

Top 10 Stories While in Owensboro

1. **Broadway, Bourbon, Bluegrass, and BBQ** – Owensboro is now world-famous for the **B**est of these “B”s. RiverPark Center has become known as Broadway West for its efficient production of the newest touring Broadway shows. Next door to RiverPark is the International Bluegrass Music Museum (IBMM) that preserves the history of Bluegrass music, which Bill Monroe popularized in the 20th Century. Spend extra time in Owensboro as the IBMM hosts the River of Music Party (ROMP) Festival 1-week after “Discovering New Mysteries”. Also, Owensboro may have the best and most barbeque restaurants per capita than any other town in the Midwest, including **Moonlite Bar-B-Q** which is nationally recognized for its great tastes and gigantic buffet of barbeque! But, before you fill up on BBQ, tour a true Kentucky bourbon distillery at the Charles Medley Distillery, or take a short drive to Bardstown, KY, for a variety of tour opportunities.
2. **Zev Buffman – Broadway Producer Brings Bright Lights, Big Stars to Small Town Middle America.** RiverPark President & CEO Zev Buffman delivered a big dream of building new Broadway shows in this town of 54,000 along the Ohio River. But the former Broadway producer with 27 Tony nominations has always dreamed bigger than most people, so his vision for Owensboro’s Riverpark Center didn’t stop there. This entrepreneur and showman went from being a member of the Israeli army to producer of Elizabeth Taylor’s Broadway debut to creator of a clean cultural industry in middle-America.
3. **Broadway West – How Owensboro Became a Top City for Building National Tours.** Zev Buffman knew that this state-of-the-art performing arts center could lure national and international touring companies to Owensboro to build, rehearse and premiere their shows. It’s what he calls “clean” industry – economic development that brings new revenue, jobs and visitors to the local economy that instead of creating pollution, create a destination. In two years, Buffman has successfully recruited six Broadway shows to build their national and international touring companies in Owensboro, making it one of the leading sites in the country for Broadway productions.
4. **Young Adult Theatre Academy – Unprecedented Hands-On Experience Draws Youth From Across the Country.** The Young Adult Theatre Academy provides students with a professional, hands-on experience that can’t be found anywhere else in the country. Through a unique arrangement with several Broadway producers, RiverPark President & CEO Zev Buffman is giving students the opportunity to work with new Broadway productions as they are assembled, rehearsed, previewed and premiered at RiverPark before going on tour in Japan and across the United States.
5. **RiverPark – The Miracle Out West.** More than 1,000 performances and events are held each year in RiverPark’s various stages and are attended by more than

210,000 people, including 50,000 schoolchildren from 40 counties in Kentucky and Indiana. Each Broadway production it builds here travels with 120-150 people and hires about 100 local residents as well as using local hotels and restaurants. The total direct economic impact of RiverPark's "Broadway West" industry is \$12 million to \$16 million per year.

6. **Baseball and Biking Champions** – A few more “B”s for you... Owensboro has produced its share of world-champion sports stars. Owensboro is the hometown of Nicky Hayden – 2006 MotoGP World Champion – and also Texas Ranger baseball star Brad Wilkerson. Both professional sports stars are actively involved in local charities and have strong family ties to the Owensboro area.
7. **Sassafras Sensation** - The largest known Sassafras tree in the world grows along the busiest street in Owensboro and is approximately 300 years old. The tree measures over 100 feet tall and 21 feet in circumference. The sassafras tree is a pioneer species that can usually be found growing along country roads and in old abandoned fields, but thanks to a local woman who in 1957 sat in front of the tree with her shotgun to ward off contractors expanding Frederica Street until the Kentucky Governor called to halt the tree's destruction, the tree still thrives today.
8. **SpeedZeum** - A gallery dedicated to the amazing successes from racing athletes who hail from Owensboro and the surrounding area. NASCAR's Darrell Waltrip, Michael Waltrip, Jeremy Mayfield, Jeff Green, David Green, Mark Green and legend G.C. Spencer are all Owensboro natives. So are AMA Superbike racers Tommy and Roger Lee Hayden. Their brother, Nicky Hayden, is currently the MotoGrand Prix World Champion (see above). Hydroplane greats Jim McCormick, Bill Sterrett, Sr., Billy and Terry Sterrett dominated the sport in the 60's and 70's. Cooper Hayden won a top fuel national championship in 1968. Army Armstrong is currently an announcer on ESPN.
9. **FREE Friday Entertainment ALL SUMMER LONG** – Owensboro residents enjoy free outdoor concerts all summer long on their picturesque riverfront. “Friday After 5” and the “Sunset Series” bookend the riverfront with one concert kicking off on the East end of the riverfront at the RiverPark Center and then ending the evening with music on the riverfront's West end on the McConnell Plaza. In the case of inclement weather, the concerts are moved indoors, but for at least 12-weeks of the summer, thousands of visitors and residents gather at the river for great music offered at no charge.
10. **Good Times at Goldie's Opry** – Celebrating 25 years of launching musical careers and providing a variety of family entertainment, Goldies' audience members have said the Opry's show is better than anything that they have seen in Branson or Nashville! Goldie's offers some of the most talented musicians, singers and comedians that you will find assembled anywhere in the country.