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old buildings are bringing
new opportunities

Some of Harrodsburg's oldest historic buildings have been designed to create a destination for history buffs. In addition, several buildings have been transformed into a hub for the city's economic, business and tourism efforts.

Leaders say they want to use the city's unique heritage to build opportunities for the future.

The historic buildings, homes and churches are what make "Kentucky's First Settlement" truly unique. In an effort to continue drawing people to Harrodsburg, the James Harrod Trust has updated an already popular driving and walking tour. The tour was originally developed by the Harrodsburg-Mercer County Tourist Commission and now

gives visitors a chance to experience history from as early as the 18th century with 21st-century style.

For the city of Harrodsburg, tourism is the No. 1 industry and contributes significantly to the overall local economy. "In 2005, tourism in Harrodsburg had more than a \$26 million impact on the community," said **Karen Hackett**, the tourism commission's executive director. "Each year there are thousands of people who come from all over the state, the nation and internationally to experience our history."

Employees and volunteers, along with local citizens, agree that the tourism impact on the community must be nurtured. "Harrodsburg is a little sleeping village waiting to wake up and show residents and people from all over what it has to offer. The walking and driving tour is a great way

At right, downtown Harrodsburg, looking south from Lexington Road.

Right below, the Beaumont Inn.



to show off the pride we have in our history and our city,” said Harrodsburg resident **Bonnie Tanner**.

The task of updating the walking and driving tour began with the tourist commission in 1992 and is now continuing with the James Harrod Trust, a nonprofit organization. Its mission is to advocate for historic preservation—to protect and promote the cultural, natural, archaeological, architectural and historic heritage of Harrodsburg and Mercer County.

Through grants, the James Harrod Trust was able to get funding for historical tour markers, which were installed along the walking and driving sites in May 2007.

History and historic architecture are on every corner in Harrodsburg. The tour includes 85 sites, up from about 50, and extends into Mercer County.

“The great thing about the tour is that it has something for everyone,” said **Amalie Preston**, a member of the James Harrod Trust. “If you want historic architecture and are looking to see homes from the 18th century, or if you want history that only Old Fort Harrod can provide, it can be found in the walking and driving tour.”

Diamond Point is the first stop listed on the tour and is located at the Gateway to Harrodsburg. Diamond Point was built in the 1840s and is an exceptional example of Greek Revival architecture found in Kentucky and the southern U.S. The building has been renovated many times over the years. Some of the work is believed to have changed its original façade. In 2003, the building underwent its biggest ren-



ovation. Harrodsburg First took on the final renovations of the building to house five important community organizations.

Diamond Point is now home to the Harrodsburg Chamber of Commerce, the tourist commission, Harrodsburg First, the city’s Main Street Program, and the Industrial Development Authority. The old building is bringing new synergy to the community’s economy.

—NEWCITIES INSTITUTE STAFF



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Harrodsburg at a Glance

Mayor: Lonnie Campbell

Population: 8,126

Location: Historic Harrodsburg is located in the Bluegrass region of Kentucky, just a short drive from anywhere in central Kentucky. Harrodsburg is surrounded by stone fences and charming horse farms, making a visit like a step back in time.

History: Harrodsburg is the oldest town in Kentucky and was the first permanent English settlement west of the Allegheny Mountains. It became known as the “Birthplace of the West.” Settled by James Harrod in 1774, Harrodsburg is a community that continues to celebrate its heritage.

Attractions and

Special Events: Shaker Village of Pleasant Hill, founded in 1805, still offers Shaker cultural experiences in its original buildings. Shaker Village, a National Historic Landmark, is surrounded by 2,800 acres of preserved farmland. Food, music, weaving, crafts, coopering and woodworks can all be experienced as they were more than 100 years ago.

Lincoln Marriage Temple houses the original log cabin where the parents of Abraham Lincoln were married. The site also includes Indian artifacts, Civil War history and artifacts, and Lincoln family memorabilia.

In 1845, the Beaumont Inn was one of the South’s most prestigious girls’ schools. Today, the inn is a place to relax and enjoy the delights of a home-cooked Southern meal. The Beaumont Inn is located on one of the highest points in Harrodsburg and has been operated by the same family since it opened its doors as an inn in 1919.

Old Towne Park is a piece of public art in the form of a 14- by 32-foot cascading fountain that is said to resemble the palisades found along the Kentucky River. The fountain is located in downtown Harrodsburg near the



Above, the townhouses in the center of downtown Harrodsburg.



At left, visitors tour Old Fort Harrod.

Ragged Edge Community Theater, which offers performances year-round.

Harrodsburg’s Summer Entertainment Series kicks off in June and continues through August with free entertainment every Saturday night in Towne Park. Entertainment includes country and Bluegrass music from local and statewide performers.

The second annual Kentucky’s Fort Harrod Beef Festival will be held June 1-3. The beef festival is a weekend packed with contests, education on Kentucky’s beef industry and concerts.

The Night of the Great Pumpkin takes place in October with a citywide trick or treat. Main Street closes to allow children to enjoy a full day of trick or treat, games, contests and much more.

Natives of Harrodsburg: Mercer County has been home to many Kentucky governors including Beriah Magoffin (1859-1862), Gabriel Slaughter (1816-1820) and John Adair (1820-1824), and two members of the Kentucky Athletic Hall of Fame—the late University of Kentucky All-American Forrest “Aggie” Sale (also a five-term state legislator) and the University of Louisville’s Jack Coleman Jr., a member of two NBA championship teams.

Mercer County’s Titans posted a 15-0 record in winning the Class AA state football championship last fall.

For more information visit:
www.harrodsburgky.com
www.harrodsburgfirst.com/event.asp