

Branson Community Summary

Taney County

Branson

The year 1903 welcomed the beginning of tourism in Branson, MO, thanks to a book titled “The Shepherd of the Hills.” It was an immediate hit and people began traveling to the area to experience the setting of the story. When the Missouri-Pacific railroad was built to run through the area, Branson became a thriving community, leading to the formation of Lake Taneycomo and Table Rock Lake.¹ Branson is no longer just a hot spot for fishing and hunting, it has grown into a major tourist destination featuring 50 theaters, museums, 200 shops, golf courses, and 35,000 restaurant seats. In the last century Branson has prospered with a regular population of about 10,500 people, but annually hosting around 8-9 million tourists. Hosting 100,000 tourists a day during its peak, the big appeal of Branson is its small-town feel with the amenities of a much larger destination.²

Stone County

Galena

Galena is the seat of Stone County and lies in the heart of Ozark Mountain country. Though the population is small with roughly 440 people, Galena lies just minutes from Silver Dollar City, Table Rock Lake, and other Branson attractions. Galena is a perfect place for fishing, hunting, and camping as it lies along the James River and occasionally offers the sight of the American Bald Eagle. Galena offers a historic courthouse and bridge—both of which are featured on the National Register of Historic Places.³ Though Galena is small, its proximity to Branson and Springfield is ideal for those interested in living away from the hustle and bustle, while still having access to amenities found only in those more populated destinations.

Carroll County

Eureka Springs

Eureka Springs has been a popular vacation destination since the 1800’s, known early on for its healing waters, Victorian architecture, and as a haven for various artists. In fact, Eureka Springs is often

¹ Branson Chamber of Commerce, <http://www.bransonchamber.com/about-branson/>

² Official Branson.com Website, <http://www.branson.com/learn/general-branson-info/branson-facts/>

³ Galena Area Chamber of Commerce, <http://www.galenamo.com/>

honored as one of the top 25 Art Destinations, welcoming art lovers from all over the county. Besides art, visitors have a multitude of alternative attractions to enjoy such as the Turpentine Creek Wildlife Refuge, Opera at the Ozarks, caves, festivals, and parades. Like other area towns, Eureka Springs offers a diverse number of outdoor activities ranging from horseback riding to bicycling to boating. Eureka Springs is also home to many award-winning restaurants and has the distinct honor of being called the Wedding Capital of the South.⁴

Berryville

Berryville sits in the center of Carroll County. Berryville is located in the Ozark Mountains of Northwest Arkansas close to both tourist towns of Branson, MO and Eureka Springs, AR. Saunders Museum is also located in Berryville and is internationally known for having an extensive historic gun collection from the frontier period.

Boone County

Harrison

Harrison has a unique past featuring many Native American tribes settling in the area. With so many tribes vying for space and resources, war eventually ensued. By the 1830's tribes were relocated to Oklahoma and French trappers settled the area around the White River. From there, agriculture and manufacturing became popular leading to Harrison's growth as a community. Harrison is home to many outdoor attractions, most prominently the river that lies just to the south. Just a few decades ago, President Nixon signed into law the Buffalo National River as the first National River in the United States.⁵ With these features, Harrison is hailed as one of the "Best Small Towns in America", featuring limestone bluffs and tranquil scenery offering prime spots for canoeing and fishing. Harrison has also been featured in Where to Retire Magazine, because it offers a low cost of living and a small-town atmosphere with local restaurants, shops, and wide-open spaces perfect for those looking for a quiet, relaxed lifestyle.⁶

⁴ The Greater Eureka Springs Chamber of Commerce, <http://www.eurekaspringschamber.com/>

⁵ Harrison Convention & Visitors Bureau, http://www.harrisonarkansas.org/c_upe_view.php?id=20

⁶ Harrison Arkansas, <http://www.cityofharrison.com/>