

**Lt. Governor Jay Dardenne** announced that in 2014 Louisiana attracted 28.7 million visitors, a five percent increase over 2013, resulting in \$11.2 billion in total visitor spending and \$836 million in state tax revenue. The revenue generated through domestic and international visitors represents a more than 38-to-1 return on investment of state funding.

Louisiana is also leading the way with its online tourism presence. **LouisianaTravel.com** ranks fifth among state tourism websites with more than 2.2 million unique visitors, representing a 25 percent annual increase, and 4.9 million page views, representing an 18 percent annual increase. Louisiana Travel's social media efforts ranked fourth among state tourism offices.

A travel media research trip throughout Louisiana held as part of the recent **Travel South USA Domestic Showcase** event in Shreveport-Bossier, March 22-25, has begun producing notable stories. In all, 27 journalists from throughout the U.S. did site research in Alexandria, Baton Rouge, Lafayette, Lake Charles, Monroe, Natchitoches, New Orleans, Plantation Country, St. Landry Parish and Shreveport-Bossier. Clips have surfaced so far on many participants' websites and blogs and in outlets including *The Philadelphia Sun* and *www.ansa.it*, an Italian wire service.

Business travelers are bypassing the taxi queue with greater frequency, choosing instead ride-hailing services like **Uber**. A new report by expense management system provider Certify shows that 47 percent of the ground transportation rides by its users in March were through Uber.

**Mary Dunn**,  
Chairwoman  
Shreveport-Bossier  
Attractions Association\*

**Sherry Stuckey**,  
Vice-Chairwoman  
Shreveport-Bossier  
Hotel & Lodging  
Association\*

**Carlton Golden**,  
Treasurer  
Bossier Parish  
Police Jury\*

**Tanita Baker**,  
Shreveport-Bossier  
African American  
Chamber of Commerce\*

**Tari Bradford**,  
Shreveport  
Mayor's Office\*

**Rob Brown**,  
Shreveport-Bossier  
Hotel & Lodging  
Association\*

**Sandy Cimino**,  
Bossier Chamber  
of Commerce\*

**Mark Garrett**,  
Greater Shreveport  
Chamber of  
Commerce\*

**Joyce Jeffrey**,  
Bossier Office  
of Community  
Services\*

**Jason McKinney**,  
Louisiana  
Restaurant  
Association\*

**Kellie Morris**,  
Caddo Parish  
Commission\*

**Ray Tromba**,  
Bossier City  
Mayor's  
Office\*

**Patricia Wooldridge**,  
Caddo Rural  
Municipalities\*

**Shelli Briery**,  
Harrah's  
Louisiana Downs\*

\*Appointing Organization



news from shreveport-bossier convention & tourist bureau

# TRAVEL TALK

July - August 2015

## Revamped Hotel Tax to Aid Airport, Independence Bowl and Sports Commission

House Bill 216 will seek voter approval to increase the hotel occupancy tax that overnight visitors pay by an additional 1.5 percent to support Ark-La-Tex Regional Air Service Alliance (a non-profit organization associated with the Shreveport Regional Airport), Shreveport-Bossier Sports Commission and the Independence Bowl Foundation. The funds would be equally distributed among the entities. The bill is awaiting the governor's signature.

Hotel occupancy tax is paid by out-of-town visitors coming to Shreveport-Bossier for business and leisure purposes. The proposed increase would add an average of \$1.10 per night to their hotel stay. With the average \$1.10 additional fee, Shreveport-Bossier would still remain the most affordable destination in the state of Louisiana.



The increased hotel occupancy tax will allow the Sports Commission to further assist venues and events such as Thunder Road Raceway Park.

The average hotel rate in Shreveport-Bossier is \$74.56. By comparison, Lafayette is \$78.44, Baton Rouge is \$86.22 and New Orleans is \$159.90.

In 2015, the Sports Commission will work with and provide a variety of resources to more than 70 events. Those events will have an economic impact of more than \$7 million to local hotels, restaurants, retail and other businesses. These events will take place all over Caddo and Bossier parishes and benefit numerous businesses of both cities and parishes. The additional dollars from the hotel occupancy tax would allow the Sports Commission to expand the number of sporting events that it partners with on an annual basis.

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**Shreveport Common Wins Prestigious Award** Page 3

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## Dates to Remember:

### Shreveport-Bossier Attractions Association Seminar

7/20 9 a.m. - 1 p.m., Holiday Inn Shreveport Downtown Hotel  
To RSVP, call 318-222-9391.  
Free for Members/\$20 Non-Members

### Hospitality Breakfast

7/1 8 a.m., Ernest's Orleans Restaurant  
8/5 8 a.m., Hilton Hotel Shreveport

### Hotel and Lodging Association Meeting

7/9 Noon, Hilton Garden Inn/Homewood Suites Bossier City  
8/13 Noon, Venue TBD

For more HLA info, contact Sherry Stuckey at [sherry.stuckey@dimdev.com](mailto:sherry.stuckey@dimdev.com).

Log on to [www.shreveport-bossier.org/partners](http://www.shreveport-bossier.org/partners) for industry events and updates.

## Membership Introduced for Attractions Association

The Shreveport-Bossier Attractions Association is now a free membership organization. The association exists to strengthen the attractions community and to give voice to the ideas, challenges and concerns of its members. Membership includes exclusive benefits and opportunities.

One of the main benefits of the new membership is that the quarterly educational seminars will remain free for members only. All non-members must pay \$20 to attend the quarterly seminars.

The next seminar, "Email Marketing 101: Using Creativity to Motivate Your Customers to Act," will be held Monday, July 20, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., at the Holiday Inn Shreveport Downtown Hotel. Charles Gaiennie and design staff from his agency, The W.L. Gaiennie Company, will be the featured speakers. Attendees will



**Mission:** The Shreveport-Bossier Attractions Association is a membership organization for Caddo and Bossier Parish attractions that supports sustainable growth and attendance through exposure, education, resources and representation.

learn best practices in email marketing in this hands-on, engaging and interactive seminar. To register for the seminar or for more information, call (318) 222-9391 by July 16.

For more information and/or to submit an application, contact Melissa Small, communications coordinator, at 318-213-8266 or [msmall@sbctb.org](mailto:msmall@sbctb.org).

“Among the many pieces of public art, Shreveport has some of the most amazing murals you'll see anywhere.”

- Elaine Warner, journalist for *Slice Magazine*





## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### DATE EVENT

- Fri. & Sat. **Brewery Tours,**  
*Flying Heart Brewery*
- Fri. & Sat. **Glow-in-the-Dark Bowling,**  
*Holiday Lanes*
- Sat. **Brewery Tours,**  
*Great Raft Brewing*
- Now-7/24 (Fri.) **South Highland Summer Market,**  
*Mall St. Vincent*
- Now-7/26 (Sun.) **Benton Farmers' Market,**  
*Simpson Street Park*
- Now-7/31 **Hannah Cooper McCauley Exhibit,**  
*East Bank Gallery*
- Now-8/22 (Sat.) **Shreveport Artists' Market,**  
*Red River District*
- Now-8/29 (Tue. & Sat.) **Shreveport Farmers' Market,**  
*Festival Plaza*
- Now-9/19 **Live Thoroughbred Racing,**  
*Harrah's Louisiana Downs*
- 7/4 **KTBS-3 Independence Day Festival,**  
*Festival Plaza*
- 7/5 **Highland Open Studio Tour,**  
*436 Topeka St.*
- 7/11 **Bob Newhart,**  
*Horseshoe Riverdome*
- 7/15-8/2 **Chicago: The Musical,**  
*Shreveport Little Theatre*
- 7/17 **Pat Green,**  
*Horseshoe Riverdome*
- 7/29 **The Eagles,**  
*CenturyLink Center*
- 8/1 **Ascend Combat "CHAOS 5,"**  
*Shreveport Municipal Auditorium*
- 8/2 **Highland Open Studio Tour,**  
*436 Topeka St.*
- 8/2-6 **AJGA Shreveport Junior Open,**  
*Southern Trace*
- 8/14 **Hotel California: A Salute to the Eagles**  
*Strand Theatre*
- 8/21-23 **Shreveport Geek'd Convention,**  
*Shreveport Convention Center*
- 8/22 **Lyle Lovett,**  
*Margaritaville Paradise Theater*
- 8/28 **All Y'all Live Storytelling: OMG,**  
*Sainte Terre*

Submit your events to [www.sbfunguide.com](http://www.sbfunguide.com) today to be included in future promotional efforts.



Instagram

Follow the Shreveport-Bossier Convention and Tourist Bureau's new Instagram account **@SeeShreveportBossier**. Each month in 2015, the account features photos of Shreveport-Bossier by a different local photographer. The featured photographer in June was Andrew Touts (**@hustleandtruthphoto**).



**Zachary Ebarb**

The Shreveport-Bossier Convention and Tourist Bureau recently welcomed a new full-time staff member to the organization. **Zachary Ebarb** has taken on the position of convention and tourism assistant. Ebarb is a recent graduate of Northwestern State University and earned a Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management and Tourism.

**David Bradley**, vice president of convention and tourism sales, **Brandy Evans**, vice president of communications, **Pat Gill**, internet and systems manager and **Charlotte Rice**, executive assistant, attended the Simpleview Summit in Tucson, Ariz., April 20-23, where they participated in training courses.



**Kelly Wells**

**Kelly Wells**, vice president of sports, **Que'brelyn Hill**, sales and services coordinator, **Lauren Rabb** of Hilton Shreveport and **Megan Creel** of Shreveport Convention Center

attended the National Association of Sports Commissions – Sports Event Symposium in Milwaukee, Wis., April 27-30, where they met with event rights holders and received several leads.



**Erica Howard**

**Erica Howard**, tourism sales manager and **Melissa Small**, communications coordinator, attended The Experience Lab in Minneapolis, Minn., May 12-14, with representatives

from attractions who applied to work with Joe Veneto to create new experiential group tours. Representatives included **Nita Cole** of Louisiana State Exhibit Museum, **Angelique Feaster Evans** of Southern University Museum of Art, **Hardette Harris** of Pure Louisiana Soul-Food Tours and Tastings and **Katy Larsen** of the Agora Borealis.

## P.R.I.D.E. Award Winners Recognized

The 2015 P.R.I.D.E. Awards Banquet was held Thursday, May 7, at DiamondJacks Casino and Resort in Bossier City. The purpose of the annual event is to honor star employees in more than 20 categories ranging from Outstanding Valet to Outstanding Hotel Executive. The 2015 P.R.I.D.E. Master Award, which is the region's highest honor among tourism and hospitality professionals, was received by Pam Atchison, executive director of Shreveport Regional Arts Council. The acronym P.R.I.D.E. stands for "Proud Residents Involved in Developing our Economy."

Other top awards went to Candee Preston of Horseshoe Casino & Hotel – Outstanding Tourism and Hospitality Employee of the Year; Barry Regula of Margaritaville Resort Casino – Outstanding Southern Hospitality Ambassador; Ashley Davis of Louisiana

Boardwalk Outlets – Outstanding Attraction Professional of the Year; Don Cook of Hilton Shreveport – Outstanding Hotel Executive; and Kathleen Elliott of Harrah's Louisiana Downs – Outstanding Venue Operations. Ray Urban was recognized with the Lifetime Achievement Award for his dedication to the tourism and hospitality industry.



**Shreveport-Bossier Convention and Tourist Bureau President Stacy Brown presents Pam Atchison with the 2015 P.R.I.D.E. Master Award.**



## Shreveport Common Voted Outstanding Community Development

The National Development Council (NDC) has awarded Shreveport Common the prestigious award for Outstanding Community Development at the NDC 2015 Academy in Washington, D.C., May 12-14. The Shreveport initiative was chosen from 56 community development projects across the nation.

Shreveport Common is an urban revitalization project and an UNcommon cultural district, a \$100 million, public/private, arts-led transformation of a blighted, urban area to a vibrant, creative, sustainable



**Pictured (left to right): City of Shreveport Community Development Director Bonnie Moore, Bureau Chief of Housing & Business Development Valerie Ervin, Shreveport Common Project Director Wendy Benscoter, National Development Council Ambassador Joseph Gray, and Shreveport Regional Arts Council Executive Director Pam Atchison.**

nine block neighborhood at the western edge of downtown Shreveport and

the eastern edge of Ledbetter Heights/Allendale Choice neighborhoods.

"The national recognition should make every partner, artist, stakeholder, funder, non-profit organization and neighbor proud," said Wendy Benscoter, project manager of Shreveport Common. "We are working on final funding for construction, and we hope to see the park finished by the end of the year."

The NDC Academy Award recognizes the top economic and community development projects in the nation. The NDC Academy is a biennial conference focused on urban and rural job creation, affordable housing and innovative community development goals.

## Bossier City Chef Announces House Concurrent Resolution No. 88 Designating "Official Meal of North Louisiana"

House Concurrent Resolution No. 88, which was enrolled and signed by the Speaker of the Louisiana House of Representatives and the President of the Louisiana State Senate on May 4, recognizes the culinary uniqueness of northern Louisiana and designates its official meal. As outlined in the resolution, the official meal of northern Louisiana



**Hardette Harris**

consists of such dishes as fried catfish, purple hull peas and hot water cornbread. The meal was created by Chef Hardette Harris, a native of Minden who now resides in Bossier City. A full list of menu items included in the meal, along with photos

of House Concurrent Resolution No. 88, can be viewed at [www.foodtourslouisiana.com](http://www.foodtourslouisiana.com).

Chef Harris worked with State Representative Gene Reynolds, of Minden, to develop the State of Louisiana's first official meal, bringing recognition to the culinary uniqueness of northern Louisiana. She hopes to foster public interest in northern Louisiana cuisine among food lovers and the public at-large. Through her business, Pure Louisiana Soul™ Food Tours and Tastings, Harris is currently developing tastings of traditional northern Louisiana cuisine which she plans to market to locals, as well as to Shreveport-Bossier visitors.

## Visitors' Guide Ad Reservations Due by September 30



The Shreveport-Bossier Convention and Tourist Bureau is taking ad reservations for the *2016 Official Visitors' Guide to Shreveport-Bossier, Louisiana*. This publication is the primary fulfillment piece for visitor inquiries. A minimum of 100,000 guides are printed annually and distributed to visitors in hotels and visitor centers across the state of Louisiana, as well as distributed regionally and nationally.

The guide is also available in electronic format on the Tourist Bureau's website. Advertisement sales close on September 30.

CORK

A Red River Revel Wine Event

Advertisers who pay by **Jan. 29, 2016** will be entered into a drawing for a chance to win two tickets to **Cork 2016 – A Red River Revel Wine Event** (\$170 total value).

To reserve ad space, contact Hollie Fritz, sales representative, at 318-470-6661 or [holliefritz@hotmail.com](mailto:holliefritz@hotmail.com) or Macy Fritz, sales representative, at 318-347-6106 or [macyfritz@gmail.com](mailto:macyfritz@gmail.com).