

40th Annual NDC Convention Preview

June 16 - 21, 2026 – Louisville, Kentucky

A different kind of horsepower...

For the first time in its 40-year history, the National DeSoto Club's (NDC) annual convention will visit the Commonwealth of Kentucky. As your 2026 convention chairperson, I, Mark Kubancik, together with supporting chapter members from the DeSoto Owners Club of Maryland, want to extend an invitation to you, your family, and your friends to visit the Bluegrass State in June 2026.



Our convention home while in Kentucky is the Holiday Inn Louisville East – Hurstbourne, located at 1325 S Hurstborne Pkwy, Louisville, KY 40222. Like many suitable convention

hotels in larger cities, the Holiday Inn is located on a busy thoroughfare in suburban Louisville. While our driving tours are designed to leave the hustle and bustle of city traffic behind, the hotel does offer the benefit of being close to many dining options, several of which are within easy walking distance. As a bonus, the hotel offers guests free shuttle service within two miles of the hotel location.

We have negotiated a very attractive nightly hotel rate of \$129/night, plus tax, for a single king bed or two queen bed configuration, with a hot breakfast buffet included. Should you wish to extend your stay before or after the convention dates, our special rate is valid for two days prior to or after the convention, with a cancellation policy of 24 hours prior to the reservation (3 pm Eastern Time). The Holiday Inn offers ample on-site parking for both show cars and trucks & trailers. Other amenities include free Wi-Fi throughout the hotel, Keurig coffee makers and mini-refrigerators in every room, indoor swimming pool and fitness area, and outside car cleaning area. A direct link to make reservations at the special NDC rate can be found on the club website: www.desoto.org/events. Alternatively, you can also call the hotel directly at (502) 426-2600 to make your reservation and mention the National DeSoto Club. Book your room early! The cut-off date for reservations with the group rate is May 13, 2026. Note that the hotel can accommodate special need and handicap access room requirements on an as-needed basis. If you encounter any issues related to booking a special need or handicap access room at the special club rate, please contact me.

As a charter member of the NDC, I've had the opportunity to attend many conventions during our club's first 40 years. That includes hosting the 1995 convention in western North Carolina with the assistance of a resourceful group of local members. As the years and conventions have progressed, I've noticed that our conventions don't include as many driving tours as we once did. I've made it a goal to include two days of driving tours at the 40th convention, with tours routing us on two-lane US and Kentucky routes, where you will be able to enjoy Kentucky's beautiful and historic countryside.

Tuesday, June 16th, is early bird registration day, scheduled for the late afternoon; collect your registration packets and get ready for the busy convention days ahead, as we have a full day planned for Wednesday. Dinner is on your own - a reminder that there is a restaurant on the premises and the registration room hours will be posted daily.

Wednesday, June 17th, we will tour east to neighboring Shelby County, Kentucky, approximately 55 miles round trip, where picturesque horse farms and historic towns dominate the bucolic countryside. Our first destination is Kismet Farm in Simpsonville, Kentucky, where we will be treated to an indoor demonstration of the Saddlebred and Morgan show horses raised and trained at the farm (<https://www.facebook.com/p/Kismet-Farm-KY-100088451485900/>).



Our lunch stop, just a few miles east on US-60 in nearby Shelbyville, Kentucky, is Claudia Sanders Dinner House, where we will dine on an all-you-can-eat buffet featuring Claudia's famous fried chicken.

If you're paying attention, you have likely guessed that, yes, there is in fact a connection between Claudia Sanders and that other Kentuckian named Sanders, also famous for fried chicken! Claudia was the Colonel's wife, and both lived on this property after moving to Shelbyville in 1959 (<https://claudiasandersshelbyville.com/>).

Following lunch, we will drive through historic Shelbyville to our final stop on this day's driving tour, Bulleit Distilling Company, for a guided distillery tour. Bulleit, founded in 1987, is one of the fastest-growing whiskeys in America. Have a taste and feel that "Kentucky hug"! Distillery tours are optional, and parts of the tour may be limited to adults only. Attending and sampling is not mandatory; if not to your liking, there are areas to "sit for a spell" and relax or head back to the hotel.



After the distillery tour, we will return to the Holiday Inn to refresh and reconvene. A Wednesday evening social and Italian-themed dinner is

planned at the local KYANA (KentuckyY-indiANA) region AACA clubhouse, a short drive less than five miles from the host hotel. With plenty of asphalt and grass parking, there will be ample room to mix and mingle with local KYANA region members before and after dinner. The local members are encouraged to drive their collector vehicles to share with our club members. With over 350 members, the KYANA Region is one of the largest and most active regions in AACA.

Thursday, June 18th, brings another driving tour, approximately 90 miles round trip, this time heading south through Bullitt County, into Nelson County, passing through his-

toric Bardstown, Kentucky, finally arriving at our destination of the Kentucky Railway Museum (<https://kyrail.org/>) in New Haven. We will travel primarily on two or four-lane US highways, passing through the rural countryside in the heart of Kentucky's Bourbon Trail. Once we arrive in New Haven, we will have a few minutes to explore the small indoor museum and gift shop as well as some of the static train cars on display. We will then board vintage air-conditioned passenger train cars for the short 25-minute ride to nearby Gethsemane, Kentucky, the home of Log Still Distillery (<https://www.logstilldistillery.com/>), one of the newest stops on the Bourbon Trail. Our group will be transported to Log Still's visitor center where we will dine at a hot barbecue meat sampler buffet with sides, salads, and cobbler for dessert. After lunch,



we expect to view a brief presentation on the history of Log Still followed by the opportunity to visit their tasting bar where Log Still products are available for purchase.

When our visit to Log Still has ended, we will again board the vintage train cars and return to the Kentucky Railway Museum. Our expected return time should allow for a leisurely drive back to the hotel, with ample time to stop and visit the shops and museums in historic downtown Bardstown. Back at the host hotel on Thursday evening, members should plan to attend the general membership meeting. Dinner on Thursday evening will be on your own. A possible dinner suggestion: a short two-mile drive from our hotel is the Bristol Bar & Grill restaurant, well known locally for their Kentucky hot brown. What is a hot brown you ask? It is an open-faced sandwich of roast turkey, bacon, and tomato on toast, covered in a creamy Mornay sauce and broiled until bubbly. Invented in 1926 at the Brown Hotel in Louisville, it has since become a regional specialty of the local area. If you go to the Bristol, this night or any other, be sure to order some of their green chili wontons. They are to die for!

Friday, June 19th, should be an especially fun day. Although we are working on a very desirable and fashionable t-shirt design for the 40th convention, let's keep your cool t-shirts pristine for show day and plan to wear your sharp and stylish dress clothes for our visit to historic Churchill Downs. We will be transported from the hotel to Churchill Downs via motor coach and dropped off at the entrance to the world-renowned Kentucky Derby Museum. Consistently ranked as one of the top museums for sports fans, the Kentucky Derby Museum has multiple floors of interactive displays telling the history of the "Greatest Two Minutes In Sports". Included with our museum tour ticket is a group viewing of "The Greatest Race", an 18-minute, 360-degree movie-in-the-round that places visitors at the center of the action on Derby Day. Also included with our tour is a guided tour of the Churchill Downs grandstand, taking you trackside for a close-up view of the historic track.



As if that was not enough, we will then ascend several floors above the famous Churchill Downs home stretch to dine at an all-you-can-eat hot buffet in the air-conditioned comfort of Churchill's Millionaire's Row. Our group will be seated together, with lunch served soon after we arrive. Soft drinks are included with the buffet while a full bar provides alcoholic beverages, including mint juleps, for purchase on your own. Thanks to the fortuitous timing of our convention, the day of our visit to Churchill Downs is a live racing day. Shortly after most have finished lunch, the National Anthem will play, and racing will begin. All lunch attendees receive a copy of the *Daily Racing Form*, allowing you to study the ponies and place your bets live at one of several betting windows, on one of several betting machines, or on your phone via any variety of sports betting apps. If you are a novice at wagering, the *Daily Racing Form* includes an easy-to-understand overview of basic wagering.



Once you hear the familiar bugler's call to post, you can begin staking out your prime spot in the adjacent outdoor grandstands to get a view of the finish line, a view you would have to pay thousands of dollars to see on Derby Day! All lunch guests receive a wristband upon entry, allowing you to venture almost anywhere in the Churchill Downs grandstand area, including the newly redesigned paddock area to view the jockeys mounting their steeds. Dressing to the nines is not mandatory, though it sure does add to the fun and ambiance of our special day at the track!

After a fun day with the ponies, we will return via motor coach to our host hotel in the late afternoon. You will have time to freshen up, grab a quick bite, and attend the Friday night ice cream social, car model contest, clean parts swap, and basket raffle at the host hotel.



Saturday morning, June 20th, brings our 40th annual DeSoto car show. We will return to the KYANA region clubhouse for our car show. KYANA hosts an annual car show on its expansive grass field, easily accommodating over 100 cars. We should have plenty of room for all DeSotos to park on the grass with ample room for spectator daily driver parking in the adjacent asphalt parking lot. The clubhouse is air conditioned with clean indoor restrooms. A lunch crew will be set up selling food and refreshments throughout the day, with air-conditioned table seating for dining.

Saturday evening is reserved for the annual awards banquet at the host hotel, where you have your choice of several plated entrees. This is another time to dress up so that you look sporty when they take your picture winning your best-in-class or best-of-show award! On Sunday morning, we will say our goodbyes until next year, God willing.

As in prior years, we will hold our ever-popular gift basket raffle, so start creating and planning your fun and beautiful baskets now. Volunteers are always welcomed and needed. Cheryl Bianco will be this year's lead volunteer and basket coordinator, so feel free to reach out to her if you are willing to assist (cheche6@me.com).

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The team is working very hard to provide you with an exciting and active convention, so if this sounds like a fun event, we hope y'all are encouraged to attend in person and bring a DeSoto or two. The convention committee has worked hard to manage expenses in an environment of increasing prices, while still offering a variety of fun events to provide you with some local Kentucky flavor. Looking forward to seeing y'all in Louisville, Kentucky!

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2026 NDC convention two-sided t-shirt design