

# Cultural Life

Arts and Cultural Attractions  
Sports and Entertainment



## Arts and Cultural Attractions

The **Owensboro-Daviess County Library** serves the community well, with a collection of over 150,000 books and 13,000 audiovisual items. Interest in the natural sciences and area history is maintained by the Owensboro Area Museum. Art lovers are enjoying the recent expansion of the Owensboro Museum of Fine Art, which now features an Atrium Sculpture Court, a restored Civil War-era mansion, the Kentucky Spirit Galleries, and a priceless collection of German stained glass windows. These institutions are recognized as among the finest in western Kentucky. 450 Griffith Avenue, 684-0211.

The **Owensboro Area Museum of Science and History and the Wendell Ford Government Education Center** is one of the finest facilities of its kind in the region. Among the features of the museum are historic memorabilia, including arts, crafts, and antiques, as well as natural history exhibits and a planetarium. A new Speedzeum opened in 2003 and celebrates the rich racing heritage of the Owensboro-Daviess County region, covering everything from Soapbox Derby to local dirt track auto racing to NASCAR, motorcycle racing to hydroplane boats. With six active NASCAR drivers and countless crew members in service in NASCAR's various racing circuits, Owensboro claims one of the highest levels of motorsports participation of any city in the country. The Speedzeum demonstrates and celebrates this connection, beginning in the early 20th century and following the developments right up through present day, featuring displays of racing vehicles, audio/visual presentations and interactive displays, including a full-scale NASCAR simulator.

The **Owensboro Museum of Fine Arts** is housed in two historic structures—the Carnegie Library and the John Hampden Smith House, which dates back to the Civil War. The museum features a permanent collection of 19th- and 20th-century paintings and sculptures, decorative arts dating back as far as the 16th century, and the spectacular Stained Glass Gallery. The museum also features traveling exhibits and hosts educational youth tours during the school year. Open Tuesday-Sunday, closed Monday. 901 Frederica Street, 685-3181.

The **Owensboro Symphony Orchestra** is a premier producer of live classical and pops music for the Western Kentucky region. According to the Kentucky Arts Council, the Owensboro Symphony Orchestra is among the top twenty Kentucky arts organizations. Under the leadership of Maestro Nicholas Palmer, Executive Director M. Wade Kelley, and an active and dedicated Board of Directors, the Owensboro Symphony Orchestra performs over 60 services annually, reaching an estimated audience of over 50,000 per year. 122 East 18<sup>th</sup> Street, 684-0661.

Theater fans are encouraged to participate in the productions of the **Theater Workshop of Owensboro**. 407 West 5<sup>th</sup> Street, 684-5003.

**The Dogwood-Azalea Trail:** Walk the picturesque and beautiful blooming tree-lined boulevards during the last two weeks in April and the first two weeks in May. Griffith Avenue and adjoining streets.

**Goldie's Best Little Opryhouse in Kentucky** features country, gospel, and bluegrass music shows. There is a charge for admission. Call for reservations. 418 Frederica Street, 926-0254.

Bluegrass music history, its pioneers, and its legends are featured at the **International Bluegrass Music Museum**. 114 Daviess Street, 926-7891.

**Mount St. Joseph Convent and Center** are nestled on rolling Daviess County terrain. The original Academy was instituted in 1874, and the building is now on the National Historic Register. Tours scheduled by appointment. No charge. 12 miles west of Owensboro on Highway 56, 229-4103.

**Cowboys of Kentucky, Inc.** Come out to see 19 acres dedicated to the Horseman and the Equine World. The facility offers supplies, clothes, riding lessons, and more. 5760 US Highway 60 West, 877-686-7433.

**Hall of Fame**, Browse down the "Hometown Hero" Hall of Fame and view the celebrities that have reached national or international acclaim in their field that are from Owensboro and the surrounding regions. 215 East Second Street, 926-1100.

You can pick your own apples, strawberries, peaches and blackberries in season or browse the homemade selections at **Reid's Orchard**. Located on Kentucky Highway 144, 685-2444.

Owensboro is known as "Kentucky's Festival City." Each May, cooking teams from around the area compete in the two-day **International Bar-B-Q Festival**. The annual event features cooking, square dancing, musical performances, arts and crafts, and a number of other events. The festival kicks off the barbecue season and a church picnic is held every weekend throughout the summer and early fall.

**RiverPark Center**. This performing arts center includes a 1,500-seat multi-purpose auditorium, experimental theater, Riverfront Plaza, a meeting-reception room, café, as well as the International Bluegrass Music Museum Schedule includes Broadway series, Owensboro Symphony Orchestra concerts. 101 Daviess Street, 687-2770.

## **Sports and Entertainment**

The area has excellent public recreation facilities sponsored and maintained by the Owensboro Parks and Recreation Department, the Daviess County Parks and Recreation Department and Ben Hawes State Park. Facilities include numerous parks, playgrounds, swimming pools, golf courses, a disc golf course, tennis courts, softball and baseball diamonds, basketball courts, nature trails, an ice arena and a new 2.5 mile greenway for biking and walking. There are two softball complexes, a soccer complex, a youth football field and sand volleyball courts. At least four playgrounds are designed for the physically disabled. The Owensboro Sportscenter is a 5,500-seat air-conditioned auditorium/arena.

Owensboro is home to Kentucky Wesleyan College and the Panthers men's basketball program. With eight NCAA Division II championships, 18 Final Four appearances and more tournament victories than any other NCAA school, KWC is fun to watch each season and is THE winter sports event in Owensboro.

Some of the area's private recreation facilities include three country clubs with golf courses, five swimming pools, 12 indoor movie theaters, three bowling facilities, a large YMCA, the HealthPark and indoor and outdoor tennis courts.