

# Another Big Year for Bluegrass in Raleigh

## Huge Annual Celebration Continues Through 2021

**T**his year, again, the entire World of Bluegrass was literally and figuratively in Raleigh in late September.

And, again, it was wildly successful.

The International Bluegrass Music Association, the Nashville-based nonprofit professional organization for the global bluegrass community, and its Raleigh partners - The Greater Raleigh Convention and Visitors Bureau, Pinecone - The Piedmont Council of Traditional Music, and the Raleigh Convention Center - once more combined for downtown Raleigh's largest annual event.

World of Bluegrass, a gathering that consists of a business conference, showcases, awards show, and the largest urban bluegrass festival in the world, has steadily grown in scope since moving to North Carolina. And 2018 was no different, attracting 223,320 people and generating an estimated \$12.7 million in direct economic impact, according to Visit Raleigh.

"This year's IBMA World of Bluegrass was another incredible week filled with music, energy and generosity everywhere you turned in downtown Raleigh. We are delighted to see greater numbers of young musicians and fans taking part among the record number of people in attendance overall," said IBMA Executive Director Paul Schiminger.

*2018 was the final year for the Sir Walter Raleigh Banjostand at the World of Bluegrass. The iconic symbol for years at the event will be reconfigured and put on permanent display inside the Raleigh Convention Center.*

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**WILLIAM LEWIS**  
Pinecone Executive Director

With the 2018 figures, Visit Raleigh estimates more than \$51 million in direct visitor spending to the greater Raleigh area annually, and drawing more than 1 million total attendees since moving from Nashville to the City of Oaks in 2013. And those numbers will continue to increase further, since the agreement for the event to stay in Raleigh continues through 2021.

"We couldn't be more excited to hold IBMA's World of Bluegrass in Raleigh through 2021. We continue to find new ways to celebrate bluegrass music we didn't know were possible until being embraced by this community," said Schiminger. "World of Bluegrass is our genre's biggest annual event, where we help our professionals connect and learn, where we shine a bright light on our best, and where we share our great music with so many new and lifelong fans! Our deepest gratitude goes out to the City of Raleigh, Mayor McFarlane, the City Council, the Local Organizing Committee and Pinecone, along with Wake County and its Commission, and to the people of Raleigh for the exuberant welcome we have received here."

And the community has embraced IBMA and bluegrass and looks forward

*An estimated crowd of more than 200,000 attended the 2018 World of Bluegrass this year in downtown Raleigh*

to the whole week of events each year, no doubt contributing to Raleigh's growing reputation as a leading live music destination here in the Southeast, said William Lewis, executive director of the Raleigh-based non-profit Pinecone, co-chair of the Local Organizing Committee, and IBMA Board Member. "Thousands of visitors from all over the world come to Raleigh for this event and take home lasting memories from their experiences here each year," he said. "IBMA members call World of Bluegrass a 'homecoming', and we're glad they all consider Raleigh a second home."

*More information about World of Bluegrass and the Wide Open Festival is available by visiting [ibma.org](http://ibma.org) or [pinecone.org](http://pinecone.org).*



IBMA 2018 Emerging Artist of the Year, the Po' Ramblin' Boys

Left: Pinecone – The Piedmont Council of Traditional Music – exhibiting in the Raleigh Convention Center

Below: 919 Magazine again sponsored the World of Bluegrass Youth Stage, located at the entrance to the Raleigh Convention Center. Crowds at the stage have grown significantly each year of the festival.

