

Cullman Christkindlmarkt Named Alabama's 2026 Event of the Year

State tourism leaders recognize the downtown holiday festival for its community impact, economic momentum, and growing role in Alabama's visitor economy.

CULLMAN, AL, UNITED STATES, May 27, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The [Cullman Christkindlmarkt](#) has been selected as the 2026 Event of the Year by the Alabama Tourism Department, recognizing the festival's sustained impact on tourism, community engagement, and economic development across the state.



The magic of the Cullman Christkindlmarkt begins at the 20205 Parade and Tree Lighting.

What began as an effort to create a meaningful holiday celebration for the Cullman community has grown into one of the Southeast's premier Christmas destinations. Held annually in downtown Cullman, the Christkindlmarkt blends German-inspired traditions with family-friendly attractions, artisan

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vendors, live entertainment, regional cuisine, and immersive holiday experiences — drawing visitors from across the country while remaining firmly rooted in the local community.

Since launching in its full-scale format, the market has welcomed hundreds of thousands of guests and generated significant economic activity for Cullman's downtown businesses, hotels, restaurants, and retailers. At the same time, it has become a cherished annual tradition for families across the region.

Third-party visitor analytics from the 2025 season further demonstrated the festival's expanding reach. Placer.ai data captured guests traveling to Cullman from all 50 states, with approximately

60,000 of those in attendance originating outside Alabama. Strong visitor representation came from Tennessee, Mississippi, Georgia, and Florida, with notable draw from the Nashville, Birmingham, Huntsville, and Atlanta metro areas.

Nathan Anderson, Executive Director of Cullman Parks, Recreation & Sports Tourism, said the recognition reflects years of intentional planning and a steady focus on serving both the community and the broader region.

“The Cullman Christkindlmarkt was built first and foremost to create a special experience for our community during the holiday season. What makes this recognition so meaningful is that while the event has grown into a major tourism destination, it has never lost sight of its purpose — bringing people together, celebrating traditions, and creating memories for families here in Cullman. We are incredibly honored to receive this recognition from the Alabama Tourism Department.” — Nathan Anderson, Executive Director, Cullman Parks, Recreation & Sports Tourism.

Cullman Mayor Woody Jacobs said the award reflects the momentum and community pride shaping Cullman’s growing reputation as a destination city.

“The Christkindlmarkt has become a source of pride for our entire community. It creates lasting memories for families and visitors, and it puts the hospitality, character, and energy of Cullman on full display. We are honored to see the work of so many people recognized at the state level.” — Woody Jacobs, Mayor, City of Cullman.

Harmony Heard, Executive Director of the Cullman Area Tourism Bureau, pointed to the festival’s expanding tourism reach and its role as a gateway to the rest of the city’s offerings. “The Cullman Christkindlmarkt has significantly elevated Cullman’s visibility as a tourism destination. Each year, we



Christkindlmarkt Visitors shop and talk with vendors down a cozy market alley.



The largest Schwibbogen on Earth welcomes guests to the Cullman Christkindlmarkt.

welcome guests from across Alabama and far beyond who come for the market and stay to discover our shops, restaurants, hotels, and attractions. The impact of this event extends well beyond the festival grounds, and this recognition is incredibly well deserved.” — Harmony Heard, Executive Director, Cullman Area Tourism Bureau.

Park Board Chairman Rusty Turner said the award belongs to everyone who has contributed to the festival, past and present. “This award represents the vision and hard work of a tremendous number of people who have invested time, creativity, and energy into the Christkindlmarkt. From our staff and volunteers to our sponsors, vendors, community partners, and leadership both past and present, this has truly been a collective effort. We are proud to see Cullman recognized at the state level for an event that has become such a meaningful part of the holiday season.” — Rusty Turner, Chairman, Cullman Park Board.

The Alabama Tourism Department Event of the Year will be formally presented on Monday, July 13, 2026, during the Alabama Governor’s Conference on Tourism at the Renaissance Shoals Resort and Spa in Florence, Alabama.

Event Cullman Christkindlmarkt

Location: Depot Park, Downtown Cullman, Alabama

Season: Late November through December, annually

Attendance: 415,000 Guests

Visitor reach: All 50 states represented in 2025; with more than 60,000 guest visiting from outside the state of Alabama (Placer.ai)

Top regional markets: Cullman, Huntsville, Birmingham, and Decatur metros; Nashville, Franklin, and Atlanta among leading out-of-state origins

Signature elements: German-inspired holiday market, German-themed merchants, family entertainment such as Santa’s Workshop, Musical Performances, Ice Skating and Giant Observation Wheel, regional cuisine, and immersive seasonal experiences

Economic impact: Significant activity for downtown retailers, restaurants, hotels, and small businesses

Recognition: 2026 Alabama Tourism Department Event of the Year

Award presentation: Monday, July 13, 2026 — Alabama Governor’s Conference on Tourism, Renaissance Shoals Resort and Spa, Florence, Alabama

About Cullman Parks, Recreation & Sports Tourism

Cullman Parks, Recreation & Sports Tourism (CPRST) operates the parks, recreation programs, athletic facilities, and signature events for the City of Cullman, Alabama. CPRST is the first CAPRA-accredited agency in Alabama and the only agency in state history to earn the National Recreation and Park Association’s [National Gold Medal](#). Its portfolio includes Cullman WildWater, the OmniSports District, Cross Creek Golf Course, Terri Pines, the Cullman Wellness & Aquatic Center, Palomino RV Resort, and the Cullman County Museum, along with signature festivals including the Cullman Christkindlmarkt, [Cullman Oktoberfest](#), and the Alabama Strawberry Festival.

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