

Johnson City is called the "*Sports Capital of the Mid- South*" because few cities if any, can offer such a high quality and variety of recreational opportunities. Johnson City has been recognized as one of the "*100 Best USA Summer Vacations*" by *Vacations Magazine*. In the article, our area is described as being "in the heart of Northeast Tennessee, the oldest part of the state and an area brimming with early American history". Also mentioned are the city's scenic beauty, the nearby Appalachian Trail and activities such as camping, hiking, fishing and white-water rafting. Clubs such as the *Johnson City Hiking Club* are available for nearly any conceivable outdoors interest and enthusiast.

Johnson City is home to the **Johnson City Area Arts Council**, which provides support to local artists through grants funded by the State, the community and through public funds. Jonesborough is home to the Northeast Tennessee Tourism Council. The Council is active in attracting both the tourist and touring entertainment groups to the area.

Each year, Johnson City Parks and Recreation meets more than one million recreational needs of the community. Coordination of league sports is a highly visible aspect of the program, including softball, swimming, soccer, tennis, basketball, volleyball and baseball. In addition to the athletic programs, Parks & Recreation offer summer playground and after school programs, fitness classes, special activities and events, instructional classes, picnic pavilions, and the maintenance and beautification of 20 parks and six recreation centers.

WATER SPORTS: There are more than a dozen varieties of game fish, including largemouth and smallmouth bass and walleye, in the waters that lie close to Johnson City. The area has a nationwide reputation for good fishing, through articles in outdoor magazines from fisherman throughout the eastern United States. Trout fisherman love the mountain streams, most of which are stocked by the State Game and Fish Commission. They are located in beautiful settings in four nearby wildlife-management areas. Boating and water-skiing enthusiasts head for the four **Tennessee Valley Authority** lakes that lie within minutes of Johnson City. There are five other lakes within a 45-minute drive. Several fishing tournaments are held on the TVA lakes throughout the year. The Freedom Hall Civic Center complex includes a variety of aquatics programs for all ages.

HUNTING: Hunters stalk game in the nearby mountains, ranging from rabbit to wild boar, bear and deer. There are liberal hunting seasons and limits on large and small games. Generally, the season opens September 1st for squirrels and doves, and closes with the end of the grouse season on the last day of February.

SNOWSKIING: Skiing has become the area's main winter-sports attraction. Though once not believed possible in the South, the Johnson City area now has several ski lodges, ski lifts and snowmaking equipment. Within 30 – 40 miles of Johnson City are numerous ski resorts in Western North Carolina, with incredible scenic views from higher elevations.

GOLF: Golf is a year-round pastime at three 18-hole city courses and one driving range. Numerous outstanding 18-hole courses are located in the area, and the Johnson City MSA region has been recently recognized by *Golf Digest* as the second best location in the nation for golf.

SPORTS: Johnson City is represented in the **Appalachian Baseball League** by a farm club of the St. Louis Cardinals. Three collegiate teams participate year round in intercollegiate sports programs of various conferences. East Tennessee State University is home to the nationally ranked Buccaneer Men's Basketball Team. The team won the 1989, 1990, 1991 and 1992 Southern Conference titles and has been a frequent NCAA tournament participant, currently competing in the **Atlantic Sun Conference**. A highly active high school athletic program, and the Boys and Girls Clubs are other centers of youth activity.

THEATRE: The **Johnson City Community Theatre** has had its own playhouse since 1959, and offer plays and musicals presented by talented non-professionals. The Jonesborough Repertory Theatre offers drama classes and an active year-round schedule of performances. The Barter Theatre, located in nearby Abingdon, Virginia, is recognized as the State Theatre of Virginia and offers exceptional entertainment.

SYMPHONY: The 70-piece **Johnson City Symphony Orchestra** frequently features touring artists and has an active concert schedule. The Inter-City Ballet Guild, formed in 1975, is designed to promote and encourage ballet and dance in the community.

ENTERTAINMENT CENTERS: The 7,000 seat arena-style **Freedom Hall Civic Center** is one of Johnson City's biggest attractions. It serves as a center for entertainment, cultural and educational activities and conventions. Over 50 public events are usually held at Freedom Hall during a year and attended by more than 200,000 patrons. Among some of the highlights have been the National AAU Girls Basketball Tournament; the Atlantic Coast Conference Basketball Tournaments and a host of other regional events and national events. Elvis Presley as well as many top entertainers have performed at Freedom Hall.

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East Tennessee State University's Memorial Center has 12,000 comfortable seats, each with an unimpeded view of the action. The "mini-dome" is climate controlled...designed for fan comfort. The Center has a tartan basketball floor, with two auxiliary floors, a six-lane 16-mile tartan track, six handball courts, six tennis courts, a volleyball court, rifle range and a physical education laboratory.

MOVIES: Theaters with fourteen screens are located in Johnson City.

PARKS: The City's Parks and Recreation Department has six recreation centers and pavilions available seating room 20-125 people. Parks and Recreation also has 20 playgrounds and parks. There are 20 modern tennis courts; 141 adult and 24 Little League, 16 Pony Colt softball and baseball teams; 80 adult and youth basketball teams and 44 soccer teams. Two municipal (one indoor) swimming pools are also available. There are two roller skating rinks and two bowling centers. Winged Deer Park, featuring four softball fields, four soccer fields and two miles of paved walking trails, is one of the premiere municipal parks in Tennessee. It is the site of major soccer tournaments, at least 15 softball tournaments and St. Jude's Bike-A-Thon, among others. Buffalo Mountain Park is a developed nature preserve, featuring 14 miles of hiking trails, panoramic views of the Johnson City area, and picnic sites. Numerous neighborhood parks also provide a wide range of amenities.

ARTS: **Princeton Arts Center**, a center for the study and exhibition of visual arts, is a theatrical and musical workshop. Each month, the center exhibits the work of a local or a touring artist. The center offers free and paid classes to children and adults, including classes in watercolor, oil and sketching.

CRAFTS: Mountain crafts abound in our area. Craft sales and exhibits are presented throughout the area on a continual basis, including festivals, bazaars, shows and fairs.

SENIOR CITIZENS: In 1974 Johnson City dedicated its Senior Citizen Center, the first in Tennessee to be built specifically to serve the needs of senior citizens. Recreational and social activities abound at the Center and membership is free and open to any Johnson Citizen 50 years of age and older. Free transportation is provided. Plans are underway for a new comprehensive senior center to serve the "Baby Boom" generation of seniors.

LIBRARIES: The **Johnson City Public Library** houses over 65,000 volumes ranging from children's fiction to technical books. The library also houses compact disks, audiocassettes, periodicals, videocassettes, and children's videos. The **Sherrod Library** at East Tennessee State University and other on-campus libraries house a collection of more than 800,000 print volumes, plus extensive holdings of microforms, audiovisual media, maps, and government documents.

MUSEUMS: The Carroll Reece Museum, on the campus of ETSU, hosts a number of traveling exhibits throughout the year, including "Tennessee Scenes by Tennessee Artists". Tennessee's top children's' museum, the **Hands On! Museum** located in downtown Johnson City is an incredible affordable experience for the whole family.

TOURS: Several organized tours and excursions are available. Examples include the Living History tour at Rocky Mount Historic Site; National Fish Hatchery tour, train excursions through Northeast Tennessee and Southwest Virginia and the Christmas Progressive Dinner and Tour of Homes in Jonesborough.

LECTURES/SEMINARS: Lecture series are sponsored by the local colleges and universities throughout the year. The public is invited to attend. Several civic and educational groups sponsor a variety of seminars in Johnson City.

HISTORICAL SITES: Historical points of interest near Johnson City are: **Jonesborough** - a mirror of pioneer American History, the first town established in Tennessee and the first historical district established in the State that houses the **International Storytelling Center**; **Sycamore Shoals** - site of the first permanent settlement and seat of the first free government in America; **Rocky Mount** - site of First Capitol of Southwest territory, complete with restored buildings. **Limestone** - site of Davy Crockett's birthplace; **Johnson City** - **Tipton-Haynes State Historic Site**, featuring the Battle of the Lost State of Franklin as well as the home of Confederate Senator Landon C. Haynes; and the **National Soldiers Home** (current College of Medicine/Veterans Administration campus) that housed one of the premiere original facilities in the U.S. for veterans health care - being originally designed for Civil War veterans.