



## **Southern Municipal Leadership Conference**

### **AGENDA OVERVIEW**

Marriott City Center  
121 W Vine St.  
Lexington, Kentucky  
April 22–24, 2026

***Special Thanks to our Event Signature Sponsor, Dinsmore & Shohl, LLP!***



### **Wednesday, April 22, 2026**

#### ***Breakfast on Your Own***

*Note: Breakfast can be purchased in Great Room from 7am – 10am at Marriott City Center*

#### **9:00 AM – 10:15 AM: Registration, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor of Marriott City Center**

#### **11:00 AM – 5:00 PM: Optional Pre-Conference Experience: Maker's Mark and Keeneland**

Enjoy an unforgettable Kentucky experience at Keeneland with an exclusive afternoon in the iconic Stakes Lounge. This refined venue offers sweeping, panoramic views of the historic racetrack and the rolling Bluegrass landscape. Tiered seating and balcony access place you right at the heart of the action, allowing you to take in the full thrill and tradition of live racing.

As a special highlight to kick off the day at Keeneland, we will meet Kentucky legend Bill Samuels, Jr. of Maker's Mark for an engaging conversation about the storied craft and heritage of Maker's Mark bourbon making. His insights and behind-the-scenes stories offer an intimate look into one of Kentucky's most beloved traditions.

**Transportation:**

*Complimentary bus service will be provided to and from Keeneland.*

*The bus will depart from the hotel at **10:15 AM on Wednesday morning.***

**5:00 PM – 6:00 PM: Registration, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor of Marriott City Center**

**5:30 PM – 7:30 PM: Welcome Reception, Grand Ballroom, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor of Marriott City Center**

***Dinner on Your Own***

**Thursday, April 23, 2026**

*Important note: Bus transportation will be provided for delegates throughout the day, as well as for dinner. A portion of the tours are outdoors; please dress for the weather and wear comfortable shoes.*

**7:30 AM – 8:15 AM: Breakfast, Grand Ballroom, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor of Marriott City Center**

**8:15 AM – 9:00 AM: Travel to Woodford Reserve Distillery, 7785 McCracken Pike, Versailles, KY 40383**

**9:00 AM – 10:30 AM: Woodford Reserve Distillery Tour & Tasting Experience**

Discover the craftsmanship, history, and signature flavor of Woodford Reserve during this guided distillery tour. We will explore the full journey of bourbon making as we walk through all five sources of flavor, from grain to glass, at Woodford's historic distillery site. Our visit will conclude with a curated tasting of Woodford Reserve's award-winning craft bourbons and whiskies, offering a true appreciation of the Woodford Reserve difference.

**Optional Thursday Morning Alternative Experience**

For attendees who prefer not to participate in the Woodford Reserve Distillery Tour on Thursday morning, we are pleased to offer a limited alternative visit to Mill Ridge Farm, one of Kentucky's premier Thoroughbred broodmare operations. This guided experience will provide a behind-the-scenes look at a working horse farm in the heart of the Bluegrass, including the opportunity to see broodmares and young foals while learning about the care, breeding, and legacy behind some of racing's most accomplished bloodlines.

Space is limited. If you would like to take part in this special Mill Ridge Farm experience, please email Amy (astout@klc.org) directly to reserve your spot.

**10:30 AM – 11:15 AM: Travel to Versailles Market & Entertainment District, 105 Rose Hill Ave., Versailles, KY 40383**

**11:30 AM – 1:00 PM: Lunch and Presentation from Horse Country, Inc.**

In this session, Hallie Hardy, Executive Director of Horse Country, Inc., shares insight into the organization's work connecting people to the heart of Kentucky's equine industry. As a not-for-profit dedicated to providing authentic, behind-the-scenes experiences, Horse Country opens access to some of the region's most renowned farms and equine facilities.

This conversation will highlight the organization's mission to inspire a lifelong appreciation for horses, the caretakers who devote themselves to their well-being, and the unique land that supports them. She also explores how Horse Country's concierge-style approach pairs visitors with working horse farms and equine businesses throughout Central Kentucky, offering meaningful, educational, and memorable encounters with the industry.

**1:00 PM – 1:30 PM: Travel to Ashford Stud, 5095 Frankfort Rd, Versailles, KY 40383**

**1:30 PM – 2:30 PM: Visit with Coolmore America – Home of Champions**

Coolmore America, located at the historic Ashford Stud in the heart of Kentucky's Bluegrass region, is one of the leading Thoroughbred breeding operations in North America. The farm is renowned for its world-class stallion roster, which includes some of the most celebrated names in modern racing history, including legendary champion, Triple Crown and Breeders' Cup Classic winner, American Pharoah.

**2:30 PM – 3:00 PM: Travel Back to Marriott City Center**

**3:00 PM – 4:00 PM: State Reports, Grand Ballroom, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor of Marriott City Center**

**4:00 PM – 6:00 PM: Break**

**6:00 PM – 6:30 PM: Travel to The Kentucky Castle, 230 Pisgah Pike, Versailles, KY 40383**

**6:30 PM – 8:30 PM: Dinner at The Kentucky Castle**

Delegates will enjoy an elegant dinner at The Kentucky Castle featuring a multi-course menu thoughtfully paired with select Kentucky bourbons. This special experience will include refined regional cuisine, curated bourbon pairings, and the unique atmosphere of one of the Commonwealth's most iconic venues.

**Friday, April 24, 2026**

**8:00 AM – 9:00 AM: SMC Board Meeting over Breakfast Grand Ballroom, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor of Marriott City Center**

**9:00 AM – 12:00 PM: State Reports continued, Grand Ballroom, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor of Marriott City Center**

**12:00 PM: Dismissal**