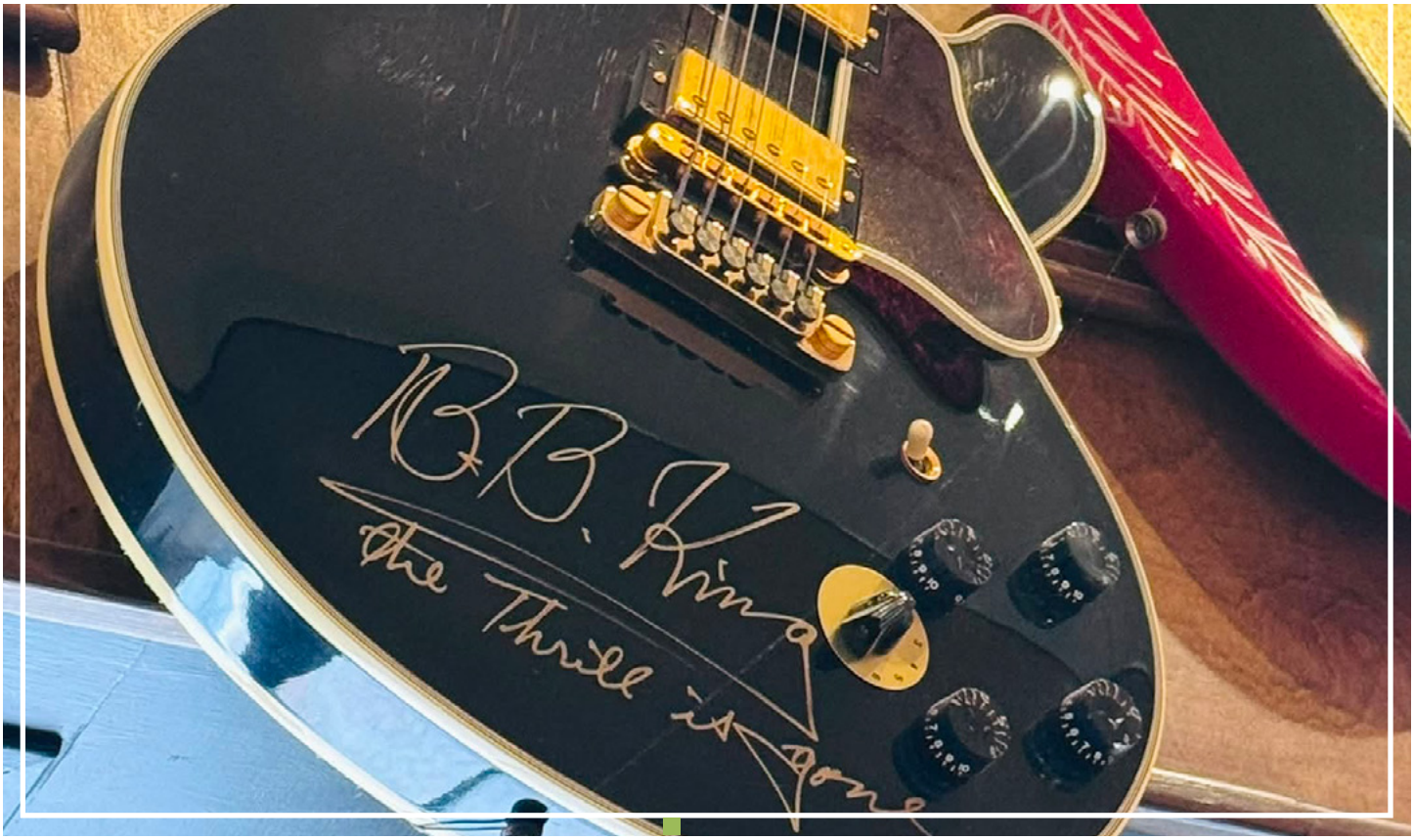
MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

B.B. King Museum and Delta Interpretive Center Economic Contribution and Visitor Analysis



Executive Summary

The B.B. King Museum and Delta Interpretive Center is one of Mississippi's premier cultural tourism attractions and an important contributor to the economy of Indianola, Sunflower County, and the Mississippi Delta. Between 2022 and 2025, the museum recorded approximately 49,512 admissions and attracted visitors from across Mississippi, the United States, and internationally. Visitor survey results and mobile location data indicate that between 43% and 53% of visitors traveled more than 50 miles to visit the museum, demonstrating the museum's role as an attractive destination that draws visitors beyond the local market. Many visitors reported traveling specifically to visit the museum and frequently combined their visit with other cultural and heritage attractions throughout the Mississippi Delta.

Visitor spending associated with museum visitation generated substantial economic benefits for the region. Based on visitor expenditures on lodging, dining, retail purchases, fuel, and other travel-related expenses, museum-related visitation supported an estimated 205 jobs paying $4.1 million in salaries and wages to employees, $12.7 million in economic output, and $7.9 million in value-added contributions to the regional economy. Museum operations and admissions revenue generated an additional $552,902 in economic output, bringing the museum's total estimated economic contribution to more than $13.3 million between 2022 and 2025. These findings demonstrate that the B.B. King Museum and Delta Interpretive Center serves as both a significant cultural institution and an important economic development driver for the Mississippi Delta, supporting local businesses, employment, tourism development, and heritage preservation.

Introduction and Study Purpose

The B.B. King Museum and Delta Interpretive Center serves as one of Mississippi's cultural tourism assets, preserving the legacy of legendary blues musician B.B. King while interpreting the broader history, culture, and social heritage of the Mississippi Delta. Located in Indianola (Figure 1), the museum functions as far more than a heritage attraction; it is an anchor institution for cultural tourism, education, and community identity. Through immersive exhibits, educational programming, live events, and international brand recognition associated with B.B. King, the museum attracts visitors from across the United States and around the world, generating spending that supports local businesses, including lodging, dining,

retail, transportation, and entertainment. As both a destination attraction and a symbol of the Delta's globally recognized musical heritage, the museum plays a key role in strengthening regional tourism development, preserving cultural assets, and contributing to the economic vitality of Indianola, Sunflower County, and the broader Mississippi Delta region.

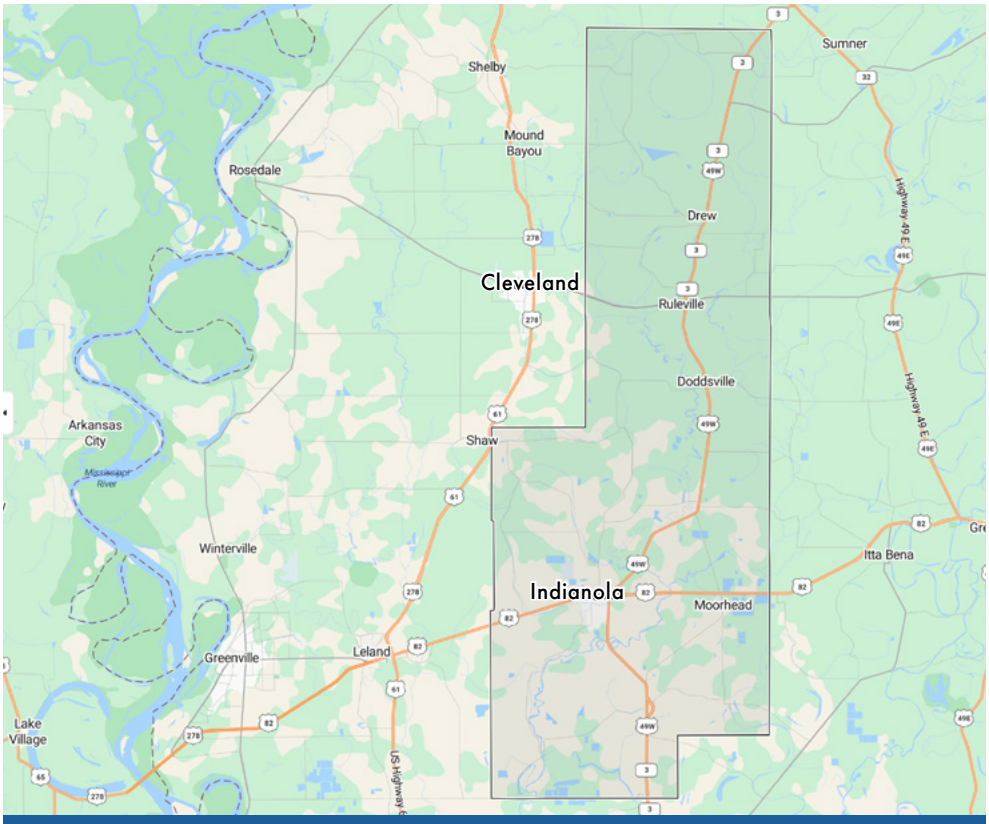


Figure 1. Indianola, Sunflower County, and surrounding regions in Mississippi.

The following report examines the visitors to the B.B. King Museum and Interpretive Center, their spending patterns and preferences, and the economic impact of the facility and the cultural experiences it creates.

Methodology

This study used a mixed-methods approach to estimate the economic contribution of the B.B. King Museum and Delta Interpretive Center by combining visitor expenditure surveys, museum admissions records, ticket sales, and third-party mobile location analytics. The analysis focused on ticketed museum attendance as the primary basis for economic contribution estimation, while mobile location data were used to validate the museum's visitor draw beyond the local market.

Visitor Surveys

Visitor spending behavior, travel characteristics, and trip motivations were assessed through a combination of on-site and digital visitor surveys. Digital surveys were distributed through the museum's official social media platforms and by email to museum visitors who had previously provided contact information. A total of 145 completed survey responses were collected and used to estimate visitor spending patterns, overnight visitation behavior, travel purpose, and visitor origin.

Ticketing and Admissions Data

Museum attendance records were provided by museum staff and compiled by the research team for the study period spanning 2022 through 2025. Admissions data included individual ticket purchases, school group admissions, tour admissions, and youth ticket sales. Across the study period, the museum recorded approximately 49,512 total admissions (adult and youth tickets), representing the primary visitation base used for economic analysis.

Ticket sales were selected as the most conservative estimate of visitation because they reflect documented museum attendance and exclude non-visitor mobile device activity that may be captured in geolocation datasets.

Mobile Location Analytics (Placer.ai)

Third-party mobile location data from Placer.ai were used to evaluate visitation patterns and confirm the geographic reach of the museum as a destination attraction. Placer.ai estimated approximately 53,600 total visits to the museum location between 2022 and 2025. Because mobile data may capture employees, pass-through traffic, repeat visits, and other non-ticketed activity, these figures were not used directly in economic spending calculations.

Instead, Placer.ai data were used to validate the proportion of visitors traveling from outside the local market. Analysis indicated approximately 36,230 unique visits originated from outside Indianola, with approximately 25,280 visitors traveling from more than 50 miles away, demonstrating that the museum attracts a substantial regional and destination visitor market beyond the immediate community.

Analytical Approach

Economic estimates were developed using documented museum admissions combined with visitor spending data collected through surveys. Mobile location analytics were incorporated as a validation tool to confirm visitor origin patterns and support assumptions regarding non-local visitation. This methodology provides a conservative and data-driven estimate of the museum's contribution to tourism-related spending in Indianola, Sunflower County, and the broader Mississippi Delta region.

Economic impact analysis using IMPLAN, an economic input-output database and modeling system (IMPLAN Group, LLC), provides descriptive measures including output, employment, labor income, and value-added for up to 546 industrial sectors in the economy. Total industry output is defined as the value of production by industry per year. Employment represents the total wage and salary of employees plus self-employed jobs in a region for both full-time and part-time workers. Total value added is defined as all income to workers paid by employers, including the value of certain benefits; self-employed net income; interests, rents, royalties, dividends, and profit payments; and excise and sales taxes paid by individuals as collected by businesses.

Multipliers measure the response of the economy to a change in demand or production. A multiplier measures how dollars are reinvested and circulated in a local economy, leading to additional economic activity (Hughes, 2018). Multiplier analysis generally focuses on the effects of external changes on a) the output of the sectors in the economy, b) the income earned by households because of the new outputs, and c) the employment (in physical terms) that is expected to be generated because of the new outputs.

When a particular industry sector is expected to change, increase, or decrease, three types of impacts economy-wide are measured: direct, indirect, and induced effects.

- Direct effects are the immediate effects associated with a change in the final demand for a particular industry.
- Indirect effects are the secondary effects, or production changes in backward-linked industries that provide goods and services.
- Induced effects represent the response by all local industries caused by increased expenditure resulting from new household income and inter-institutional transfers generated from the direct and indirect effects of the change in final demand for a specific industry.

Visitor Profile and Market Analysis

A total of 145 visitor survey responses were collected as part of this study, providing insight into the geographic reach, visitor characteristics, and spending behavior associated with the B.B. King Museum and Delta Interpretive Center. Survey respondents represented a broad geographic distribution, reinforcing the museum's role as both a local cultural institution and a destination attraction with regional, national, and international appeal. Respondents reported originating from communities across Mississippi, neighboring southern states including Tennessee, Louisiana, Arkansas, Alabama, and Texas, as well as more distant domestic markets such as California, New York, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Arizona, Massachusetts, Wisconsin, and Idaho. International visitors were also represented, with respondents from countries including Canada, France, Italy, the United Kingdom, Australia, Austria, Brazil, and Chile.

Visitor group sizes ranged from individual travelers to organized tour groups, though many respondents appeared to travel in small groups such as couples, families, or small travel parties.

Among respondents identifying their primary reason for being in the area, the B.B. King Museum and Delta Interpretive Center was the leading primary travel motivator, with approximately 15% indicating the museum itself as the main purpose of their trip. Additional motivations included touring the Mississippi Blues Trail (9.7%), visiting other cultural attractions (9%), touring the Mississippi Delta (4.8%), and visiting friends and family (4.1%).

Survey responses also demonstrate that the museum serves as a vital component of broader cultural tourism itineraries. Visitors frequently combined museum visits with related heritage attractions including Emmett Till sites, Fannie Lou Hamer destinations, Blues Trail attractions, Memphis music tourism destinations, and regional cultural road trips.

While some survey respondents identified themselves as local residents, those respondents did not report measurable expenditures across the visitor spending categories included in the analysis. As a result, spending averages used in the economic contribution model reflect expenditures attributable to non-local visitors, providing a conservative estimate of tourism-related economic activity generated by the museum.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that the B.B. King Museum and Delta Interpretive Center attracts a geographically diverse visitor market and serves as a major cultural tourism anchor for



the Mississippi Delta, generating visitor activity and spending that extends well beyond the immediate local community.

The survey results indicate that visitors to the B.B. King Museum and Delta Interpretive Center represent a highly desirable cultural tourism market. Respondents were generally well educated, with a substantial proportion reporting completion of a bachelor's degree or graduate-level education. Household income levels were also relatively high, with many respondents reporting annual household income exceeding $50,000 and a significant share reporting incomes above $100,000. These findings suggest that the museum attracts visitors with strong discretionary spending capacity and a demonstrated interest in heritage, cultural, and educational tourism experiences.

The survey further indicates that many visitors travel specifically to experience the cultural resources of the Mississippi Delta. While the museum itself served as the primary travel motivator for many respondents, visitors frequently incorporated the museum into broader cultural itineraries that included Blues Trail attractions, civil rights sites, and other heritage destinations throughout the region. This pattern reinforces the museum's role as a gateway attraction that contributes to visitation throughout the Delta tourism economy.

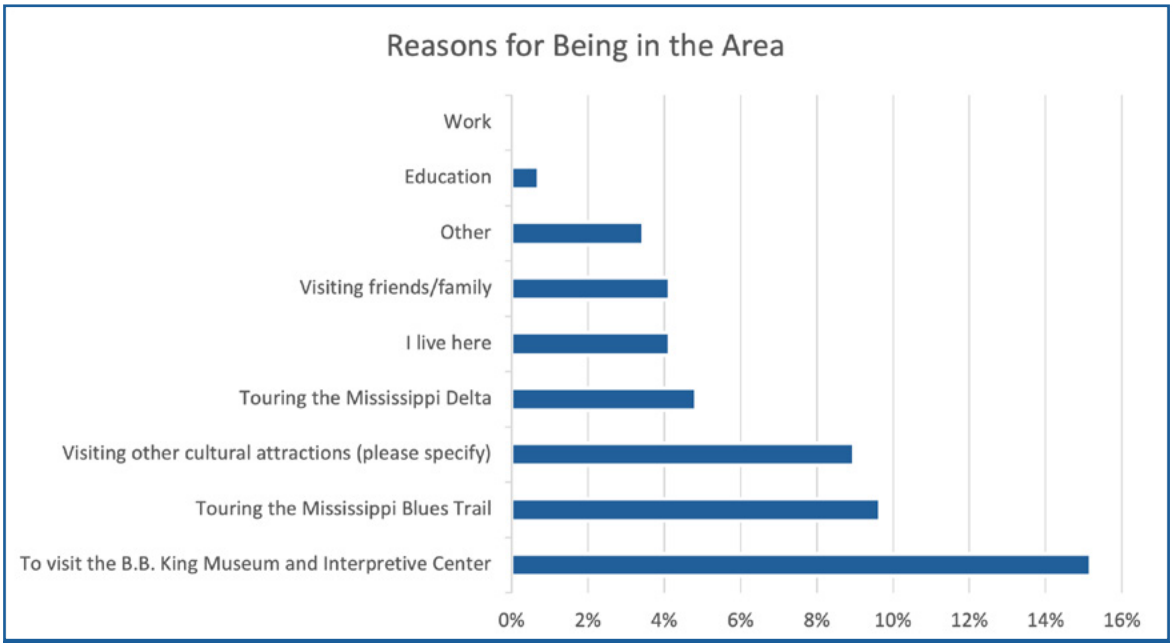


Figure 2. Respondents' reason for being in the area.

Survey responses indicate that the B.B. King Museum and Delta Interpretive Center is a primary travel motivator for many visitors to the Mississippi Delta. The museum itself represented the leading reason respondents visited the area, followed by touring the Mississippi Blues Trail, visiting other cultural attractions, and exploring the broader Delta region. These findings demonstrate that the museum functions as a destination attraction that generates visitation beyond local residents and contributes to broader regional tourism activity.



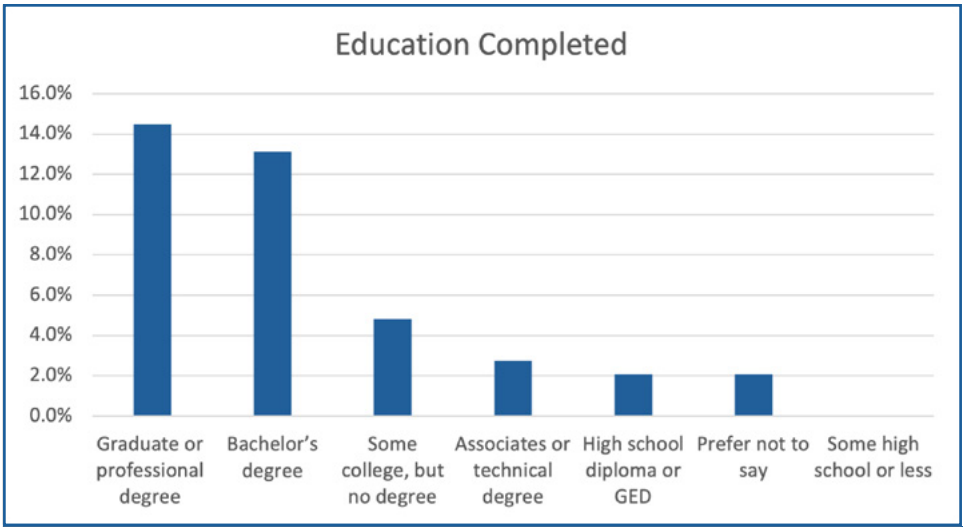


Figure 3. Respondents' education level.

Visitor survey results indicate that museum visitors are highly educated. A majority of respondents reported completing a bachelor's degree or graduate/professional degree. This finding is consistent with national trends in cultural heritage tourism, where visitors often seek educational, historical, and authentic experiences. The educational profile of museum visitors suggests a strong interest in cultural learning and heritage preservation.

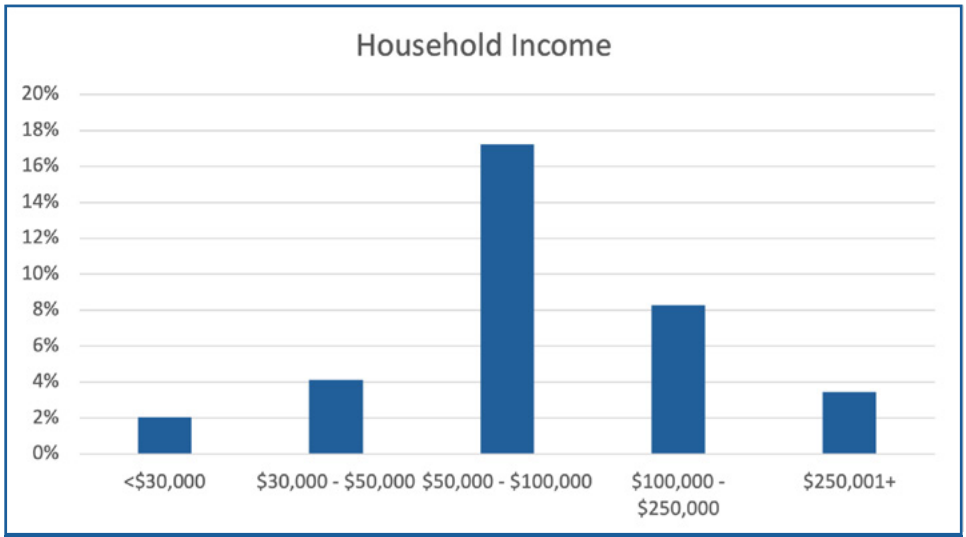


Figure 4. Respondents' household income.

Survey responses indicate that museum visitors generally possess moderate to high household incomes. Many respondents reported annual household income exceeding $50,000, with a substantial share reporting incomes greater than $100,000. These findings suggest that visitors have significant discretionary spending capacity, which supports spending at local restaurants, lodging establishments, retail businesses, and other tourism-related enterprises throughout the region

The results of this study show the museum attracts a geographically diverse, highly educated visitor market.

Visitor Spending Analysis

Visitor spending associated with trips to the B.B. King Museum extends well beyond museum admission fees. Survey responses indicate that visitors spend money on lodging, restaurants, retail purchases, fuel, entertainment, and other travel-related expenses while visiting Indianola and the surrounding region. Because local residents reported little to no measurable spending in the expenditure categories included in the survey, spending estimates used in this analysis primarily reflect expenditures made by non-local visitors and tourists.

Analysis of visitor origin data suggests that approximately 25,280 adult visitors traveled from more than 50 miles away to visit the museum between 2022 and 2025. These visitors represent the primary source of tourism-related economic activity generated by the attraction. An additional estimated 19,288 adult visitors originated from Indianola and surrounding communities, demonstrating the museum's importance as both a regional cultural asset and a destination tourism attraction.

Based on geolocation data and the survey data, it is estimated that 43% to 52% of the visitors to the museum were from outside of 50 miles of Indianola. It is estimated that approximately 25,280 of the adult ticket holders were from outside 50 miles of Indianola. This leaves an estimated 19,288 adults from Indianola and the surrounding area who bought tickets to the museum.

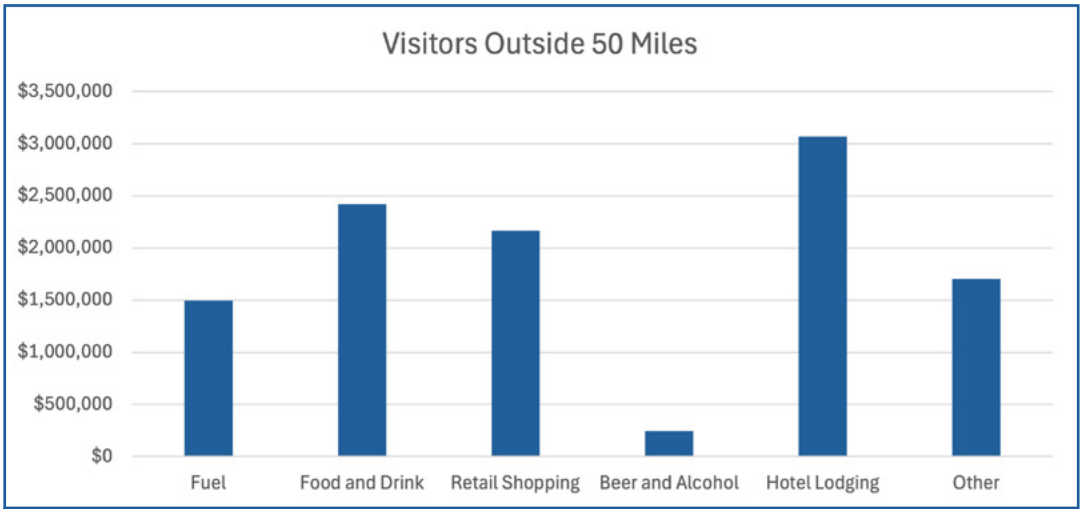


Figure 5. Spending between 2022 and 2025 by visitors who traveled more than 50 miles.

Visitors traveling from outside the local area generated the largest share of tourism spending associated with the museum. Spending by these visitors was concentrated on lodging, food and beverage purchases, retail shopping, transportation, and fuel expenditures. Hotel expenditures represented one of the largest spending categories, demonstrating that many museum visitors contribute to overnight visitation and extended stays within the region. Based on survey responses, approximately 7,836 visitors spent on average 2.8 nights in the region from 2022 to 2025.

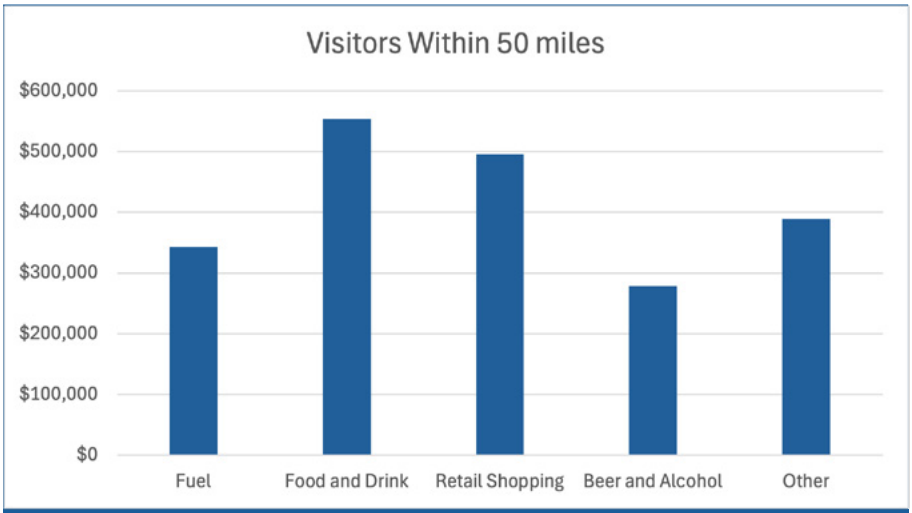


Figure 6. Spending by visitors who traveled less than 50 miles.

Attendance and Revenue Overview

Between 2022 and 2025, the B.B. King Museum and Delta Interpretive Center recorded approximately 49,512 admissions, including individual visitors, group tours, educational groups, and youth admissions. Individual ticket sales accounted for 35,790 admissions, while organized tour admissions accounted for an additional 13,782 visitors. The substantial number of group tour participants highlights the museum's importance to regional and national heritage tourism itineraries and demonstrates its ability to attract organized travel groups to the Mississippi Delta. Based on ticket sales revenue from the museum, it is estimated that individual ticket sales totaled $412,332 and tour ticket sales totaled $139,128. Revenue generated through admissions provides direct support for museum operations while also serving as the catalyst for broader visitor spending throughout the local economy.

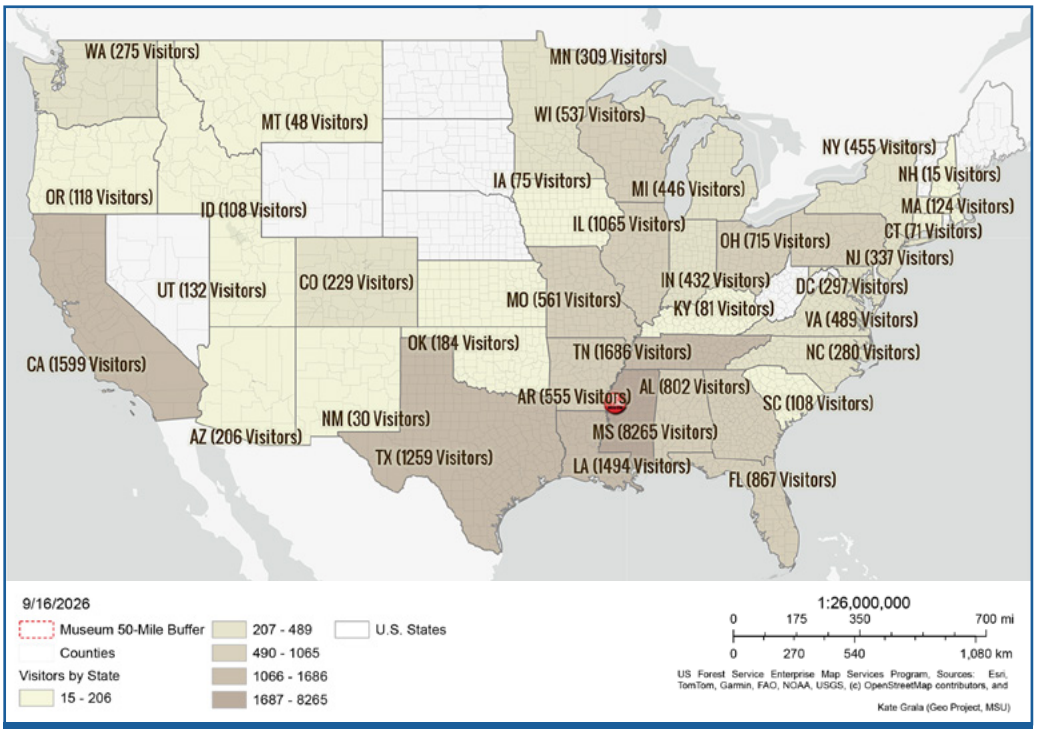


Figure 7. Museum visitors' home states. *Click here for a more detailed view of this map*.

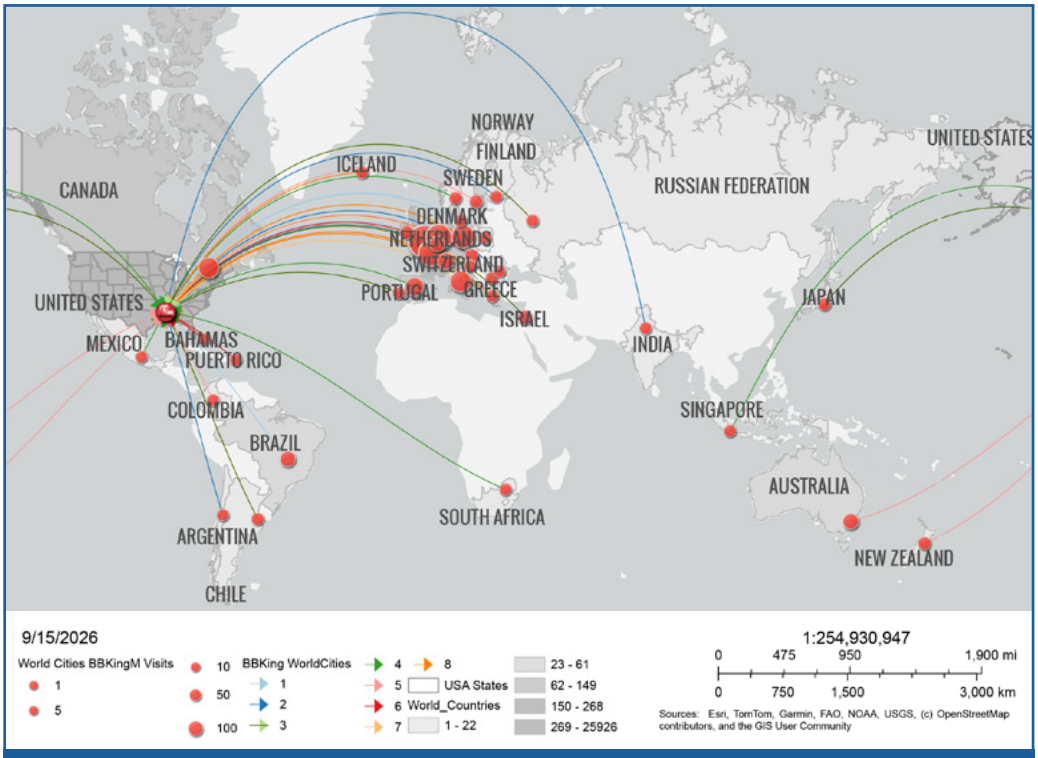


Figure 8. Museum visitors' home countries. *Click here for a more detailed view of this map*.

Economic Analysis

Museum admission revenue generates direct economic activity through museum operations, staffing, programming, and facility maintenance. The analysis indicates that ticket sales alone supported approximately 5.5 full-time equivalent jobs and generated more than $552,902 in economic output. While these contributions are important, they represent only a portion of the museum's overall economic contribution. The largest economic benefits occur when visitors spend money throughout the local economy during their trip.

Table 1. Economic measures and values.

Measure	Value
FTE jobs supported	5.49
Total wages (labor income)	$181,242.39
Added to regional economy (value added)	$222,970.47
Total economic output	$552,902.00

Table 2. Economic contribution of ticket sales.

Contribution Type	Employment (FTE)	Labor Income	Value Added	Output
Direct	4.49	$143,474.16	$158,680.39	$412,332.00
Indirect	0.81	$31,337.49	$47,105.96	$111,987.84
Induced	0.19	$6,430.73	$17,184.12	$28,582.16
Total Impact	**5.49**	**$181,242.39**	**$222,970.47**	**$552,902.00**

Table 3. Economic contribution of visitor spending in the local area.

Impact Category	Jobs	Earnings/Labor Income	Sales/Output	Value Added/GDP
Initial Impact	185	$3,438,704	$158,680.39	$412,332.00
Direct Impact	14	$522,769	$47,105.96	$111,987.84
Indirect Impact	2	$64,957	$163,441	$97,654
Induced Impact	4	$109,540	$270,935	$167,656
Total Impact	**205**	**$4,135,970**	**$12,749,734**	**$7,874,461**

Visitor spending generated by the B.B. King Museum and Delta Interpretive Center produced an estimated $12.75 million in economic output throughout the region and supported approximately 205 jobs. These contributions include direct expenditures made by visitors at local businesses; indirect contributions resulting from business-to-business transactions to purchase raw materials, goods, and services; and induced contributions generated when employees spend earnings within the local economy.

The analysis estimates that visitor spending associated with the museum generated more than $4.1 million in labor income and contributed approximately $7.8 million in value added to the regional economy. These findings demonstrate that the museum functions not only as a cultural institution, but also as a significant economic development asset for Indianola, Sunflower County, and the Mississippi Delta region.

Table 4. Economic impact of ticket sales combined with visitor spending, 2022–2025.

Measure	Ticket Sales Impact	Visitor Spending Impact	Total Impact
Jobs	5.49	205	210.49
Labor Income	$181,242	$4,135,970	$4,317,212
Output	$552,902	$12,749,734	$13,302,636
Value Added	$222,970	$7,874,461	$8,097,431

Between 2022 and 2025, ticket sales combined with visitor spending estimates contributed to an estimated 210 jobs being supported, paying $4.3 million in salaries and wages, in addition to over $8 million in value-added contributions to the regional economy and an output of over **$13 million**.

In summary, for every dollar of contribution, there is an estimated $1.15 returned to the local economy.

Marketing Insights

Marketing results show that social media is the museum's most influential marketing tool, with nearly two-thirds of respondents identifying social media as a source of information about the museum. Special events and organized tours also play important roles in generating visitation, while online search activity continues to contribute to visitor awareness. Traditional advertising channels such as television, radio, newspapers, and magazines appear to play a more limited role in visitor decision-making.

These findings suggest that future marketing investments should prioritize digital engagement strategies, social media content development, and partnerships with group tour operators. Expanding these efforts may increase visitation, strengthen visitor awareness, and further enhance the museum's economic contribution to the region.

Table 5. How respondents heard about the B.B. King Museum and Interpretive Center.

Marketing Source	Percent
Social media	62
Special events	28
Trip part of a tour	25
Online sources	22
Television	6
Radio	6
Magazine	5
Newspaper	6

Summary and Conclusions

- The B.B. King Museum is an influential community anchor institution that draws local, regional, national, and international visitors.
- Between 2022 and 2025, the museum recorded approximately 49,512 admissions and attracted visitors from across the United States and internationally.
- Between 2022 and 2025, the museum was a strong economic driver that supported 210 jobs, paying $4.3 million in salaries and wages, over $8 million in value-added contributions to the regional economy, and over $13 million in output.
- The museum functions as a primary travel motivator, with many visitors reporting that visiting the museum was the main purpose of their trip to the Mississippi Delta. In addition, visitors frequently combined museum visits with other Delta cultural attractions, including Blues Trail sites, civil rights destinations, and heritage tourism experiences.
- Implications for tourism-related activities are that additional impacts could be generated through tourism packages that combine regional attractions or venues such as local restaurants and hotels.

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Appendix

Figure 2 Data Table. Respondents' reason for being in the area.

Reason	Percent of Respondents
To visit the B.B. King Museum and Interpretive Center	15.2
Touring the Mississippi Blues Trail	9.7
Visiting other cultural attractions (please specify)	9.0
Touring the Mississippi Delta	4.8
I live here	4.1
Visiting friends/family	4.1
Other	3.4
Education	0.7
Work	0.0

Figure 3 Data Table. Respondents' education level.

Education Level	Percent of Respondents
Graduate or professional degree	14.5
Bachelor's degree	13.1
Some college, but no degree	4.8
Associates or technical degree	2.8
High school diploma or GED	2.1
Prefer not to say	2.1
Some high school or less	0.0

Figure 4 Data Table. Respondents' household income.

Household Income ($)	Percent of Respondents
Less than 30,000	14.5
30,000–50,000	13.1
50,000–100,000	4.8
100,000–250,000	2.8
250,001 or more	2.1

Figure 5 Data Table. Spending between 2022 and 2025 by visitors who traveled more than 50 miles.

Category	Amount Spent ($)
Fuel	1,496,552
Food and Drink	2,419,258
Retail Shopping	2,163,934
Beer and Alcohol	243,190
Hotel Lodging	3,069,783
Other	1,701,317

Figure 6 Data Table. Spending by visitors who traveled less than 50 miles.

Category	Amount Spent ($)
Fuel	342,562
Food and Drink	553,770
Retail Shopping	495,326
Beer and Alcohol	278,332
Hotel Lodging	0
Other	389,433

Figure 7 Data Table. Museum visitors' home states.

State	Number of Visitors
Mississippi	8265
Tennessee	1686
California	1599
Louisiana	1494
Texas	1259
Illinois	1065
Florida	867
Alabama	802
Ohio	715
Georgia	651
Missouri	561
Arkansas	555
Wisconsin	537
Pennsylvania	534
Virginia	489
New York	455
Michigan	446
Indiana	432
New Jersey	337
Maryland	322
Minnesota	309
Washington, D.C.	297
North Carolina	280
Washington	275
Colorado	229
Arizona	206
Oklahoma	184
Utah	132
Massachusetts	124
Kansas	123
Oregon	118
South Carolina	108
Idaho	108
Kentucky	81
Iowa	75
Connecticut	71
Montana	48
Alaska	42
New Mexico	30
New Hampshire	15

Figure 8 Data Table. Museum visitors' home countries.

Country	Number of Visitors
United Kingdom	268
France	190
Netherlands	182
Germany	149
Italy	122
Canada	114
Spain	90
Switzerland	61
Australia	50
Belgium	49
Brazil	48
Israel	31
Austria	22
Sweden	16
Ireland	16
Japan	11
New Zealand	11
Argentina	8
Norway	8
Denmark	8
Portugal	5
Colombia	4
Puerto Rico	4
Poland	4
Russia	4
Iceland	3
Finland	3
Chile	2
Mexico	2
Greece	2
India	2
The Bahamas	1
Bulgaria	1
Romania	1
Croatia	1
Indonesia	1
South Africa	1



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