



FACT SHEET

The Birthplace of Country Music (BCM) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that seeks to perpetuate, promote, and celebrate Bristol's rich musical heritage; to educate and engage audiences worldwide regarding the history, impact and legacy of the 1927 Bristol Sessions from which we derive our name; and to create recognition, opportunities, and economic benefit for our local and regional communities.

BCM accomplishes this mission through its three primary branches (Museum, Festival, and Radio), special projects and events, and a multitude of community and educational outreach programs. A brief description of the three primary entities follows:

Birthplace of Country Music Museum

- The Museum, an affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution, opened on August 1, 2014.
- The Museum is 24,000 sq. ft. on two levels.
- The Museum also houses a large space for special exhibits, a performance theater, the radio station, a learning center and The Museum Store.
- The Core Exhibits are highly interactive and feature a number of video experiences as well as various artifacts relating to the 1927 Bristol Sessions and other aspects of Bristol's musical legacy.
- The Museum has received numerous awards including the highest awards in its state organizations and has been recognized for Leadership in History by the American Association of State and Local History.

Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion

- The annual music Festival began in 2001.
- The Festival hosts over 130 bands on 20 stages in downtown Bristol during the second weekend in September.
- Attendance has grown to approximately 45,000 each year.
- The Festival has been named as one of *Rolling Stone's* "Top 20 Tours and Festivals," and has won a Grand Pinnacle Award from the International Festival and Events Association.
- A 2015 Economic Impact Study showed that visitors to the Festival from outside the region had a \$16.1 million impact on the region.

Radio Bristol

- Radio Bristol is a network of channels showcasing the diversity of American roots music from the early recording era to today.
- Providing local listeners with a radio signal at 100.1 FM, and reaching the world through our online media players and mobile app, Radio Bristol produces original programming through recordings and live sessions from the Birthplace of Country Music Museum and the surrounding region.

Our free streaming content includes four channels:

- WBCM broadcasts locally in Bristol TN/VA on 100.1 FM from our studios in the Birthplace of Country Music Museum. WBCM features live performances and a diverse blend of Old Time, Bluegrass, Americana, Classic Country and more presented by our outstanding team of DJs. Centered on local and regional artists, Radio Bristol Sessions, and special live events like Farm & Fun Time, Radio Bristol offers listeners something unique and representative of Bristol and our region. With one foot placed deeply in the history of American roots music and the other stretching into the future, WBCM 100.1 is a great destination for today's roots music fan.
- Radio Bristol Americana features a diverse catalog of artists and the varied musical traditions that have shaped the genre.
- Radio Bristol Classic highlights historic American recordings spanning the early commercial recording era.
- Radio Bristol Video showcases digital video of live radio performances recorded at the Radio Bristol studio or Performance Theater – in the Birthplace of Country Music Museum, remote festival locations or other sites.

Why is Bristol Tennessee/Virginia known as the birthplace of country music?

In the summer of 1927, just two months after Charles Lindbergh made the first flight across the Atlantic in the Spirit of St. Louis, and during the season that Babe Ruth was blasting out 60 home runs for the Yankees, record producer Ralph Peer of the Victor Talking Machine Company was making music history in Bristol TN-VA. Between July 25 and August 5 of that year, Peer conducted recording sessions using the new Western Electric electronic microphone during which 19 performers (or groups of performers) recorded 76 songs.

Those sessions – the now legendary “Bristol Sessions” – are known as the “Big Bang” of modern country music.

The 1927 Bristol Sessions featured the first recordings of both Jimmie Rodgers and the Carter Family. Jimmy Rodgers is now referred to as the “Father of Country Music” and was the first person inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame. The Carter Family, featuring A.P., Sara, and Maybelle Carter, is now known as “The First Family of Country Music” and are also in the Hall of Fame. The 1927 Bristol Sessions not only initiated the careers of these superstar performers but initiated the broad commercialization of country music. Many of the songs and stylings of those sessions still resonate and influence the music of today. For these reasons, in 1998 the United States Congress officially designated Bristol TN/VA as the “Birthplace of Country Music.”

The 1927 Bristol Sessions are also significant due to the technological advances used to record them. The invention of the Western Electric microphone changed the dynamics of recorded sound. In addition, Ralph Peer's introduction of the royalty system set the standard for the country music industry we know today.



The War and Treaty at the 2018 Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion



AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

2020

Northeast Tennessee Tourism Association

Pinnacle Award, Tourism Leader of the Year

- Leah Ross, Executive Director

YWCA Northeast Tennessee and Southwest Virginia

Tribute to Women

- Dr. René Rodgers, Head Curator, Birthplace of Country Music Museum

Tennessee Association of Museums

Award of Excellence, Volunteerism

- Alisa Dishner

Award of Excellence, Educational Programming

- Radio Bristol Book Club

Virginia Living Magazine

Best of Virginia 2020

Best Non-Food Festival, Southwest Virginia

- Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion

Best Museum, Southwest Virginia

- Birthplace of Country Music Museum

2019

Tennessee Association of Museums:

Award of Excellence, Educational Programming

- For All the World to See: Visual Culture and the Struggle for Civil Rights

Award of Excellence, Special Event

- 90th Anniversary of the 1927 Bristol Sessions special event

Northeast Tennessee Tourism Association

Pinnacle Award, Attraction of the Year

- Birthplace of Country Music Museum

Virginia Living Magazine

Best of Virginia 2019

Best Family Entertainment, Southwest Virginia

- Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion

Best Music Venue, Southwest Virginia

- Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion

Best Museum, Southwest Virginia

- Birthplace of Country Music Museum

2018

Southeast Tourism Society

Shining Example Awards, Best Marketing Award <\$500K

- Birthplace of Country Music (Bristol, Tenn./Bristol, Va.)

Virginia Commission for the Arts

50 for 50 Arts Inspiration Award, Exemplary Programs & Pinnacle Events

- Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion

Tennessee Association of Museums

Award of Excellence, Webpage

- Birthplace of Country Music blog – Listen While I Tell: From Bristol's Birthplace of Country Music & Beyond

Award of Excellence, Special Event

- 90th Anniversary of the 1927 Bristol Sessions special event

Northeast Tennessee Tourism Association

Pinnacle Award, Attraction of the Year

- Birthplace of Country Music Museum

Pinnacle Award, Best Event or Festival

- Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion

Pinnacle Award, Advertising and Promotions

- Perpetuating the Legacy brochure
- Birthplace of Country Music

Pinnacle Award, Advertising and Promotions

- 2017 Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion Video

- Birthplace of Country Music

Pinnacle Award, Marketing and Public Relations

- 90th anniversary of the Bristol Sessions Campaign
- Birthplace of Country Music

2017

Northeast Tennessee Tourism Association

Pinnacle Award, Special Projects

- "Tennessee Ernie Ford: A Life On Stage" Special Exhibit, Birthplace of Country Music Museum

Pinnacle Award, Judges Choice

- Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion Artist Reveal Video

Pinnacle Award, Advertising & Promotions

- Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion Artist Reveal Video

Pinnacle Award, Public Relations

(Shared with Bristol Motor Speedway & Bristol Convention & Visitors Bureau)

- Integrated Public Relations for the World's Largest College Football Game, Battle At Bristol

2017 Continued...

Merit Award, Advertising & Promotions

- Birthplace of Country Music Branding Video

Merit Award, Advertising & Promotions

- Birthplace of Country Music 30 Second Commercial

Tennessee Association of Museums

Award of Excellence, Volunteerism

- Richard Horner

Tennessee Association of Museums

Award of Excellence, Volunteerism

- Richard Horner

Award of Excellence, Educational Programming

- YWCA Bristol TechGYRLS Museum Day Live! Radio Program

American Advertising Federation of Southwest Virginia

Out of Home Ambient Media – GOLD ADDY

- Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion Festival Poster

Elements of Advertising, Film & Video – GOLD ADDY

- Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion Lineup Video

Sales & Marketing Sales Promotion Packaging – SILVER ADDY

- Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion Wristband Box

American Advertising Federation of Northeast Tennessee

Film Video Sound, Online Film – SILVER ADDY

- Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion Video Campaign

Southeast Festivals and Events Association

Kaleidoscope Award: Silver

- Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion, Best Social Media Marketing
- Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion, Best TV Ad or PSA

Kaleidoscope Award: Bronze

- Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion, Best Festival or Event Video
- Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion, Best Event Program
- Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion, Best Promotional Poster

2016

International Festivals and Events Association

Grand Pinnacle: Bronze (\$750,000-\$1.5 million budget)

- Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion Kaleidoscope Award: Bronze

Silver, Best Newspaper Insert/Supplement

- Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion Festival Guide

Southeast Tourism Society

- 2016 Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion Top 20 Event/Best Festival

American Association for State and Local History

2016 Leadership in History Award

- Permanent Exhibits

Tennessee Association of Museums

Award of Excellence, Temporary Exhibits

- "Tennessee Ernie Ford: A Life on Stage"

Award of Excellence, A/V Exhibit Component

- WBCM Radio Bristol station

Southeastern Museums Conference

Excellence in Exhibition Competition, Permanent Gallery Installations Gold Award of Excellence

- Birthplace of Country Music Museum

American Advertising Federation of Northeast Tennessee

Video Any Length – SILVER ADDY / Judges Choice

- Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion 2015 Recap Video

American Advertising Federation of Northeast Tennessee

Video Any Length – SILVER ADDY / Judges Choice

- Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion 2015 Recap Video

Product or Service Sales Promotion Campaign – GOLD

- Orthophonic Joy: Country Music History Born Again

American Advertising Federation of Southwest Virginia

Specialty Advertising GOLD ADDY

- Birthplace of Country Music Unbroken Circle Jewelry Line

Out-of-Home Installation GOLD ADDY

- Birthplace of Country Music Interactive Exhibit at Bristol Virginia Welcome Center

Northeast Tennessee Tourism Association

Pinnacle Award, Best In Show

- Interactive Exhibit at the Bristol Virginia Welcome Center

Pinnacle Award, Advertising & Promotions

- Orthophonic Joy Music CD

2016 Continued...

Pinnacle Award, Public Relations

- Public Relations Campaign for Orthophonic Joy: The 1927 Bristol Sessions Revisited Album Release

Pinnacle Award, Special Events

- Economic Impact of Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion

Pinnacle Award, Special Projects

- Interactive Exhibit at the Bristol Virginia Welcome Center

Pinnacle Award, Volunteer

- Keith Liskey

Award of Excellence, Permanent Exhibit

- Birthplace of Country Music Museum

Award of Excellence, Temporary Exhibit

- "Carter Family: Lives and Legacies"

Award of Excellence, A/V Exhibit Component

- Music Mixing Station, Birthplace of Country Music Museum

Award of Commendation, Films

- Chapel Film, Birthplace of Country Music Museum

Southeastern Museums Conference

Technology Competition, 2015 Gallery Installations Silver Award

- Making Music Gallery, Birthplace of Country Music Museum

Technology Competition, 2015 Media Production Gold Award

- Greasy Strings Theater, Birthplace of Country Music Museum

American Alliance of Museums

2015 AAM Museum Publications Design Competition

- Birthplace of Country Music Museum Grand Opening Poster

American Advertising Federation of Northeast Tennessee

Best of Show – Overall

- Birthplace of Country Music Museum Grand Opening Poster

Best of Show – Print

- Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion 2014 Festival Campaign

Judge's Choice

- Birthplace of Country Music Museum Grand Opening Poster

Sales Promotion, Packaging, Single Unit – Gold

- Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion Weekend Pass Gift Box

Collateral Material, Poster, Single Unit – Gold

- Birthplace of Country Music Museum Grand Opening Poster

Collateral Material, Special Event Material – Gold

- Birthplace of Country Music Museum Grand Opening Event Invitation

Collateral Material, Poster, Campaign – Gold

- Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion 2015 Festival Campaign

Tri-Cities Associated General Contractors of Tennessee

Project of the Year

- BurWil Construction Company, Birthplace of Country Music Museum

Architect of the Project of the Year

- Peyton Boyd, Birthplace of Country Music Museum

Southeast Tourism Society

- 2015 Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion Top 20 Event

American Bus Association

- Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion, Listed among Top 100 Events in North America

Best of Virginia

Best Historic Museum Award in

Southwest Virginia – 2nd Place

- Birthplace of Country Music Museum

International Festivals and Events Association

Promotional Poster – Gold

- Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion Festival Poster

Best of Bristol

Best Museum / Gallery

- Birthplace of Country Music Museum

2014

Television, Internet and Video Association of DC (TIVA-DC)

Peer Gold Award for a Documentary (Under 30 Minutes)

- "Bound to Bristol" film, Birthplace of Country Music Museum

Motion Graphics – 2D/3D Animation (\$10K-\$25K)

- "I Was There" film

2015

British Guild of Travel Writers

Highly Commended Award

- Birthplace of Country Music Museum

Northeast Tennessee Tourism Association (NETTA) Pinnacle Awards

Special Events Award

- Grand Opening of the Birthplace of Country Music Museum

Special Projects Award

- Birthplace of Country Music – The Carter Family Lives and Legacies Special Exhibit

Advertising and Promotions Award

- Advertising and Promotions for the Birthplace of Country Music Campaign (2014)

Public Relations Merit Award

- Media Day – Grand Opening of the Birthplace of Country Music Museum

Best of Show

- Grand Opening of the Birthplace of Country Music Museum

Tennessee Association of Museums

Past President's Award of Excellence

- Birthplace of Country Music Museum



QUOTES AND REVIEWS

“

This is one of the best museums of its type that I have ever visited. History of Country music presented like you will see no where else.

James C.
Google Review

“

Tourism is such a huge part of Virginia's economy. It is a \$20 billion enterprise that employs 200,000 folks and what we have here — as it relates to tourism — is a real jewel. The impact of this museum is about \$50 million over the next five years...This is a milestone in the history of Bristol.

Terry McAuliffe
Former Virginia Governor
(at opening of BCM Museum)

“

When we were looking for a location for our Quaker Steak & Lube restaurant we decided we wanted to capitalize on the music culture BCM had brought to downtown Bristol. With Rhythm & Roots and the Museum, BCM has had the single greatest impact on Bristol's revitalization.

Jeff Tickle
Co-owner, Quaker Steak & Lube

“

What a nice find on our way home from a 5 day road trip! Staff is super, admission is decent and what a nice museum! They also have a super gift shop! The building used to be a car dealership and has been all remodeled in to a great place to house a lot of wonderful information and a collection of lots of country music items. We learned a lot and you will too!

TravelinSueMaryland
Trip Advisor

“

Bank of Tennessee supports the revitalization of Downtown Bristol, which led us to make a significant commitment to the Museum as we believe the Museum is a cornerstone of future development of downtown.

David Wagner
Executive Vice President Bank of Tennessee

“

Jimmy Rodgers and the Carter Family are thought of as the founding families of the whole country music scene. The first two inducted into the hall of fame. The big bang of country music industry on record was that one session that's kind of thought of as that one that iconic thing.

Jeff Place
Curator of Folk Life at the
Smithsonian Institution

“NASHVILLE IS LIKE A CHILD TO BRISTOL.”

– Jim Lauderdale, Grammy-winning singer-songwriter

“

No matter if you're there for Music or History (or both) the Museum and Staff are awesome. Attending events in the sound stage are magical as well, makes you feel like the musicians are throwing you a Private Concert.

Rich E.
Google Review

“

As our hotel's name, 'The Sessions', suggests, the Birthplace of Country Music with its events, and its spectacular museum, is the primary reason we decided to locate our unique hospitality complex in beautiful downtown Bristol.

Hal Craddock
Partner/Owner, Creative
Boutique Hotels, LLC

“

During the Festival, we hire an additional 8-12 employees to handle the volume, and it's our biggest sales weekend of the entire year!

Karen Hester
Owner, Cranberry Lane
Southern Churn

“

This is my second trip to Bristol to go to this Museum. It is so interesting. It is a great learning experience. We are always delighted to remember our childhood thru museums like this. We spent over 4 hours there and it was the second time we have.

Wade
Trip Advisor

“

Must admit that prior to visiting I had no idea about Bristol being at the center of spreading the reach of country music via the early recording industry. A beautiful building with well thought out and interesting displays.

Neil R.
Google Review

“

The adjacent Birthplace of Country Music Museum was the key factor in our decision to move forward with the revitalization of the Executive Plaza Building into THE BRISTOL HOTEL with a capital investment of over \$20 million.

Marcus McCall
President, McCall Capital
Hotel Developer