



INTERNATIONAL STORYTELLING CENTER

100 West Main Street, Jonesborough, Tennessee 37659 • 800.952.8392 Ext. 224

The National Storytelling Festival

The National Storytelling Festival is the flagship event of the International Storytelling Center in Jonesborough, TN. Now in its 49th year, the Festival was the first modern gathering of its kind. Having transformed the art of storytelling—as well as the small rural town in which it is held—the Festival is widely recognized as the world’s premiere storytelling event.

History



Since 1973, the National Storytelling Festival has been at the vanguard of the storytelling movement. The first year, 60 people came to hear a few folk tales told from the back of a hay wagon. That tiny audience has since grown to more than 11,000 visitors each year, inspiring hundreds of other storytelling programs, festivals, and organizations across the country and around the world. Recent Festival audiences have included people from nearly every state on the continent, as well as visitors from Brazil, New Zealand, England, Australia, Japan, India, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands and France.

Trajectory

During the Covid-19 pandemic, ISC found new opportunities to reach people across the world with the power of story. Our virtual programming reached over 32,000 viewers with our first virtual Festival in 2020 drawing almost 10,000 viewers; 1 in 5 of those viewers were first-time Festival participants. ISC is excited to produce the 49th National Storytelling Festival with both in-person and virtual attendance options. We are emerging from the pandemic stronger than ever and in a great position to bring the world’s oldest folk art to new viewers and old friends with our new hybrid programming model.

At-A-Glance

- Contributes more than \$7.6 million to the region’s economy each year
- Has made Jonesborough, Tennessee a tourist destination—“the storytelling capital of the world”
- Professionalized the storytelling industry
- Transformed a grassroots movement into an international phenomenon
- Remains at the forefront of the American storytelling revival
- Hosts 11,000+ attendees
- Features more than 36 artists with more than 100 hours of live programming
- Streamed live worldwide in 33 countries with 30,000 viewers
- Enjoys national media coverage



October 1-3, 2021

Jonesborough, Tennessee

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Audience

More than 11,000 people attend the National Storytelling Festival each year. The Festival's audience is primarily:

- 45 years of age or older
- Married
- College educated
- Household income of \$95,000+

Economic Impact

Broadly speaking, the International Storytelling Center serves as an anchor in promoting the town of Jonesborough as the "Storytelling Capital of the World."



- The economic impact of the International Storytelling Center's programs is \$7.6 million each year.
- The International Storytelling Center supports the equivalent of 111 jobs.
- Festival attendees spent an average of \$875 per trip, which is more than twice the spending of the average tourist in Tennessee.

Festival Attendee Spending

- \$3 million on lodging (per annum)
- \$1.6 million on meals
- \$1.5 million on shopping

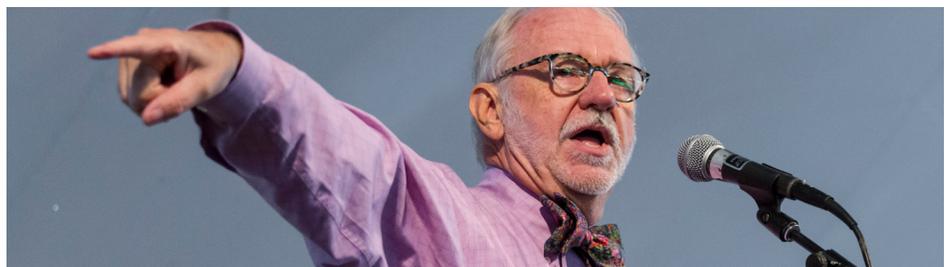
Quick Stats

- 75% of attendees are repeat visitors.
- The average attendee has been to the Festival six (6) times.
- 93% of out-of-town visitors stay overnight.
- 70% stay for 3 or more nights.



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Organizational Overview

The International Storytelling Center (ISC) is an educational and cultural institution that enriches lives through story. Our signature programming includes the National Storytelling Festival, which is held the first weekend of October each year, and the Storytelling Live! series, which hosts a different storyteller-in-residence each week from May through October. Each year, ISC hosts around 26,000 visitors for more than 300 hours of live storytelling.



As a regional leader in arts and culture, ISC has a strong working relationship with local residents and businesses. Our beautiful storytelling campus is located in the heart of downtown Jonesborough, which is Tennessee’s oldest town. More than 500 volunteers support our work each year. We also reach out to local youth and underserved populations, providing ticket subsidies and other opportunities for individuals to listen to the stories of others and use storytelling in their own lives to promote positive change.

Our Mission

To enrich lives and build a better world through the power of storytelling

To forge connections through story and promote cultural understanding in East Tennessee and around the world

To nurture world-class talent

To develop and host educational resources and digital archives

To remain grounded in oral tradition while being open to its new, emerging forms

Collaborations

- The Smithsonian Institution
- Library of Congress
- NASA
- White House
- National Endowment for the Arts
- National Endowment for the Humanities
- Google Cultural Institute
- Desmond Tutu Peace Foundation
- USA Alliance for Peacebuilding
- The United Nations
- Rotary International
- Tennessee Arts Commission
- South Arts, Inc
- Dollywood DreamMore Resort and Spa
- Ballad Health



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National Press

Each autumn, the National Storytelling Festival attracts wide-ranging coverage from major platforms across print, radio, and television. It has been featured by prestigious outlets including the *New York Times*, the *Chicago Tribune*, *People* magazine, the *Boston Globe*, *Garden & Gun*, PBS, *Reader's Digest* and NPR, among others. Festival performances are also streamed live online and broadcast on SiriusXM Radio. The Festival boasts a 5-star rating and a special certificate of excellence from TripAdvisor.com.



The Los Angeles Times

"For what New Orleans is to jazz . . . Jonesborough is to storytelling."

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

"The trance came over the crowd without anyone being aware. A man's iPod ear buds dangled, unused, around his neck. Potato chip bags lay untouched in teenagers' laps. Two thousand people sat in folding chairs under a huge white tent, utterly still, listening."

USA Today

"...the leading event of its kind in America."

Smithsonian

"From all over America, people came to Jonesborough just to hear stories."

U.S. News and World Report

"The old-fashioned art of storytelling has become a 21st-century sensation."



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Festival Sponsors

The International Storytelling Center operates with an annual budget of \$1.4 million. Earned income from the National Storytelling Festival funds the majority of our costs. However, we rely on the generous support of sponsors, including corporations, area businesses, government agencies, and philanthropists to maximize existing revenue streams and enhance regional growth.

Previous sponsors for the National Storytelling Festival include:

Corporate Sponsors



Area Sponsors



CARMEN AGRA DEEDY



Mooneyhan Family Foundation Inc



Government Sponsors



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES



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The success and growth of the National Storytelling Festival is due in large part to the generous support of people like you. Our sponsors enjoy benefits that may include recognition in the Festival souvenir program, signage, announcements from the stage, website acknowledgment, media releases, and mention across our social media platforms. Additional benefits may include free tickets, complimentary facility rentals, workshops and private performances. Benefit packages vary according to availability, organizational needs, and level of sponsorship.

Sponsorship Opportunities



Premier Sponsor (partnership level negotiable)

Our premier sponsor enjoys maximum exposure, branding, and benefits. We'll work closely with your organization to develop a custom campaign best suited to your needs.

Stage Sponsors (\$5,000 - \$10,000 • 5 available)

Each stage sponsor supports programming presented in one of our six venues throughout the weekend of the Festival.

Special Event Sponsors (\$1,500 - \$3,000)

Sponsor a one-time or limited-run event like our famous Yarnspinner party, Ghost Story Concerts, the Story Slam contest and special Story Studios, or support our Festival student ticket subsidy.

Corporate Friend of the Festival (\$2,000)

Friends of the Festival will be thanked by name or business name in the Festival souvenir program.

In-Kind Sponsor (goods and services)

Contributions of goods and services like food, wine and supplies that help the Festival control costs.

Media & Marketing Stats

Brochure distribution: 60,000 annually

Souvenir programs: 11,000 annually

Email subscribers: 30,000

Website visitors: 347,000 annually

Social Media Impressions: 1.6 million annually

Inquiries

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