

Bardstown to host state fair reception

RALUCA BARZU

The Kentucky Standard

Once again this year, Bardstown is hosting the Kentucky State Fair opening reception in Louisville .

This is the second year in a row the fair will receive a Bardstown kick-off.

The Kentucky State Fair officially starts at noon Aug. 18 at the Kentucky Fair & Exposition Center , 937 Phillips Lane . At 5:30 p.m. Gov. Ernie Fletcher will give a welcome speech.

Afterward, at about 6:15 p.m., all fair and state officials will “flow down to our reception,” Kim Huston, Nelson County Economic Development Agency CEO, said.

“This is the perfect opportunity for Bardstown and Nelson County to spotlight themselves on front of the state.”

Last year's reception was a success, Huston added. The Heaven Hill Distillery's Trolley got its inauguration at the fairgrounds and Bardstown received a lot of attention.

The city also had residents as ambassadors traveling in the trolley that stopped in front of the reception hall, Huston said.

This year's theme will be Bardstown's 225 th birthday celebration.

The reception will be sprinkled with snippets of Bardstown's history. Mayor Dixie Hibbs will give Gov. Fletcher a 225 birthday pin, according to Huston.

“During the reception Jim Beam and Heaven Hill

have booths to showcase their bourbons; Stephen Foster - the Musical cast

members will greet guests and perform,” Dawn Ballard, vice president of tourism expansion and marketing, said. “We'll run a slide show celebrating

Bardstown and Nelson County , and highlight local food products.”

All food and beverages will be provided by Bardstown restaurants.

“We're spotlighting the best of the best,” Huston added.

The main reason why Bardstown received the opportunity to put on the opening show at the state fair this year was last year's festive atmosphere.

“We upgraded it,” Huston explained. “And it might be something we continue to do.”

Ballard said the event is “truly a collaborative effort among

NCEDA partners, local government and businesses.”

"People were very excited about it," Huston added.

In addition to the reception, Bardstown continues to have an indoor booth with materials marketing the area.

People stop by, inquire, and even share their impressions on the city.

"Everyone has a Bardstown story," Huston said.

Ballard agreed. Tourism benefits from the Bardstown booth at the state fair, she said.

"Thousands of people visit the state fair booth so it is a way to interact with visitors," Ballard added.

Raluca Barzu can be reached at 348-9003 Ext. 114 or by e-mail at rbarzu@bardstowncable.net.