

Industry Briefs

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news from shreveport-bossier convention & tourist bureau

TRAVEL TALK

January - February 2015

Mardi Gras Bash Celebrates Nine Years of Fun for Out-of-Town Groups

The Shreveport-Bossier Convention and Tourist Bureau will host the 9th annual Mardi Gras Bash in downtown Shreveport during the Krewe of Centaur Parade, Feb. 7.

Mardi Gras Bash gives out-of-town groups a "home base" during the parade, making it possible for them to relax and enjoy the festivities. Groups can also add other Carnival experiences to their overnight itineraries such as behind-the-scenes tours on how to make a king cake at Julie Anne's Bakery, tour the Krewe of Gemini Mardi Gras Museum and shop for Mardi Gras decor and accessories at Tubb's Hardware and Rentals.



The Tourist Bureau will host 9th annual Mardi Gras Bash in February.

Mardi Gras Bash was named one of the American Bus Association's Top 100 Events in 2014. Mardi Gras Bash tickets, which may be purchased by groups of 10 or more, are \$35 per person for an all-inclusive parade-day experience which includes access to a prime viewing location on the parade route, meal tickets for Louisiana cuisine, live Cajun music and dancing, meet-and-greet opportunities with local Mardi Gras personalities and more.

To purchase group tickets or for more information contact Erica Howard, tourism sales manager, by Jan. 7 at 800-551-8682 ext. 104 or ehoward@sbctb.org.

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Dates to Remember:

Hospitality Breakfast

Jan. 7 8 a.m., Ralph & Kacoo's Restaurant

Feb. 4 8 a.m., Superior's Steakhouse

Hotel and Lodging Association

Jan. 8 Noon, Venue TBD

Feb. 12 Noon, Venue TBD

For more HLA info, contact Cindy Lubbe at cindy.lubbe@dimdev.com

Shreveport-Bossier Attractions Association

Jan. 26 9 a.m.-2 p.m., Harrah's Louisiana Downs. To RSVP call 318-222-9391.

Log on to www.shreveport-bossier.org/partners for industry events and updates

Seminar Aims to Help Attractions Boost Experiences

The Shreveport-Bossier Attractions Association and the Shreveport-Bossier Convention and Tourist Bureau will host the next quarterly seminar, entitled "Engineering Memorable Guest Experiences," 9 a.m. - 2 p.m., Jan. 26 at Harrah's Louisiana Downs.

Seminar attendees will be provided with a framework of strategies and tools to engineer memorable guest experiences for their attractions. The hands-on workshop will focus on how to design, develop stories, script and stage experiences. Attendees will also learn tools and techniques necessary to successfully host key market segments like group tours, media, small meetings and conventions.

Joe Veneto, principal and founder of Opportunities Unlimited in Quincy, Mass., will be the featured speaker. Veneto, aka The Opportunity Guy, is an expert in working with attractions to create unforgettable visitor experiences. The seminar is only for attractions, festivals and tourism-related businesses, events or organizations. Lunch will be provided. The event is free, but space is limited. To RSVP call 318-222-9391.



Featured Speaker: Joe Veneto
aka The Opportunity Guy from Quincy, Mass.

What's better than ziplining? Try ziplining while hungry gators circle underneath, nipping at your heels as you zoom past, waiting to devour anyone who falls! The presence of the sharp-toothed reptiles at Gator and Friends Alligator Park in Greenwood, Louisiana definitely ramps up the adrenaline factor.

- Scott Shetler, blogger and author of QuirkyTravelGuy.com



FUNGUIDE! Your Bureau at Work

Calendar of Events

- Now - 2014 Bossier Parish Student Art Show. East Bank Gallery.
- 1/31
- Now - How to Make a Monster Special Exhibit. Sci-Port: Louisiana's Science Center.
- 4/6
- 1/1 New Year's Day Fireworks. Windrush Lake at Provenance.
- 1/3 Twelfth Night Celebration. Bossier Civic Center.
- 1/4 Dust-Buster Duathlon. Stoner Boat Launch.
- 1/8-18 Two on the Aisle, Three in a Van. Shreveport Little Theatre & Academy.
- 1/17 Brian McKnight Concert. DiamondJacks Casino and Resort.
- 1/17 Engelbert Humperdinck Concert. Margaritaville Resort Casino.
- 1/17 Krewe of Sobek Parade. Begins at Fairgrounds Field.
- 1/19 Krewe of Harambee Mardi Gras/MLK Day Parade. Begins at Milam St. and Texas St.
- 2/3 The Harlem Globetrotters. CenturyLink Center.
- 2/5 Guys and Dolls. Strand Theatre.
- 2/7 Krewe of Centaur Parade. Begins at Clyde Fant Pkwy. and Lake St.
- 2/8 Krewe of Barkus & Meoux Pet Parade. Marilyn's Place.
- 2/14 Krewe of Gemini Parade. Begins at Clyde Fant Pkwy. and Lake St.
- 2/15 Krewe of Highland Parade. Begins at Gilbert Dr. and Gregg Ave.
- 2/17 Krewe of Aesclepius Children's Parade. Begins at Pierre Bossier Mall parking lot.
- 2/17 Fat Tuesday Texas Street Bridge Closing Ceremony. Texas Street Bridge.
- 2/19 Jason Aldean Concert. CenturyLink Center.
- 2/21 Louisiana Comic Con. Bossier Civic Center.
- 2/24 SSO Rising Stars: Cello Concert. RiverView Theater.
- 2/26-3/8 All My Sons. Shreveport Little Theatre & Academy.
- 2/27 Winter Jam 2015. CenturyLink Center.
- 2/28 Shreveport Symphony: Spring is in the Air. Shreveport RiverView Theater.

Submit your events to www.sbfunguide.com today to be included in future promotional efforts.

shreveportbossierfunguide.com

for a **fun** time... **CLICK!** 

The staff of the **Shreveport-Bossier Convention and Tourist Bureau** raised funds, collected non-perishable food items and bowled in the Turkey Bowl Food Drive to benefit the Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana at Holiday Lanes, Nov. 21.



Stacy Brown, president

Stacy Brown, president, and **Evelyn Cassell**, Boom or Bust Byway coordinator, met on Nov. 18 with representatives from the firm of Merje Environments & Experiences who are contracted to develop the wayshowing signage program along the Byway (LA Hwy. 2).

Dianna Douglas, regional sales manager, attended XSITE Birmingham with the Hilton Shreveport and Shreveport Convention Center in Birmingham, Ala., Nov. 12-14. She hosted the District 50 Toastmasters International Fall November Conference at the Hilton Shreveport and Shreveport Convention Center, Nov. 14-17.



Brandy Evans, vice-president of communications

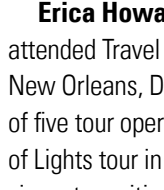
Brandy Evans, vice-president of communications, completed Leadership Louisiana, a one-year program that delves into the state's issues. It is organized by the Council for a Better Louisiana, a nonpartisan

statewide organization working in the public interest to focus attention on challenges most important to moving the state forward.



Pat Gill, internet and systems manager

Pat Gill, internet and systems manager, and **Melissa Small**, communications coordinator, were accepted into the inaugural class of the Louisiana Tourism Leadership Academy, a one-year program that builds tourism leaders. It is organized by the Louisiana Tourism Promotion Association.



Erica Howard, tourism sales manager

Erica Howard, tourism sales manager, attended Travel South International Showcase in New Orleans, Dec. 1-4. She also hosted a group of five tour operators on a Louisiana Holiday Trail of Lights tour in Shreveport-Bossier and the other six partner cities, Dec. 11-14.



Suzanne Manfredi, convention sales manager

Suzanne Manfredi, convention sales manager, attended Rejuvenate Marketplace in Atlanta, Ga., Oct. 28-30. She had 28 scheduled appointments and secured four requests for proposals. She also traveled to Montgomery, Ala., Oct. 9-12. Suzanne presented the conference bid to APLUS Southern Region Conference and won the bid to host the regional conference in 2016.

Over 500 Tourism Professionals will Participate in Travel South

The Louisiana Office of Tourism is partnering with the Shreveport Bossier Convention and Tourist Bureau to bring the 33rd Annual Travel South Domestic Showcase to Shreveport-Bossier, March 22-25.

Travel South Domestic Showcase is a marketing program designed to showcase tourism organizations state-by-state and connect tour operator buyers and sellers to bring more visitors to the South. Pre-registration for buyers and journalists is up 30 percent over previous years, and the showcase expects to have more than 500 delegates participate in the programming.



Shreveport-Bossier Louisiana
MARCH 22-25, 2015

To learn more about sponsorship opportunities or conference attendance contact **Erica Howard**, tourism sales manager, by Jan. 16 at 800-551-8682 ext. 104 or ehoward@sbctb.org.

The showcase offers several great opportunities for Shreveport-Bossier tourism-related businesses to highlight the unique food, music, culture and history of northwest Louisiana.

"The opportunity to showcase our state and it's many wonderful tourism assets to tour operators and journalists is the culmination of several years of hard work and partnership between the state and the tourist bureau," said Kyle Edmiston, assistant secretary at the Louisiana Office of Tourism. "I hope all of our tourism partners will take advantage of this unique sales opportunity and participate in the showcase."



Venues Today Features Shreveport-Bossier

Venues Today recently featured the Municipal Auditorium and CenturyLink Center in their publication after visiting Shreveport-Bossier for a film-inspired convention media tour, Oct. 9-12. *Venues Today* is a magazine, newsletter and website reporting on meeting venues, live entertainment and events for management, owners and suppliers.

Jessica Boudevin, managing editor for *Venues Today*, wrote an article titled "Historic Facility Renovation Increases Bookings," which covered the \$5.3 million renovation of the Municipal Auditorium and detailed the positive increase in touring events and concerts since reopening on April 3, 2014.



Municipal Auditorium and CenturyLink Center highlighted in national media.

The second article in *Venues Today*, titled "SMG GMs Head Home," focused on the return of Rebecca Bonnevier to lead the CenturyLink Center as the general manager. Bonnevier previously opened the facility and spent five years as director of sales and marketing. The facility will celebrate its 15-year anniversary in November.

The journalists on the tour also visited several meeting venues where movies were filmed, sampled Cajun cuisine and attended the Louisiana Film Prize and the Red River Revel Arts Festival.

The media stories can be viewed online at www.venuestoday.com.

State Officials from Louisiana and Arkansas Hosted I-49 Ribbon Cutting



Photo by: Jonathan Toups

Northern extension of Interstate 49 opens to connect Louisiana and Arkansas.

The Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development held a ribbon cutting ceremony on Nov. 20 to celebrate the completion of I-49 North Segments A-D Louisiana/Arkansas State Line – U.S. 71. The event was held in conjunction with the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department.

Louisiana and Arkansas officials simultaneously opened the two roadways, one welcoming drivers to the Natural State and the other to the Bayou State. The completion is an important step in making transportation to northwest Louisiana easy for out-of-state visitors. Interstate 49 connects 12 states through the heartland of America.

CONVENTION GROUPS CALENDAR

DATE	EVENT
Jan. 25-28	2015 State Evangelism Conference
Feb. 18-20	2015 Red River Valley Association Meeting
Feb. 19 -20	Leadership Ouachita Opening Retreat
Feb. 19-22	Vietnam Vets/Legacy Vets Reunion
Feb. 21-25	2015 Louisiana School Boards Association Annual Conference
Feb. 23-March 1	2015 Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival Regional Festival

MARDI GRAS BASH Group Tours, Feb. 6-8

- American Eagle Hog Group
- First Class Tours
- Legends Bank
- Peak Activities
- Pla Tours
- Sharon's Tours