

## Restaurant Growth Index

**T**HE SOUTH TODAY IS A MIX OF SLEEPY traditionalism and contemporary development. Look at the cities that landed in this year's RGI Top 10 ranking: Myrtle Beach, South Carolina; the Fort Walton Beach-Crestview-Destin, Florida, metro area; Owensboro, Kentucky; and Valdosta, Georgia. None would likely be top-of-mind as hotbeds of opportunity, yet all hint that there's more to the South than meets the eye.

Topping the list, Myrtle Beach sits on The Grand Strand, a 60-mile stretch of beach that runs from Georgetown, South Carolina, to the North Carolina border. It's a fast-growing tourism draw that's about to get bigger thanks to \$15 million earmarked for promotion. Add to

that the new 140-acre, \$400-million Hard Rock Park, the "world's first rock 'n' roll theme park," scheduled to open next spring.



Owensboro, on the Ohio River 100 miles West of Louisville, is also gearing up for development. Underway is a \$40-million riverfront development with a marina and river walk; a \$400-million medical center; and the \$390-million Gateway Commons, with a hotel, convention center and arena.



# THE SOUTH HAS RISEN

Missouri's marquee cities, Kansas City and St. Louis, are also buzzing. In Kansas City, a new \$850-million downtown dining, arts and entertainment district is set to debut next spring. Dubbed the Power & Light District, it links the convention center and new Sprint Center arena, and anchors \$3.5 billion of development downtown. Among the restaurants that have signed leases in the new district are Gordon Biersch Brewery Restaurant, Famous Dave's Bar-B-Que and Chipotle Mexican Grill.

Over in St. Louis, more than \$4 billion has gone into revitalizing downtown with condo and loft development and attractions like The Loop, a six-block area of boutiques, restaurants, galleries and live entertainment venues.

Fast-tracking Orlando seems to have taken a page from Vegas' playbook, diversifying to attract a broader base of tourists and businesses. Still further South, in downtown Miami, more than 20,000

residential units are being constructed, and downtown will soon be home to more than 1.5 million square feet of high-end retail and entertainment venues. —DANA TANYERI



## South

	RGI	RGI Rank	Population	Income per capita	Restaurant sales	Sales per capita	Sales as % of income	Total restaurants	Sales per restaurant
<b>Kentucky</b>									
Bowling Green	173	33	113,371	\$22,306	\$213,411,002	\$1,882	8.44%	234	\$912,013
Elizabethtown	137	71	111,845	\$21,761	\$184,599,988	\$1,650	7.58%	192	\$961,458
Lexington-Fayette	141	65	436,661	\$26,302	\$805,984,929	\$1,846	7.02%	908	\$887,649
Louisville-Jefferson County (includes IN)	97	177	1,222,071	\$25,714	\$1,847,687,913	\$1,512	5.88%	2,458	\$751,704
Owensboro	300	7	112,263	\$21,667	\$273,892,994	\$2,440	11.25%	188	\$1,456,878
<b>STATE TOTAL</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>4,215,340</b>	<b>\$21,952</b>	<b>\$5,730,549,859</b>	<b>\$1,359</b>	<b>6.19%</b>	<b>7,474</b>	<b>\$766,731</b>