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Contact

Betsy Hatfield, Executive Director
502-871-4570

Preservation Kentucky Announces Tour120 Program Historic Preservation and Tourism Marketing Effort Launches May 18-19 with Architectural Tours Across the Commonwealth and New Website

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FRANKFORT, KY. Kentucky has more National Register historic sites than 46 other states. And, all 120 Kentucky counties have at least one historic site. To raise awareness of historic preservation and its connection to tourism, Preservation Kentucky has launched **Tour120**, a statewide heritage tourism program. The program launches on **Saturday-Sunday, May 18-19, 2019** during **National Historic Preservation Month**, with tours of historic residential, commercial and public buildings throughout the state. The **presenting sponsors** are **Louisville Water Company** and **JRA Architects**. *For information about current tours and participating members, visit, Tour120.org.*

Tour120 is not just a weekend event. Participating Tour120 members will benefit year-round from Tour120's cohesive branding and promotional efforts, including a unified and searchable website (Tour120.org) with a page for each historic property or tour, listing hours of operation, location and a wealth of photographs and historical information.

Ultimately, the program's goals are to:

- Showcase diverse historic architecture that tells Kentucky's story,
- Increase visitor numbers to historic sites,
- Spark interest among all age groups, and
- Provide tourists and Kentuckians alike with a tool to plan their own tour trails, whether driving the state's scenic byways or strolling along Main Street.

Diversity Across the Commonwealth

The diversity of inaugural Tour120 sites gives Kentucky residents and out-of-state travelers a variety of architectural styles, historic sites and folklore to explore. Louisville's Crescent Hill Reservoir and Gatehouse, and the 1860 Water Tower, offer guests all three and are hosted by presenting sponsors Louisville Water Company and JRA Architects.

“Tour120 compliments Louisville Water’s 159-year history,” said **Kelley Dearing-Smith**, Louisville Water Vice President for Communications and Marketing. “Since Louisville Water began in 1860, we’ve blended form and function. Our facilities not only produce some of the highest-quality drinking water in the United States, they’re also community landmarks.”

“For more than 75 years, JRA Architects has endeavored to bring awareness to thought-provoking architecture and the history of the towns and cities in which we work,” said **Tim Graviss, AIA**, JRA Architects. “This partnership with Preservation Kentucky and the Louisville Water Company allows us to share the talents of the local and regional owners, preservationist and craftsmen with our communities.”

"The main roads and backroads of the Commonwealth are filled with architectural treasures and interesting stories that attract history buffs and heritage tourism travelers seeking authentic experiences, unique surroundings and a genuine aesthetic special to each location. Our long-term goal for Tour120 is to have permanent members in all 120 counties," said **Betsy Hatfield**, Preservation Kentucky Executive Director. "Tour120.org will be the go-to site for people who love historic buildings and Kentucky history."

Nineteen Kentucky counties are participating in the first Tour120 and some will highlight sites not typically open to the public. Louisville Water Company will open its 1879 Gothic Revival Gatehouse at the Crescent Hill Reservoir for a special tour. Also opening for the weekend are Grant County’s ca. 1790 William Arnold Log Home (Williamstown) and ca. 1820 Sherman Tavern (Dry Ridge); Kenton County’s ca. 1815 Porter Fallis House (Covington); and, Laurel County’s 1890s Belle Bennett Hall and Lewis Administration Building on the former campus of Sue Bennett College (London).

Historic Preservation is Key to Tourism Dollars and a Driving Force for Kentucky’s Economy

Kentucky tourism generated more than \$15 billion in 2017—with all nine of the state’s tourism regions registering gains—which generated more than \$1.5 billion in tax revenue, with \$202 million going directly to local communities, and supported more than 195,000 jobs.

“Preservation Kentucky has been a great partner to our Cabinet, and we are excited to join them in building momentum for Tour120,” said **Regina Stivers**, Deputy Secretary of the Tourism, Arts, and Heritage Cabinet. “Whether you are in a big city or a small town, Kentucky has an abundance of unique and beautiful places to help illustrate our rich history. It is important to preserve these structures so that they remain destinations for generations to come.”

“We are delighted to work with Preservation Kentucky to further promote heritage tourism in the state through the Tour120 program,” said **Kristen Branscum**, Commissioner of the Kentucky Department of Tourism. “Our historic buildings across the Commonwealth play a significant role in telling Kentucky’s story; they are landmarks that have helped shape our communities for generations.”

Historic preservation is a fundamental tool for economic development around the country, and important to Kentucky’s economy and tourism industry, where iconic images have gained international attention and attracted visitors from all over the world. Historic preservation strengthens our communities with a wide range of public goals, including small business incubation, affordable housing, sustainable development,

neighborhood stabilization, downtown revitalization, job creation, increased property values, environmental sustainability, promotion of the arts and culture, small town renewal and social engagement.

According to recent studies, heritage tourism travelers spend twice as much as conventional tourists, stay longer for their visits and return more often to places where they enjoyed their experience. With Kentucky having more than 42,000 historic properties in all 120 counties, the fourth highest number of National Register listings in the country, and more than one billion investment dollars in historic tax credit projects annually, the number of sites to showcase the Commonwealth is impressive.

"Kentucky's architectural heritage is just as rich as that of Charleston or Savannah, among others," said **Grady Walter**, Preservation Kentucky Board Chair. "Here, it's more difficult to promote because it is spread across the Commonwealth. We want people to take notice of what we offer."

The 19 counties participating represent numerous historic sites—some not typically open to the public:

Adair	Campbell	Fulton	Hickman	Laurel	McCracken	Woodford
Bourbon	Fayette	Gallatin	Jefferson	Logan	Montgomery	
Boyle	Franklin	Grant	Kenton	Marion	Pike	

For more information about the Tour120 program, contact Betsy Hatfield, Executive Director for Preservation Kentucky at 502-871-4570 or 561-699-9860.

Follow news about Tour120 with hashtags **#KYTour120** and **#Tour120**.

Tour120 Presenting Sponsors



Preservation Kentucky is a statewide membership-based 501(c)(3) public charity nonprofit that facilitates the sustainability of Kentucky's historic buildings, rural landscapes and archaeological sites through advocacy and education. Our mission is to preserve Kentucky's heritage and foster the benefits of historic sites that define our communities, contribute to our economy and represent our cultural legacy. Our goals are to advocate historic preservation for community revitalization and stabilization; provide resources and technical assistance on the methods, materials and treatment of historic properties; and to connect Kentuckians with their heritage by helping them appreciate, maintain and protect their history. Programs include workshops, webinars, conferences, publications and tours for professionals, novices and volunteers.

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