

JEFFERSON COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM

2025/2026 – Q2 REPORT
October, November, December

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Tourism performance during the second quarter of FY2026 reflects continued stabilization and modest growth following the impacts of Hurricane Helene in late FY2025. Year-to-date hotel occupancy tax collections total \$440,300, representing a 0.24% increase over the same period last year and indicating a gradual rebound in visitor activity.
- Visitor data further supports this recovery trend. While overall visitation declined during late winter and summer months due to hurricane-related disruptions to Douglas Lake and the Interstate 40 corridor, post-cleanup activity in Q2 showed measurable gains. Event performance remained strong, generating an estimated \$3.0 million in economic impact with a 7.0:1 return on investment.
- Marketing and promotional efforts focused on seasonal travel demand, digital advertising, and earned media placements, contributing to increased website traffic, subscriber growth, and sustained visitor interest entering the winter season.

HOTEL OCCUPANCY TAX

Final FY2025 collections are pending; however, early indicators suggest a slight increase over 2024, reflecting a modest recovery following Hurricane Helene.

- FY2026 Year-to-Date Collections: \$440,300
- Annual Year-over-Year Change (FY2024 vs. FY2025): +0.24%

The prior year-end decrease in collections was primarily driven by the impacts of Hurricane Helene and temporary access limitations along Interstate 40 in North Carolina, one of Jefferson County's largest out-of-state visitor markets. Early FY2026 data indicates stabilization and positive momentum as access and lake conditions normalized.

VISITOR TRENDS (Placer.ai – 2025)

- Out-of-Market Visitors: 3.8 million
- Total Visits: 18.2 million
- Average Length of Stay: 4.8 days
- Overnight Trips: 4,310
- Average Visit Nights: 1.2
- Overnight Visitor Spending: \$70.3 million
- Top Visitor States: North Carolina, Virginia, Kentucky, Florida, Georgia

Visitation from February through September declined 1.9%, reflecting hurricane-related impacts on Douglas Lake and travel access along the I-40 corridor. However, FY2026 Q2 data showed gains as cleanup efforts concluded in late August, resulting in improved visitor confidence and travel activity during the fall months. October and November 2025 recorded more than 25% growth in overnight visitor spending compared to the same period in 2024.

(Full Market Report: <https://plcr.ai/bdzf8rut>)

EVENTS & TOURNAMENT PERFORMANCE (2025 YTD): JCTD tracks event performance using participant registrations, ticket sales, surveys, Placer.ai data, and IRS federal daily average rates for meals, incidentals, and fuel to estimate economic impact and return on investment.

Metric	Value
Total Number of Events	21
Estimated Overall Attendance	21,800
Estimated Overnight Stays	2,700
Average Nights Stayed	1.58
Total Number of Boats	1,900
Food & Miscellaneous Expenditures	\$2.5 million
Gas Expenditures (Boats Only)	\$194,000
Lodging Revenue	\$308,800
Total Estimated Economic Impact	\$3.0 million
Estimated ROI	7.0 : 1

[View All Upcoming Events](#)

MARKETING & PROMOTION HIGHLIGHTS

- **Fall Photoshoot:** Hosted travel writer and photographer *Souled Outside* for a four-day countywide shoot, producing four video commercials and a library of more than 300 images.
- **Website Performance:** VisitJeffersonCountyTN.com recorded over 58,000 active users and 80,000 page views.
- **Email Marketing:** Monthly newsletter reached 5,790 subscribers, delivered three campaigns, and achieved an average open rate of 35.9%.
- **Content & Media:** Published six blogs, five press releases, and two itineraries.

(View all: <https://visitjeffersoncountytn.com/lakeside-news/>)

PAID MEDIA & ADVERTISING

Meta (Facebook & Instagram)

- **Fall Campaign (Aug 22 – Nov 30, 2025):**
 - 656,200 views
 - \$0.32 cost per click
 - 11,000 link clicks
- **Winter Campaign (Dec 5 – Ongoing):**
 - 115,300 views
 - 4,800 interactions

Google Ads (Pay-Per-Click Search & Display)

- **Fall Campaign (Aug 11 – Nov 30, 2025):**
 - 7.4 million impressions
 - 49,600 clicks
 - 162% conversion rate
- **Winter Campaign (Dec 1 – Ongoing):**
 - 3.0 million impressions
 - 19,600 clicks
 - 164.8% conversion rate

INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIPS & PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Interviewed with WSMV Nashville Channel 4 highlighting fall travel opportunities in Jefferson County and the 9 Lakes Region. [Interview Link](#)
- Participated in the Bill Dance Signature Lakes Bridge Dedication in Lynchburg, TN
- Serving on the TWRA Black Bass Stakeholder Committee, contributing to statewide bass fishing and tournament management discussions
- Presented "*Tourism Is Economic Development*" to the East Tennessee Regional Leadership Group
- Collaborated with the Tennessee Department of Tourism and Jefferson County Clerk's Office on Granicus Host Compliance implementation
- Presented tourism overview to Jefferson County High School Leadership students
- Coordinated the Wyldstay Grand Opening and Ribbon Cutting on November 14
- Assisted with a successful \$83,000 TDTD Enhancement Grant for greenway development along Douglas Lake in Dandridge
- Partnered with TWRA and the Mossy Creek Foundation to reintroduce trout stocking to Mossy Creek after 40 years
- Established a partnership with the University of Tennessee Tourism & Hospitality Program for a senior capstone project in FY2026
- Supported multiple community organizations with holiday marketing initiatives
- Hosted the fourth-quarter METTC meeting at the Bush's Visitor Center

Additional Reports

Supporting data and detailed reports are available at:

<https://visitjeffersoncountytn.com/jctd-reports/>