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Northeast Tennessee Tourism Sees Record Growth During 21st Annual Pinnacle Awards

The Northeast Tennessee Tourism Association honored the tourism industry's top performers Thursday, May 10 during the 21st Annual Pinnacle Awards at Meadowview Convention Center in Kingsport as part of National Travel & Tourism Week.



Presented by Bristol Motor Speedway and produced in partnership with the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development, Tennessee Tourism Commissioner Kevin Triplett was on hand to deliver the keynote address as the top performers who contribute to tourist related community and economic development in the Northeast Tennessee and Southwest Virginia region were honored. The

organization saw a record number of 52 entries in categories for Marketing, Advertising & Promotions, Public Relations, as well as Best New Event, Festival of the Year and individual achievement awards such as Partner of the Year, Rising Star and Tourism Leader of the Year.

Ranked by a panel of judges within the tourism and advertising industry associated with the Southeast Tourism Society, Pinnacle Awards were given to the top entry in each category.

Tourism is the second largest economic driver in Tennessee, with Northeast Tennessee generating more than \$800 million in direct tourist spending, more than \$170 million in payroll while employing nearly 6,700 people, and generating more than \$25 million in local sales tax receipts annually.

The Northeast Tennessee Tourism Association, chartered in 1977, is a non-profit tourism promotion and agency that serves and supports Carter, Greene, Hancock, Hawkins, Johnson, Sullivan, Unicoi, and Washington counties in Tennessee, as well as portions of Southwest of Virginia. The organization's mission is to serve as a catalyst to enhance regional economic and



community growth through the promotion and development of tourism.

Pinnacle Awards were given to the following projects, events and individuals:

Advertising and Promotions:

Perpetuating the Legacy Brochure
Birthplace of Country Music

Jonesborough Yarn Exchange Rack Card
Town of Jonesborough

A Midsummer Night's Dream Postcard
Barter Theatre

Southern Dozen Print Ad
Johnson City Convention and Visitors Bureau

Discover Bristol Great Outdoors Commercial
Discover Bristol

Discover Bristol Music and Shopping Video
Discover Bristol

Coming Home to Historic Sullivan County
Sullivan County Department of Archives and Tourism

2017 Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion
Birthplace of Country Music

40th Annual Unicoi Apple Festival
Unicoi County Chamber of Commerce

Marketing and Public Relations:

"Be Epic" - NAIA Indoor Track & Field National Championships
Johnson City Convention and Visitors Bureau

90th Anniversary of the Bristol Sessions
Birthplace of Country Music

Trek Store, Johnson City
Johnson City Convention and Visitors Bureau

#CaptureKingsport, Kingsport's Selfie Trail
Visit Kingsport

Attraction of the Year:

Tweetsie Trail
Johnson City Convention and Visitors Bureau

Birthplace of Country Music Museum
Birthplace of Country Music

Best New Event:

U.S. Women's Disc Golf National Championship
Johnson City Convention and Visitors Bureau

Best Festival or Event:

Jonesborough Yarn Exchange Radio Series
Town of Jonesborough

Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion
Birthplace of Country Music

Partnership Award:

The High Road Agency nominated by Birthplace of Country Music

Individual Achievement Awards:

Rising Star
Stephen Callahan, Tennessee Hills Distillery

Volunteer of the Year
Tim Bar, Tournament Director for 2017 Professional Disc Golf Association

Tourism Leader of the Year
Brenda Whitson, Johnson City Convention and Visitors Bureau