 700 towns nominated for the [“Best of the Road”](#) contest. According to the contest organizers, teams of amateur travelers visited the finalists in each of six categories, with the winners announced this week.

Bardstown, site of My Old Kentucky Home State Park, was selected as most beautiful small town in the contest. Murray was named the friendliest small town, for its down-home charm. Danville, site of Kentucky’s historic Constitution Square, was a runner-up in the “most beautiful” category won by Bardstown.

“Kentuckians already know what friendly people we count as neighbors and what beautiful cities and towns we have to live in and visit,” Governor Steve Beshear said.

“We’re happy to share that news and welcome visitors to experience Kentucky’s scenic beauty and its warm hospitality. Congratulations to the Kentucky towns recognized as ‘Best of the Road.’”

Bardstown, which calls itself the “Bourbon Capital of the World,” is the home of several distilleries as well as the Kentucky Bourbon Festival each September. My Old Kentucky Home State Park is known as the inspiration for the state song, and every summer, crowds watch the outdoor drama “The Stephen Foster Story” about the composer of the state song. Other scenic and historic sites welcome travelers, such as Talbott Tavern, the Basilica of St. Joseph Proto-Cathedral and the nearby Abbey of Gethsemani.

Murray offers plenty of outdoor recreational opportunities. It sits on the edge of the Land Between the Lakes National Recreational Area, with plenty of fishing, boating and other outdoor fun. It’s also home to Murray State University, the Wrather West Kentucky Museum on the MSU campus, “Playhouse in the Park” performances in Central Park and other activities such as golf and tennis.

Danville welcomes visitors each year to the annual Great American Brass Band Festival, the Pioneer Playhouse outdoor theater, the Norton Center for the Arts at Centre College, the Great American Dollhouse Museum and other attractions, including a winery.

My Old Kentucky Home, the “Stephen Foster Story,” Land Between the Lakes and the Great American Dollhouse Museum are all part of the Kentucky Department of Travel and Tourism’s “There’s Only One” campaign – an effort to call attention to the one-of-a-kind places people can visit in Kentucky. For more information, visit www.kentuckytourism.com.

“Residents of Bardstown, Murray and Danville should be proud of this special designation,” said Tourism, Arts and Heritage Secretary Marcheta Sparrow. “These communities embody the very best of what Kentucky communities are known for – hometown pride and great hospitality.”

An hourlong television special on the “Best of the Road” towns will air on the Travel Channel at 8 p.m. EDT on Wednesday, July 25.

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