

# **INTERIM JOINT COMMITTEE ON TOURISM, SMALL BUSINESS, AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

## **Minutes of the 6th Meeting of the 2025 Interim**

**November 20, 2025**

### **Call to Order and Roll Call**

The sixth meeting of the Interim Joint Committee on Tourism, Small Business, and Information Technology was held on November 20, 2025, at 1:00 PM in Room 149 of the Capitol Annex. Senator Phillip Wheeler, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

### **Present were:**

Members: Senator Phillip Wheeler, Co-Chair; Representatives Deanna Gordon, Co-Chair; Kim King, Co-Chair; Senators Jason Howell, Matt Nunn, Reginald L. Thomas, Mike Wilson, and Max Wise; and Representatives Shane Baker, Ryan Dotson, Daniel Grossberg, Vanessa Grossl, Shawn McPherson, Adam Moore, Nancy Tate, Timmy Truett, Joshua Watkins, Bill Wesley, Mitch Whitaker, Richard White, Nick Wilson, and Susan Witten.

Guests: Greg Fante, President and CEO, Louisville Sports Commission; Julie Howell, Chief Revenue Officer, Louisville Sports Commission; Bob Scott, Board Member, Pikeville-Pike County Tourism; Tony K. Tackett, Executive Director, Pikeville-Pike County Tourism; and Jay Shepherd, Marketing Director, Pikeville-Pike County Tourism.

LRC Staff: Janine Coy, Christian Deeter, Austin Johnson, and Samantha Gerhart.

### **Approval of October Minutes**

A motion was made by Senator Nunn and seconded by Representative Baker to approve the minutes of the October 23, 2025, meeting. Minutes were approved by voice vote without objection.

### **Signage Value & Tourism Growth Along the Hatfield-McCoy Feud Trail**

Bob Scott, Board Member, Pikeville-Pike County Tourism; Tony K. Tackett, Executive Director, Pikeville-Pike County Tourism; and Jay Shepherd, Marketing Director, Pikeville-Pike County Tourism, discussed the need for strategic signage along the Hatfield-McCoy Feud Trail for tourism growth. Mr. Shepherd detailed statistics related to tourism growth and spending from 2017 to 2024 and the marketing potential of adding signage. He explained how tourism would impact local economies and how signage would increase visitor engagement, dwell time, and tourist spending. Mr. Tackett detailed how adding

signage would promote economic growth for the small businesses in and around Pikeville and Eastern Kentucky.

In response to Representative Dotson, Mr. Shepherd explained the partnership with West Virginia and Kentucky to co-promote the historical significance of the Hatfield-McCoy Feud Trail and the Matestwan Massacre to boost local economies in both states.

In response to Representative Whitaker, Mr. Tackett discussed how Kentucky will never spend enough money for marketing. Lodging is up 33 percent from last year. Eastern Kentucky needs more marketing and lodging for tourism growth.

In response to Representative Wesley, Mr. Tackett explained how a partnership has been created with dinner theaters in Tennessee and how the partnership is used as a marketing strategy.

### **Building a Stronger Community Through Sports**

Greg Fante, President and CEO, Louisville Sports Commission; and Julie Howell, Chief Revenue Officer, Louisville Sports Commission, explained the role of sports tourism and the importance of having venues to host sporting events in Louisville. Mr. Fante detailed the growth of total revenue from 1999 to 2024, as well as the secondary impact of hosting events. Mr. Fante detailed the Louisville Sports Commission's successfully owned and operated events. Ms. Howell explained the implementation of different programs that promote healthy and active lifestyles for both children and adults.

In response to Senator Howell, Mr. Fante explained how 4,800 teams were a part of the Run for the Roses last year, and the estimated revenue was tens of millions of dollars.

In response to Representative Grossberg, Ms. Howell discussed their partnerships with the Boys and Girls Clubs.

In response to Representative Grossberg, Mr. Fante stated they hired a state consultancy who is conducting a feasibility study to determine what size field is needed for diamond sports.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:08 PM.