



For Immediate Release

Contacts:

Mitch Leff, mitch@leffassociates.com

Kim Speece, kim@leffassociates.com

New Report Shows City of Decatur Will See Economic Impact of Up to \$142 Million from FIFA World Cup '26

DECATUR, March 17, 2026 -- FIFA World Cup 26 will have an economic impact of up to \$142 million for the City of Decatur, according to an [Economic Impact Report](#) released today from the city. The research was conducted by Thomas Smith, Ph.D., professor of finance and economist with the Goizueta Business School at Emory University.

“This research shows the World Cup and Decatur WatchFest ‘26 will have a strong economic impact for Decatur’s hotels, short-term rentals, retail, and dining establishments,” says Angela Threadgill, Assistant City Manager, Community and Economic Development, City of Decatur and Executive Director of the Decatur Development Authority. “In addition to Decatur WatchFest ‘26’s great concerts and events, our local business base will see a major economic benefit.”

By the Numbers

- **Impact:** The economic impact is forecast to be as high as \$142.5 million
- **Visitors:** The research shows Decatur could draw up to 10,000 visitors to the city each day
- **Tourism:** 70% of Decatur visitors will be domestic from within the US and 30% will be international tourists.
- **Tourist Spend:** International and domestic tourists are expected to spend almost \$500 per day at restaurants and other local attractions (this does not include additional spending on airfare, accommodations, and match tickets)
- **New Jobs:** Up to 1,139 new jobs will be created
- **Additional Wages:** Up to \$5.9 million in additional wages will be generated
- **Hotels/Short-Term Rentals:** The average cost per night of hotel rooms will increase to \$500 and the average cost of a short-term rental will increase to \$400
- **Retail:** Visitors will spend an average of \$110 per day on shopping at Decatur retail locations
- **Fine Dining:** Up to \$28.1 million in direct spending, \$2 million in wages
- **Casual Dining:** Up to \$12 million in direct spending, \$848,000 in wages

Additional Numbers

- FIFA’s economic impact study predicts 6.5 million World Cup attendees, with 20 - 50 percent of them coming from outside of the US with a \$30 billion economic boost to the U.S. economy
- The Atlanta Sports Council says the World Cup will provide a \$500 million impact to Atlanta

“The magnitude of WatchFest’s benefit to Decatur does not depend solely on international visitors,” says report author Tom Smith with the Goizueta Business School. “Decatur will market WatchFest 26 as an authentic experience, a more relaxed and affordable alternative to viewing the matches live in Atlanta. It will be especially accessible to people familiar with Atlanta’s public transit and U.S. residents within driving range.”

Decatur WatchFest '26 will offer 34-days of free music, games, activities and food and beverages on and around the newly renovated Decatur Square as fans watch the world's top soccer matches.

- Every day of FIFA World Cup 26™ matches will be celebrated in Decatur during WatchFest '26
- All matches will be shown in Decatur's Official WatchFest soccer pubs and restaurants
- Pre/post match concerts will feature national and local acts

BigBoi, The War And Treaty, Indigo Girls Take the Decatur Concert Stage

The Decatur WatchFest '26 concert series ticket events includes [Big Boi](#) on June 11, continues with [The War and Treaty](#) on June 25, and concludes with Decatur's own [Indigo Girls](#) closing out the City's 34 days of World Cup festivities on Sunday, July 19, 2026.

Concert timing and additional ticket information can also be found on [Decatur WatchFest '26's Music](#) page and on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), [TikTok](#) and [YouTube](#).

"Decatur WatchFest was created to give residents of the City of Decatur an opportunity to be a part of this global moment of a lifetime and this economic impact study shows they will also see a powerful economic benefit as well," says Andrea Arnold, Decatur City Manager.

FIFA World Cup 2026™ runs from June 11, 2026 through July 19, 2026, with eight matches taking place at Mercedes-Benz Stadium in Atlanta. Easily accessible by MARTA connecting Decatur to downtown, Decatur will join greater Atlanta to celebrate the arrival of world class soccer to Atlanta.

Decatur is a Soccer Town

Soccer is huge in Decatur. From international viewing parties and pub crawls to Atlanta United and Decatur FC to the many recreational soccer leagues for adults and children, the four-square miles of Decatur are a soccer mecca. Decatur FC set a new WPSL attendance record twice in their inaugural season and was awarded franchise of the year (2024).

Decatur WatchFest is a partnership of the City of Decatur, the Decatur Downtown Development Authority, and the Decatur Tourism Bureau.

Folder [HERE](#) for media assets: photos, video, quotes, logos.

About The City of Decatur - <https://visitdecaturga.com/>

Decatur, a city in DeKalb County, Georgia, was founded in 1823 and named for Commodore Stephen Decatur. Decatur is the county seat of DeKalb County and is 4.7 square miles with a population of 25,000 people. The city, known for its homes, schools, places of worship, diversity, events and festivals, a thriving business community and award-winning restaurants, is located six miles east of Atlanta. Decatur prides itself on being a friendly city where everyone is welcome! For more information, visit www.decaturga.com.

IG/FB: [@decaturwatchfest26](#)

Web: DecaturWatchFest26.com

###