Branson, Missouri, is located on the White River/Lake Taneycomo in the Ozark Mountains. The city was named for Rueben Branson, who opened a general store that became the post office in 1882. The discovery of Marvel Cave, which was described in Scientific American in 1885 and in the 1907 publication of The Shepherd of the Hills, led to an influx of visitors. Branson was incorporated as a town in 1912.

Among Branson’s many museums is the Branson Centennial Museum, which opened in 2012 to share the history of the region in rotating displays that include early history, the White River, roots of tourism, schools, conflicts, and interesting local people. The Branson Dinosaur Museum displays various dinosaurs constructed in great detail by paleoartists. The interactive Titanic Museum Attraction shares the stories of those who were onboard the tragic ocean voyage and also displays authentic artifacts. The Ralph Foster Museum, on the campus of the College of the Ozarks, houses a collection of artifacts, most of which have some tie to the Branson region, and a display of Rose O’Neill’s world-famous Kewpie Dolls. The Veterans Memorial Museum–Branson is a tribute to the men and women who bravely served our country in WWII, WWI, Korea, Vietnam, the Persian Gulf, and more recent conflicts. Branson Auto & Farm Museum displays more than 100 cars and antique tractors. The World’s Largest Toy Museum Complex consists of 6 museums: World’s Largest Toy Museum, Harold Bell Wright Museum, National BB Gun Museum, Steamy Bear Museum, World of Checkers Museum, and the Paul Harvey Jr. Museum. Other museums include the Hollywood Wax Museum and Ripley’s Believe It Or Not!

Hollywood Wax Museum and Ripley’s Believe It Or Not!.

The Shepherd of the Hills Historic Homestead is the site where Harold Bell Wright, the author of the popular novel, compiled his notes for his book. The Homestead is also the location for a nighttime live reenactment of the famous historical novel, the Inspiration Tower, the Vigilante Extreme ZipRider, and opportunities for horseback and all-terrain vehicle rides. With more than 50 theaters on or near Highway 76, also known as the Strip, Branson offers a variety of performances. Originally a home to country music, the theaters along the Strip now present diverse entertainment, including music in all genres as well as dramas, dance performances, magic shows, acrobatic performances, and comedy shows. Also along the Strip are Silver Dollar City, an 1800s-themed amusement park with live music; the landmark Marvel Cave located beneath Silver Dollar City; and Dolly Parton’s Stampede, a Wild West-style dinner theater.

**Neighborhoods**

**Historic Downtown Branson** is primarily a shopping district.

Lakewood Estates is among Branson’s residential neighborhoods and is close to downtown Branson, Cox Medical Center Branson, and the Branson Landing. Many of the homes and condominiums in this subdivision are ranch-style and are surrounded by large trees. Lakeshore Terrace is an established subdivision near the hospital and features 1960s-style cottages, 1970s-style ranches, and contemporary custom homes built in the 1980s and 1990s. Larger cottages and ranch-style homes are found in the Hideaway Hills neighborhood. Country Bluff Estates offers Colonial two-story homes along with traditional ranchers. Many of these homes overlook Lake Taneycomo or large meadows adjacent to farms. The Lake Shore Hills community, situated along Lake Taneycomo, has experienced a recent renaissance. Some older homes have been demolished and new houses have been built; the older properties vary from small houses to large, stately mansions. The Roark Hills subdivision is surrounded by a number of mature trees and Ozark Mountain views. This neighborhood offers homes in varying sizes. Vacant lots available in many neighborhoods offer opportunities for new construction.

The Branson area also has many senior residential communities, some of which have specific bylaws prohibiting full-time residents under a certain age and others that promote themselves as communities for retired individuals without official guidelines.

**Health Care**

Branson is served by the Cox Medical Center Branson with 157 licensed beds.

**City Stats**

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<th>Category</th>
<th>2016</th>
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<tr>
<td>City Population</td>
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<td>Metropolitan Statistical Area Population</td>
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<td>Per Capita Personal Income, Springfield-Branson MO, MSA</td>
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Photograph courtesy of Branson CVB.