



LT. GOVERNOR'S TRAVEL SUMMIT HELD IN LAKE CHARLES



Opening Night Reception



Kathy Vidrine, owner of Steamboat Bill's, honored as a Tourism Champion by Lt. Gov. Nungesser.



LTA Political Panel



Travel Professionals Tour SWLA



Travel Professionals Tour SWLA

The Lake Charles/Southwest Louisiana Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) was honored to host the Lieutenant Governor's Travel Summit in Lake Charles August 21-23, at the Golden Nugget. The Travel Summit, presented by the Louisiana Travel Association, brought a record attendance of nearly 600 attendees together in Southwest Louisiana for the largest educational opportunity for tourism professionals in the state.

Summit attendees experienced a keynote address from Lieutenant Governor Billy Nungesser and legislators on the state of the industry, as well as national and global economic updates from Anirban Basu, and multiple opportunities to network with tourism professionals from around the state.

The Summit featured educational speakers from across the country including Jeff Tobe, Andy Masters, Darienne Mobley, and Cheryl Hargrove, as well as workshops addressing the latest industry trends led by Mark Romig, Renee Areng, Murphy Foster, and John Deveney.

The bureau staff planned familiarization tours of the area for statewide tourism ambassadors as well as international marketing

representatives from the Louisiana Office of Tourism. Exposing them to our unique cultural gems will enhance their ability to promote our area to leisure travelers and tour groups all over the world. The CVB also showcased the "festivals culture" of Southwest Louisiana with a pirate-themed opening night reception.

Culinary tourism is a tremendous economic driver. Kathy Vidrine, owner of Steamboat Bill's on the Lake was named as a Tourism Champion by Lt. Gov. Nungesser during the conference.

The state welcomed a record 47.1 million visitors in 2017, representing an increase of nearly 500,000. The travel and tourism industry generated \$1.8 billion in state and local sales tax revenue. For Calcasieu Parish, that is over \$732 million dollars added to the local economy.

To find out more about the conference, go to www.ltpa.org. For more information on the Lake Charles/Southwest Louisiana Convention & Visitors Bureau, call (337) 436-9588 or go to www.visitlakecharles.org.

www.VisitLakeCharles.org #VisitLakeCharles

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VISIT
LakeCharles
SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA

LATER GATOR

A message from our executive director

The Lake Area is bustling with new projects that enhance tourism offerings for visitors to Southwest Louisiana, and the Lake Charles/Southwest Louisiana Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) is a partner with groups in the area, boosting ideas that will help grow more opportunities for visitors and residents alike.

The CVB was delighted to know that Southwest Louisiana is receiving funds for coastal recreational projects as part of the 2010 Deepwater Horizon settlement. \$2.4 million will be allocated to improvements to cabins and restrooms at Sam Houston Jones State Park. The Rockefeller Wildlife Refuge in Cameron will receive \$690,000 for signage as well as new fishing piers, which will enhance the experiences found along the Creole Nature Trail All-American Road. In addition, the Federal Lands Access Program grant will allow funds to upgrade the Pintail Wildlife Drive on Cameron Prairie National Wildlife Refuge to make it all-season accessible. The Creole Nature Trail District is providing matching funds of \$85,800.

The CVB is the longstanding marketing arm of the Creole Nature Trail All-American Road, and projects that enhance experiences for nature-lovers make the branding of the outdoors stronger. With Creole Nature Trail Adventure Point as a satellite office and interpretive center, these new projects will provide opportunities for adventure guides to give visitors additional ideas of places to explore while in Southwest Louisiana.

Another project along the lines of the great outdoors is the feasibility assessment for a Bike Share Program in Lake Charles and Sulphur. The Community Foundation of Southwest Louisiana is utilizing a \$10,000 Tourism Development Marketing Matching Grant to assist with the research necessary to launch a program in Southwest Louisiana. This study will conclude early next year, indicating which of the many bike-sharing models would be the best fit for Southwest Louisiana.

McNeese State University is a tremendous asset for Southwest Louisiana, and the CVB has awarded the university a \$30,000 Project Enhancement Grant to assist with the production of signage to have a direct impact of tourism, visitation and recruitment. The program will enhance the curb appeal and orientation for those navigating in and around McNeese campus. Some of the signage items that will be updated include pole banners and custom street signs.

The CVB is looking forward to a productive fall, and we are appreciative of partners in tourism throughout the community who make Southwest Louisiana shine.

Shelley Johnson, CDME, LCTP
Executive Director

Bill Hardman: STS President Emeritus



After his 21-year tenure, Bill Hardman Jr. has retired as president and CEO of the Southeast Tourism Society (STS). Contributions were made to the travel and tourism industry under Hardman's guidance and leadership. We appreciate his passion and his heart for the tourism industry and wish him the very best on his retirement.

Hardman has been replaced by Monica Smith, the third chief executive in the 35-year history of STS. Smith has more than 26 years' experience in the hospitality and tourism industry, most recently as vice president of sales and services for Visit Jacksonville, the city's tourism sales and marketing organization.



THE BUREAU STAFF

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Heather Savoie

Accounting/HR Director

Alecia Acosta

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Cindy Johnson

Special Projects/Film Location Manager

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Taylor Beard

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Laikyn Cooper

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Amos Orr

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Amanda Reeves

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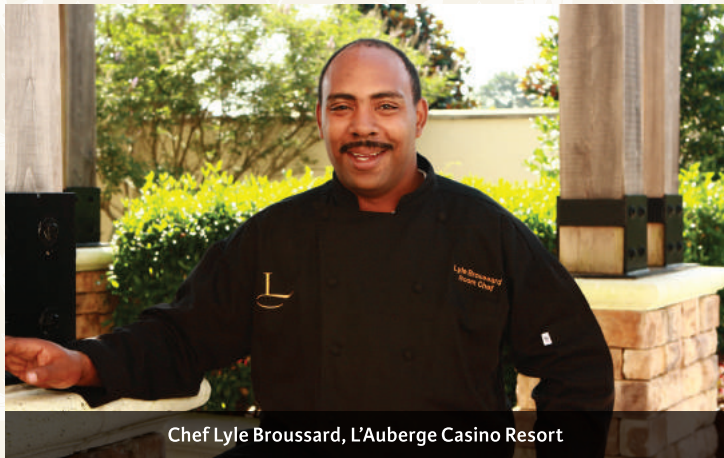
Calcasieu Parish Police Jury

Alan Trantina

Southwest Louisiana Lodging Association

COMING UP

Louisiana Culinary Trails



Chef Lyle Broussard, L'Auberge Casino Resort

This October, Chef Lyle Broussard from L'Auberge Casino Resort's Jack Daniel's Bar & Grill, and Chef Kevin Thompson from Golden Nugget Lake Charles' Cadillac Mexican Kitchen & Tequila Bar, will join some of the state's finest chefs to showcase Louisiana's destinations through the best of their culinary offerings for a crowd of editors, writers, bloggers, group tour operators and VIP consumers, as part of the Louisiana Culinary Trails Nashville Media Mission. The Bridge Building venue will be transformed into a

Louisiana-themed experience, with attendees taking a full tour of the state as they move through the venue and taste each dish. A Restaurant Takeover will take place the following night, where Chef Lyle Broussard will be paired with Fin & Pearl, and Chef Kevin Thompson will be at The Southern Steak & Oyster. Nashville locals are invited to experience Louisiana-themed menu specials at any of the partnering restaurants across Nashville for one night only.

CVB staff members, Amos Orr and Amanda Reeves will accompany the chefs during the Louisiana Culinary Trails Media Mission, along with staff from the Louisiana Travel Association. Throughout their stay, they will have the opportunity to promote Southwest Louisiana to editors from several Nashville media outlets, as well as freelance writers.



Chef Kevin Thompson
Golden Nugget Lake Charles



**Attention Nonprofits, Arts Organizations,
Attractions, Festivals and Event Organizers!**



The LC/SWLA CVB is providing a free opportunity for professionals in the community to learn about fundraising techniques for arts organizations, event planners, non-profits, museums and attractions through the YOUUniversity learning series, established by the LC/SWLA CVB.

Lisa Chmiola, is a certified fundraising executive, CFRE, and this seminar will outline how to be successful with motivating a community of support for your organization. Attendees will learn how to effectively engage, inspire and cultivate a community to strengthen not only the organization but the funds that flow into the organization to make it the best that it can be.

Topics to be covered:

- Inspire through Compelling Storytelling
- Effective Social Media
- Motivate Volunteers
- Relationship Management Techniques
- Fundraising



Lisa Chmiola, Certified
Fundraising Executive, CFRE

The event will be held at Reeves Uptown Catering, 1639 Ryan St., in Lake Charles from 9 a.m. – 3:45 p.m. Lunch will be provided. Learn more and register at VisitLakeCharles.org/YOUUniversity.

BUREAU UPDATES

TOP 20 RESTAURANT WINNERS



First Place - Luna Bar & Grill



Second Place - Steamboat Bill's



Third Place - Darrell's

The Lake Charles/Southwest Louisiana Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) held the sixth annual Top 20 Restaurants online voting contest where individuals could nominate and vote for their favorite places to eat in Calcasieu Parish. Culinary delights are a major draw for tourism, and people are passionate about food.

There were over 250 restaurant nominations made by the public with a record number of 7,425 total votes cast. The restaurant that received the most votes was Luna Bar & Grill. Second place went to Steamboat Bill's followed by Darrell's for third place.

Other restaurants that made it to the Top 20 list, in alphabetical order are: 121 Artisan Bistro, Blue Dog Café, Casa Mañana, Harlequin

Steaks & Seafood, MacFarlane's Celtic Pub, Mazen's Mediterranean Foods, Nina P's, Pat's of Henderson, Restaurant Calla, Rikenjaks, Saltgrass Steakhouse, Seafood Palace, Southern Spice Restaurant & Grill, Texas Roadhouse, The Villa, Tia Juanita's Fish Camp, Tony's Pizza and Walk-On's.

The contest was promoted through social media, on the CVB's website, as well as through National Tourism Week marketing including print, radio and public relations efforts.

For more information, log onto www.visitlakecharles.org/Top20 or become a fan of the CVB on Facebook at facebook.com/LakeCharlesCVB.

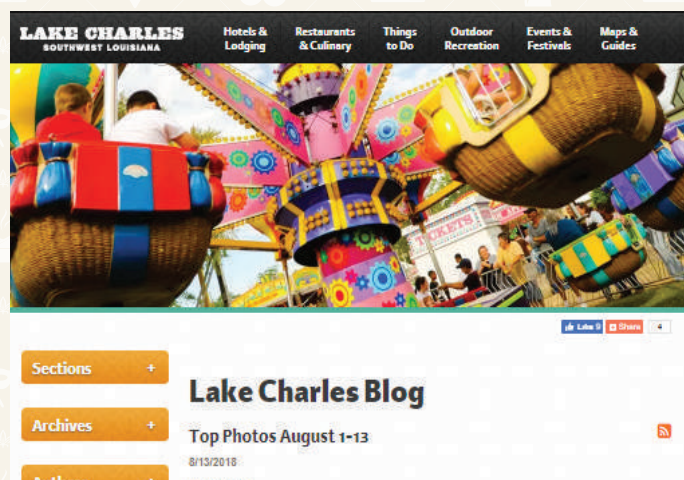
Marketing College Recap



Left to right: Amanda Reeves, CVB; Thom Trahan, Brimstone Historical Society; Kaitlyn Gallegos, City of Sulphur; and Krickett Racca, Crying Eagle Brewing Company. (Not pictured: Taylor Meeks, Holiday Inn Express & Suites Sulphur)

Amanda Reeves from the CVB and local tourism partners recently attended the Southeast Tourism Society (STS) Marketing College in Dahlonega, Georgia. STS Marketing College is a three-year program where students earn their Travel Marketing Professional (TMP) certification. Amanda Reeves, Thom Trahan and Taylor Meeks are expected to receive their TMP certification in 2019. First year students Kaitlyn Gallegos and Krickett Racca, will work toward their TMP certification for the next two years.

New Blog Subscription Available



Stay up-to-date with the latest attractions and offerings in Southwest Louisiana! We are excited to announce that users now have the ability to subscribe to the Visit Lake Charles blog. This feature will help keep the destination top-of-mind by offering consistent, helpful information to subscribers. By subscribing to the blog, users will receive a weekly email with the latest blog posts made on VisitLakeCharles.org. To subscribe, go to VisitLakeCharles.org/blog and click on "Subscribe to Blog."



Living History Cemetery Tour

On October 26, from 5 – 8:30 p.m., five Lake Charles cemeteries will be featured in a “Living History” Cemetery Tour where guests can hear stories of local iconic figures while visiting their final resting places.

Actors will dress in period attire and embody the lives of deceased historic figures from each of the five cemeteries. Guests will be guided throughout each cemetery as they listen to stories of the historic figures’ lives and their impacts on today’s Lake Charles. Larger-than-life figures such as historian Maude Reid, Professor J.E.L. Hoskins, Captain Daniel B. Goos, John Jacob Ryan – “The Father of Lake Charles,” Hollywood actor Juan Pla, and infamous murderer Toni Jo Henry and others will tell their life stories and their famed feats from their own perspectives.

Featured cemeteries will include: Bilbo Cemetery, located on Lakeshore Drive; Goos Cemetery and Huff and Thomas Cemetery, located on N. Shattuck Street near Goos Boulevard; Orange Grove and Graceland Cemeteries, located on Broad Street; and Catholic Cemetery, located on Common Street and Iris Street.

Guests will have the freedom to drive from cemetery to cemetery at their own pace. Tickets are \$12 and can be purchased at cemeterytourlc.eventbrite.com or at the Arts Council office at Central School.



Mickey Smith, Jr. Receives Third Grammy Nomination

Mickey Smith, Jr., a 2004 McNeese State University graduate in music education and band director at Maplewood Middle School, is one of 188 quarterfinalists for the 2019 Music Educator Award presented by the Recording Academy and Grammy Museum. This is his third music educator nomination.

The award recognizes educators who have made a lasting contribution to the field of music education. The field will be narrowed to 10 finalists in the spring, with the winner announced prior to the 61st Annual GRAMMY Awards. Good luck, Mickey!



Lake Charles “10 Best Under the Radar Travel Destinations”

Lake Charles, Louisiana, is known for its delicious Cajun and Creole flavors complemented by an artistic culture. The Southwest Louisiana city was recently recognized by TheTravel.com in an article listing the top under-the-radar travel destinations in the United States.

In the article, titled “10 Under-The-Radar US Travel Destinations (10 To Avoid),” Lake Charles is described as a highlight in Louisiana for its artsy culture, unique museums and historic significance. Attractions such as 1911 Historic City Hall Arts & Cultural Center, Imperial Calcasieu Museum, and the Mardi Gras Museum of Imperial Calcasieu are mentioned as attractions that tourists should visit.

“It’s no wonder that Lake Charles has become such a loved travel destination,” said Mayor Nic Hunter of Lake Charles. “Our famous cuisine, colorful festivals, and southern hospitality make for a wonderful recipe that visitors enjoy.”

To see more media coverage of Southwest Louisiana, visit www.visitlakecharles.org/media.

Travel Media Showcase & Travel Bloggers Exchange

The communications department attends various conferences that offer opportunities to meet one-on-one with journalists and network with travel media to pitch story ideas. Will Precht will travel to Niagara Falls in September for Travel Media Showcase, where nearly 200 travel journalists and industry professionals will converge for a national tradeshow to meet one-on-one. There, he will foster relationships with travel media as they exchange story ideas and participate on press trips at the conference. Amanda Reeves will also be attending TBEX, which is the largest conference and networking event for travel bloggers, online travel journalist, new media content creators, travel brands and industry professionals.

Louisiana Municipal Association

The City of Lake Charles and the Southwest Louisiana Convention & Visitors Bureau welcomed members of the Louisiana Municipal Association for its annual convention. Members of the organization consisting of mayors, city councilmen and various municipal employees from across the state of Louisiana met in Lake Charles in August.

The Convention and Visitors Bureau coordinated the accommodations, blocking approximately 2,750 room nights for the event. "Hosting this convention offered Lake Charles and all of Southwest Louisiana the opportunity to showcase our area at its best!" said Shelley Johnson, executive director for the Southwest Louisiana Convention and Visitors Bureau.



Lt. Gov. Billy Nungesser addresses the Louisiana Municipal Association conference.



Governor John Bel Edwards delivered the welcome address at the Louisiana Rural Water Association (LRWA) Annual Conference, which was held at the Lake Charles Civic Center.

Louisiana Rural Water Association

The Louisiana Rural Water Association (LRWA) held their annual Training & Technical Conference July 15-20 at the Lake Charles Civic Center. The bureau was excited to host the conference in Lake Charles for the sixth year in a row, as well as showcase the area to the 1,000+ participants. Attendees participated in water and wastewater certification review courses, technical classes and surveyors classes.

The LRWA Conference provides the water and wastewater personnel in Louisiana with various training on day-to-day operations; informative topics regarding federal/state rules and regulations, new and innovated equipment, and managerial training. LRWA works closely with Louisiana Department of Health and the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality.



AROUND TOWN



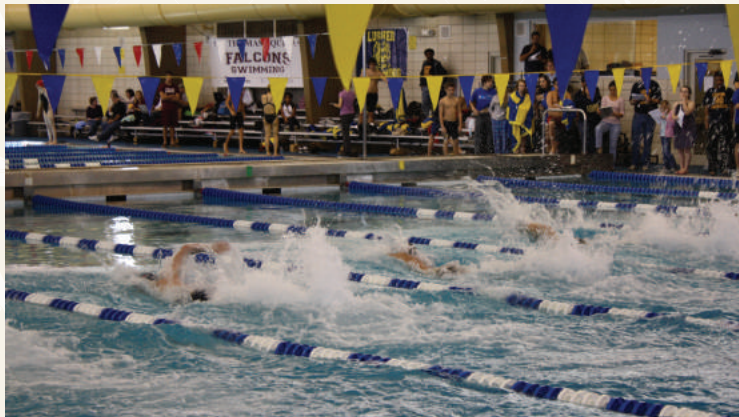
Downtown Lake Charles Developments

A new multiuse path along Lakeshore Drive will soon be under construction, thanks to a grant provided by Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LA DOTD). The multiuse path will connect Broad Street to Clarence Street along the west side of Lakeshore Drive, making it easier for every Lake Charles resident to enjoy our lakefront and downtown district. Sidewalk improvements will also be made to Clarence Street, connecting Lakeshore Drive to Ryan Street.

The project will provide improved pedestrian access along Lakeshore Drive by way of new accented sidewalks, crosswalks, and rest area landings, as well as ADA accessibility, special decorative paving at key locations for accent, and site furnishing improvements including bike racks, benches, and litter receptacles. The expected completion is in February 2019.

Another addition on the horizon for downtown Lake Charles is the Erdace apartment building. Construction on the \$43 million complex is well underway, scheduled to open in Spring 2019. This four-story building will feature 272 one- and two-bedroom luxury apartments, designed as small, urban-style flats priced at \$995-\$1,200 per unit. Upon completion, the complex will triple the amount of rental housing available in the downtown area.

LHSAA Swimming and Softball to Return to Southwest Louisiana



The board of the Louisiana High School Athletic Association (LHSAA) awarded the LHSAA State Championship Swim Meet and The Allstate Sugar Bowl LHSAA Softball State Championships to the Lake Charles/Southwest Louisiana area for two additional years. Historically, the area has hosted swim for 12 years and softball for 18. Eric Zartler, sales director of the Lake Charles/Southwest Louisiana Convention & Visitors Bureau (LC/SWLA CVB) and Steve Gayfield, executive director of Sulphur Parks & Recreation, represented Southwest Louisiana during the bidding process held earlier today.

“The LHSAA tournaments that have been awarded to the Lake Charles/Southwest Louisiana area are tremendous testimonies to the hospitality community, leadership and facilities in Southwest Louisiana as well as the genuine relationships that have been built over the years through hosting successful tournaments. We are fortunate to have a thriving fanbase in Southwest Louisiana with people who love to volunteer and cheer on the teams. We could not do what we do without everyone working together,” said Eric Zartler, sales director for the LC/SWLA CVB.



Southwest Louisiana is known as the Youth Sports Capital of Louisiana, and as such, the area has benefited greatly from youth sports being an economic driver from softball, baseball and basketball to swimming and a myriad of other tournaments.

For more information on the LC/SWLA CVB, log on to VisitLakeCharles.org or VisitLakeCharles.org/ImpactOfTourism for the latest economic news on how tourism works to strengthen the economic fabric of the community.



LAKE CHARLES

SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA

CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

LAKE CHARLES | SULPHUR | WESTLAKE
DEQUINCY | VINTON | IOWA

1-800-456-SWLA | www.VisitLakeCharles.org
1205 N. Lakeshore Drive | Lake Charles, LA 70601

MISSION

To provide leadership in initiating and coordinating the worldwide marketing of Calcasieu Parish as a highly desirable leisure and convention destination; to solicit and service convention and other group-related business; and to engage in visitor promotions which generate overnight stays in Southwest Louisiana.

VISION

To enhance and develop the economic fabric of the parish.

PRESORTED
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SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA SPOTLIGHT

BAYOU RENEGADE RALLY NO MAN'S LAND

PROGRESSIVE POKER RUN & PATRIOT PARADE
LOUISIANA - 2018

NOV 9-13

BayouRenegadeRally.com

Bayou Renegade Rally

Bayou Renegade Rally is a new special event being held over Veteran's Day weekend, and it is also the kick-off event for the No Man's Land Bicentennial Celebration, which begins in the fall of 2018 and ends in 2021. No Man's Land refers to a large swath of land on the western edge of what is now Louisiana known as the neutral strip during the time of the Louisiana Purchase.

Open to all motorcycle enthusiasts, the rally spans multiple dates and includes a progressive poker run from Shreveport to Lake Charles, LA on Nov. 9-13. Riders will be in the Lake Charles area from Sunday, Nov. 11 through Tuesday, Nov. 13. The rally participants will be able to experience a multitude of patriotic events while also soaking in the hospitality, culture, music, and cuisine of Louisiana.

For more information about the rally or to register, log on to **BayouRenegadeRally.com**.

