

In the often volatile world of the restaurant business, Boone has climbed to national acclaim, landing at 5th in the nation in per capita spending, according to Restaurant Business, the data gathered by Nielsen. Boone jumped from a very respectable 37th last year to land at 5th this year. The report shows that Ocean Pines, Maryland, the #6 market last year, claimed the top spot. The publication says, "This market includes the state's Atlantic coast, and is home to the popular vacation resort area of Ocean City."

Jumping all the way from the #99 spot in 2012 to the current #2 spot is Findlay, Ohio, tied to the Toledo metropolitan area, where restaurant sales nearly doubled year-over-year. In the #3 spot this year is Liberal, Kansas, "a market more than doubled restaurant sales from last year," according to the publication. Fourth is Sevierville, Tennessee—gateway to Smoky Mountain Nation Park and last year's #3 market—drops to #4. Then there's Boone, jumping from 37th to reach the fifth spot this year. The publication describes Boone as a "tourist destination, drawing 225,000 each year. It's also home to Appalachian State University, which has seen dramatic growth in the last decade and ranks in the top 5 percent for general business growth in Nielsen's BGI. The influx of students and tourists helped drive up its RGI score."