



**Good times and good friends await you in Knoxville,** a vibrant and beautiful river city with an abundance of great restaurants, nightlife, museums, shopping, family fun and national championship sports. It's a warm, welcoming place with its own distinct history, spirited arts community and blessed with the natural beauty of the Tennessee River and the Great Smoky Mountains.

---

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Erin Burns Freeman, Director of Communications  
Knoxville Tourism & Sports Corporation  
865-342-9137  
865-673-4400 (fax)  
ebfreeman@knoxville.org

## **FUN FACTS ABOUT KNOXVILLE**

*Historical -*

- Knoxville was settled in 1791 and established in 1792.
- The city of Knoxville was incorporated in 1815.
- Knoxville was named after Henry Knox, President Washington's War Secretary.
- William Blount selected the name for the city of Knoxville.
- Knoxville was home to one of the most intense Union supporters, William Brownlow, editor of the Knoxville Whig newspaper.
- The inventor of the Dempster Dumpster, George R. Dempster, was Mayor of Knoxville in 1952-1955.
- Due to Knoxville being a major center of marble distribution in the early 1900s, its nickname soon became "The Marble City."
- In Knoxville on May 1, 1890, the first electric street car ran from Gay Street to Lake Ottossee (now Chilhowee Park).
- McGhee Tyson Airport in Knoxville is named in honor of Knoxville native and Fighter Pilot Lt. Charles McGhee Tyson, who was shot down over Britain's North Sea in WWI.
- Indians were the first settlers on Knoxville and East Tennessee. By the time the first European settlers appeared, the Cherokees dominated the region.
- James White was the first known settler of Knoxville.
- Mrs. N.E. ("Whitty") Logan was a nurse who worked near the front lines in France during World War I, earned a Medal of Commendation from General Pershing, and helped found the Knoxville Chapter of The Red Cross.
- Charles McClung (1761-1835) was Knoxville's first surveyor.

- Henley Bridge was named after Col. David Henley, a Revolutionary War hero sent to Knoxville in 1793 by President George Washington to represent the war department.
- Knoxville native James E. “Buck” Karnes helped rally the 117<sup>th</sup> Infantry in charge that broke the Hindenburg Line and forced the Germans into a retreat in WWI. He received the Congressional Medal of Honor for his actions.
- The first train arrived in Knoxville in 1855.
- In 1903, Kid Curry, a member of Butch Cassidy’s Wild Bunch, shot a couple of deputies and escaped out the back window of a business on Central Avenue in what is now the Old City. He was captured, brought to the Knoxville Jail, but escaped and was last seen riding the Sheriff’s stolen horse across the Gay Street Bridge.
- The French Broad and the Holston River’s converge in Knoxville to form the headwaters of the Tennessee River, which begins the 650-mile River Navigational Channel.
- Seven lakes surround Knoxville: Cherokee, Douglas, Ft. Loudon, Melton Hill, Norris, Watts Bar and Tellico.
- Knoxville is situated at the crossroads of two major interstates, I-75 and I-40.
- David Glasgow Farragut was born in Knoxville in 1801 and was appointed to the rank of Admiral – the first ever in American History.
- Knoxville College was founded in 1875.
- The corporate headquarters of the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) is located in Knoxville. President Franklin D. Roosevelt created the TVA in 1933 during the Great Depression to provide “Electricity for All,” further creating jobs and attracting manufacturing.
- Currently Knoxville’s city population is more than 177,000.
- The city of Knoxville shares its name with Knoxville, Georgia – Knoxville, Iowa – Knoxville, Maryland – Knoxville, Pennsylvania – and New Knoxville, Ohio.
- The University of Tennessee is located in Knoxville with more than 28,000 students.
- Blount College, the forerunner of the University of Tennessee, was chartered in 1794.
- Knoxville is 20 miles south of the Oak Ridge National Laboratory, which was instrumental in the development of the atomic bomb.
- Downtown Knoxville is 936 feet above sea level.
- In Tennessee’s early history, Knoxville was one of four different towns that served as the seat of government.
- The City of Knoxville comprises 101 square miles of the 526-square mile total for Knox County.

- The soft drink Mountain Dew had its beginnings with Hartman Beverages in Knoxville in the late 1940s.
- In 1974 Walter Cronkite designated Knoxville as the “Streaking Capital of the World.” It was spring of that year that an estimated 5,000 people on the University of Tennessee’s famous Cumberland Avenue took their clothes off...stripping on the “strip.”
- The “Million Dollar Fire of 1897” destroyed most of downtown’s Gay Street.

#### *Attractions -*

- During the 1991 bicentennial celebration of Knoxville, lighting totaling to 455,000 bulbs was added to the Henley Bridge façade.
- The 13-foot bronze statue of “Roots” author Alex Haley inside Morningside Park is thought to be the largest statue of an African-American in the country.
- The Sunsphere, built for the 1982 World’s Fair, is 266 feet tall and has 26 stories. The actual ball itself houses only five levels. The fourth floor of the ball opened in 2007 as an observation deck.
- Knoxville residents are treated to the largest Labor Day weekend fireworks display in the nation during the Chrysler Jeep Boomsday Festival.
- Smoky Mountain National Park is located within 45 minutes of Knoxville.
- Knoxville has its own zoo (Knoxville Zoological Gardens), which is on 53 acres and has more than 400,000 yearly visitors.
- The Knoxville Zoo is the Red Panda Capital of the World, having the greatest success in breeding and survival of baby Red Pandas. In 2004, the zoo celebrated the birth of four pandas bringing the total of babies born in Knoxville to 86 since 1978.
- In 1978, the Knoxville Zoo had the first African Elephant bred and born in captivity in the Western Hemisphere. Her name was Little Diamond.
- Knoxville is home to more than 20 museums and seven historical houses.

#### *Business -*

- Knoxville is home to cable TV’s HGTV, which is one of the fastest growing networks in cable history with nearly 92 million households in less than 10 years.
- Knoxville is home to the Knoxville News Sentinel, which is one of the top 100 daily newspapers in the United States.
- The corporate headquarters of Regal Entertainment, Bush Brothers and Company, Petro’s Chili & Chips and Pilot Corporation are located in Knoxville.

- East Knoxville businessman William Hooper volunteered in WWII as an instructor to train the mostly-black “Red Ball Express,” which became one of the most decorated U.S. Convoy Units in Europe.
- Knoxville is home to the East TN Clean Fuel Coalition, which serves the area with action for and information on alternative fuels, like biodiesel, propane, ethanol and hybrids.
- Wendy’s restaurant creator, Dave Thomas, once worked for the Regas Restaurant in Knoxville.

#### *Civil War –*

- Most of the Civil War dead from the battle in Knoxville are buried in the Confederate Cemetery, which is located in East Knoxville.
- During the Civil War, the Siege of Knoxville lasted 17 days (Nov. 17 – Dec. 4, 1863) and ended with the Confederates never taking Knoxville.
- The Civil War battle in Knoxville ended with General James Longstreet’s failed, bloody attempt to storm General Ambrose Burnside’s fortifications at Fort Sanders.
- During 1860, Knoxville was a small city of about 3,700 people.
- During 1860, Knox County was home to more than 20,000 white citizens and more than 2,000 slaves.
- Fort Sanders is named after General Sanders, who was killed in a skirmish during the Civil War.
- Bethel Cemetery on Mabry Hill contains the remains of approximately 1,670 Civil War soldiers.

#### *Famous Births –*

- Nikki Giovanni, the “Princess of Black Poetry,” was born in Knoxville in 1943.
- The first black federal judge, William Henry Hastie, was born in Knoxville in 1904.
- Pulitzer Prize winning writer James Agee was born in Knoxville in 1909.

#### *Music –*

- Famous country singer Kenny Chesney grew up in Knoxville.
- WNOX went on the air as one of the first 10 radio stations in the nation in 1921.
- Knoxville’s Historic Andrew Johnson Hotel is the site of the last known appearance of Country Western singing star Hank Williams, Sr.
- The singing duo, The Everly Brothers, settled in Knoxville when they appeared on radio from 1953 to 1955.
- Country Music Hall of Famer Roy Acuff lived in Knoxville during his early music learning days.
- Country Music Hall of Famer Chet Atkins started on Knoxville’s WNOX radio station when he was 18 years old.

- A Knoxville record merchant, Sam Morrison of Bell Sales Company, helped launch the career of Elvis Presley by promoting Presley's "That's All Right, Mama" by playing it on loudspeakers to the public on the square. He sold hundreds of copies to people of all ages, including two copies to an RCA talent scout. The scout sent a copy of the record to his boss in New York and several months later, RCA bought Elvis' contract from Sun Studios in Memphis.

*Sports –*

- Knoxville is home to UT Lady Vols Coach Pat Summitt, the all-time winningest coach in NCAA basketball history (men or women) with more than 1,000 victories.
- In the 2008 Olympics, 17 current and former UT athletes competed.
- Thompson-Boling Arena underwent a \$35 million renovation in 2008 is currently the sixth largest basketball arena in the country.
- At the 2004 Olympic games in Athens, Dee Dee Trotter became the first Lady Vol track and field underclassman ever to win an Olympic Medal.
- Former UT track star and Knoxville resident Tim Mack broke not only his own record, but the Olympic mark in winning the gold medal in the pole vault at the 2004 Olympic games in Athens.
- Former UT Volunteer Justin Gatlin won the Gold in the Olympic 100 Meter Dash I, only 9.85 seconds at the 2004 Olympic games in Athens.
- Knoxville's Neyland Stadium, the fifth largest football stadium in the US, is named after UT football coach Robert Neyland.
- From 2003-2009, the University of Tennessee was the only Division 1 school to rank in the top 5 nationally for highest attendance in men's and women's basketball and football.
- Current NFL star and 2006 Super Bowl champion Peyton Manning played for UT in Knoxville.
- Three former UT Vols were on the 2010 Super Bowl champion team, the New Orleans Saints. (Robert Meachem, Jabari Greer, and Marvin Mitchell)
- The only museum devoted to women's basketball (Women's Basketball Hall of Fame) is located in Knoxville.
- The Lady Vols softball team reached the Women's College World Series three consecutive times, in 2005, 2006 and 2007.
- Knoxville was the birthsite of Todd Helton, professional baseball player for the Colorado Rockies. Other MLB stars and UT alums include Chris Burke, Joe Randa and the number one overall pick in the 2006 MLB draft, Luke Hochevar.
- Knoxville was home to Doris Sams, All-American, All-Star Outfielder and Pitcher for the All-American Girls Professional Baseball league.

- There are currently more 13 Lady Vols in the WNBA, including Candace Parker, Michelle Snow, Tamika Catchings and Kara Lawson.

#### *TV & Movie Connections –*

- Quentin Tarantino, famous actor, director, and creator of “Kill Bill” and “Pulp Fiction,” was born in Knoxville.
- MTV stuntman and actor Johnny Knoxville grew up in Knoxville.
- Knoxville is home to Tina Weston, the million-dollar winner of the television series “Survivor 2: Australian Outback.”
- Ella Nolan, from the Knoxville area, was a contestant on The Bachelor in 2010.
- Knoxvilleian Mary Costa’s voice was used in many Disney movies.
- Scott Miller, a musician for the “Blue Collar TV” series, lives in Knoxville.
- Former Knoxville resident Ryan Murphy is the creator of the acclaimed cable drama “Nip/Tuck.”
- Actor John Cullum of the “Northern Exposure” TV series and a Tony-winning musical theatre star, calls Knoxville his hometown and is known to perform at the Clarence Brown Theatre from time to time.
- Actress-singer Polly Bergen, born in Knoxville in 1930, was the first woman to serve on the Board of Directors of the Singer Sewing Machine Company.
- Actor David Keith was born in Knoxville and still calls it home. Keith starred in “An Officer and a Gentleman” and “Daredevil.”
- The major Hollywood feature film “October Sky” was shot in and around Knoxville. The 1999 film starred Laura Dern and Jake Gyllenhaal.
- The 2009 movie “That Evening Sun” was filmed in Knoxville and starred Hal Holbrook and his wife, Tennessee native, Dixie Carter.

#### *1982 World’s Fair –*

- Knoxville was home to the 1982 World’s Fair. Attendance was recorded at 11,127,786 visitors.
- When it hosted the World’s Fair in 1982, Knoxville was the smallest city to ever host the International Exposition.
- “Energy Turns The World” was the theme of the 1982 World’s Fair in Knoxville.
- The first touch-screen computer displays were demonstrated in the U.S. Pavilion at the 1982 World’s Fair in Knoxville.
- Petro’s Chili and Chips made its debut at the 1982 World’s Fair in Knoxville.
- Knoxville had the last successful World’s Fair held in America.

### *Honors/Awards –*

- In 2006, Hotwire.com named Knoxville #4 among the “Most Affordable Travel Destinations in the United States.”
- CNNMoney.com ranked Knoxville as one of the seven most affordable travel destinations in the United States and abroad.
- The Chrysler Jeep Boomsday Festival was named a “Top 20 Event in the Southeast” for the month of September 2006, September 2007 and September 2009 by the Southeast Tourism Society.
- *Expansion Management Magazine* named Knoxville as a Top 50 “Hottest City for Business Relocation & Expansion” in 2007.
- AllHeadlineNews.com ranked Knoxville #5 among “Best Places for Business.”
- Inc. Magazine ranked Knoxville #107 of “Hot Cities,” which is based on Tennessee Metropolitan Statistical areas with an employment base of less than 150,000 people.
- Kiplinger’s *Forbes Magazine* ranked Knoxville #10 in 2008 among “Best Places for Business and Careers”.
- “Places Rated Almanac Millennium Edition” rated Knoxville #13 in its overall ranking of best cities to reside for both the U.S. and Canada.
- Relocate-America.com named Knoxville a “Top 100 Place to Live” in 2008.
- In 2007, RetirementJobs.com named Knoxville as a top 25 “Best City for Post-Retirement Jobs.”
- Knoxville ranked #1 in 2007 for “Best Mid-Sized Cities for Relocating Families” from *Worldwide ERC/Primary*.
- *Expansion Management Magazine* named Knoxville #3 for “Best Metros for Business & Expansion” in 2007.
- Knoxville ranked #3 in the “Best Place to Live & Boat” listing by *Boating Life* magazine in 2007.
- Knoxville ranked among the “10 Best Places in America” to live and boat by *Boating Life*.
- Milken Institute named Knoxville #9 among “Lowest Cost States for Doing Business” in 2007.
- In 2008, *Site Selection Magazine* ranked Knoxville #2 among “Top States with Best Business Climate,” #1 among “Top Ten Competitive States for Economic Development Projects” and #10 among “Top Ten Metro Areas for Economic Development.”

---

---

*The Knoxville Tourism & Sports Corporation promotes the Knoxville/Knox County area as a premier destination for conventions, sports-related events & leisure travelers to enhance the quality of life for the citizens of the City and County, while generating economic impact & development.*

**“It’s All Here, Just for You. Enjoy!”**

[www.Knoxville.org](http://www.Knoxville.org)