

TOURISM WORKS

for SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA

LAKE CHARLES/SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA
CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

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Photo Courtesy of Chad Moreno

PGA KORN FERRY TOUR ANNOUNCES LAKE CHARLES CHAMPIONSHIP



Pictured left to right: Alan Trantina, Golden Nugget, Senior VP & General Manager; Alex Baldwin, PGA Korn Ferry Tour, President; Steve Nieman, Bruno Event Team, Tournament Director; and Kyle Edmiston, Lake Charles/Southwest Louisiana CVB, President/CEO

The PGA Korn Ferry Tour recently announced a partnership with the Lake Charles/SWLA Convention and Visitors Bureau to bring a new tournament to the Tour's annual schedule starting in 2020. The Lake Charles Championship will debut at The Country Club at Golden Nugget in Lake Charles, the week of March 23-29 with 156 players competing for a \$600,000 purse. A five-year agreement is in place through 2024.

"We are excited to partner with the Lake Charles/SWLA CVB to

bring PGA Korn Ferry Tour golf to this region of Louisiana," said Korn Ferry Tour President Alex Baldwin. "I am confident our players will enjoy a tremendous week of competition at the Golden Nugget while providing local golf fans a glimpse into the future stars of the PGA Tour."

The announcement ensures the Bayou State will have two events on the 2020 Korn Ferry Tour schedule, as the Chitimacha Louisiana Open presented by MISTRAS will be contested in

Lafayette the week prior. Louisiana will join Tennessee, Missouri and Illinois as the only U.S. states to host two Korn Ferry Tour events annually.

"The Lake Charles/SWLA CVB is proud to join the long list of successful destinations that are part of the Korn Ferry host family," said CVB President/CEO Kyle Edmiston. "We are thankful to Lt. Governor Billy Nungesser, Mayor Nic Hunter, the Calcasieu Parish Police Jury and the Golden Nugget Lake Charles for helping to make this iconic event a reality. I am positive that the Korn Ferry players and staff will enjoy the wonderful hospitality provided by our community."

Notable PGA TOUR players who got their start on the Korn Ferry Tour include major champions Justin Thomas, Jason Day, Bubba Watson and Zach Johnson.

Learn more at
www.visitlakecharles.org/PGA.

SHELLEY JOHNSON INDUCTED INTO DESTINATIONS INTERNATIONAL HALL OF FAME



Tourism professional Shelley Johnson of Lake Charles, La., was recently inducted into the Destinations International Hall of Fame at the association's annual convention. Don Welsh, President & CEO of Destinations International (left) honored Johnson along with Paul Arrigo, President & CEO of Visit Baton Rouge (middle left); and Steve Moore, president & CEO of Visit Phoenix (right).

Destinations International Chair, William Pate, President/CEO of the Atlanta Convention & Visitors Bureau and Destinations International President & CEO, Don Welsh, announced the 2019 Hall of Fame Inductees, recognizing them at the association's annual convention July 23-25, in St. Louis, MO.

Shelley Johnson, CDME, LCTP, former Executive Director/CEO of Lake Charles/Southwest Louisiana CVB was honored as a Destinations International Hall of Fame inductee along with Cole Carley, former President & CEO of Fargo, Moorhead CVB; Kathleen (Kitty) Ratcliffe, President of Explore St. Louis; and W. Bill Williams, former Vice President of Diversity Sales at Choose Chicago. Brad Dean, CEO of Discover Puerto Rico was awarded as the Destination Organization Leadership Award Recipient.

"Each Hall of Fame inductee and our Destination Organization Leadership recipient made tremendous contributions to our industry, and we are thrilled to honor them at our Annual Convention in St. Louis," said Welsh.

Shelley Johnson retired earlier this year with more than 30 years as Executive Director/CEO of the Lake Charles/Southwest Louisiana Convention & Visitors Bureau.

"Whenever I received the news that I was chosen to be inducted into the Destinations International Hall of Fame, it truly took my breath away. I am beyond grateful for the opportunities that I have had over the course of my career and the people that I have had the pleasure of working with along the way. To be recognized by the entire industry is genuinely surreal," said Johnson.

Johnson is the founding chairman of the National Scenic Byway Foundation and past board member of the foundation's national marketing committee. She is a past presidential appointee to the White House Conference on Tourism, and she also received a conservation award by the US Fish & Wildlife Service, Southeast Region.

She became the executive director of the CVB in 1988 and oversaw a second office for the CVB, Creole Nature Trail Adventure Point, which opened in 2015. During that time, the CVB was well-recognized with accolades such as the CVB of the Year in 1997, 2000, and 2015 by Southeast Tourism Society, covering 12 southern states. The bureau also received CVB of the Year by the Louisiana Travel Association in 2008 and 2012. In 2018, Shelley received the Lifetime Achievement Award by the Louisiana Travel Association and The Beacon Award by the Southeast Tourism Society.

She is revered throughout the tourism industry as someone who can get things done efficiently and effectively, always with hospitality at the core of everything that she does and going above and beyond to make the industry shine.

For more information about the Hall of Fame, visit
www.destinationsinternational.org.

FROM THE DESK OF KYLE EDMISTON, PRESIDENT/CEO

There has been much excitement in the Lake Charles area over the past several weeks with the rollout of the #GetDownTownLC initiative and partnership with the City of Lake Charles and the Downtown Business Association. The GetDownTownLC.com website is generating interest from people looking for places to eat, shop, and enjoy entertainment and events in downtown Lake Charles. The CVB is pleased to promote local products and businesses to visitors who are interested in experiencing Lake Charles.

Events that will highlight the downtown area this fall are Rouge et Blanc, Oct. 12; Chuck Fest, Oct. 19; and Smoke & Barrel on Nov. 16. These events showcase our culture, music, and culinary arts, and they also attract people to explore and appreciate our

downtown businesses and streetscape.

A new event coming to the Lake Area November 1-2 is the Southern Cast Iron Cook-off. At-home chefs are invited to preregister in various categories and prepare original dishes for on-site judging. Musical entertainment, cooking demonstrations and food and beverage booths will all be part of this exciting event. The CVB is encouraging chefs and local vendors to log onto SouthernCastIron.com for information. This will be another event for a chance for people to #GetDownTownLC!



Kyle Edmiston,
President/CEO



PRO WATERCROSS NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP



www.ProWatercross.com

The Pro Watercross National Championships took place along North Beach in Lake Charles Saturday-Sunday, Aug. 10-11. AJ Handler, CEO of the Pro Watercross Tour, expressed his appreciation to Eric Zartler, sales director at the Lake Charles/Southwest Louisiana Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) and the CVB's team for all the effort they put into making this event a tremendous success.

The Pro Watercross National Championship Event brought in excess of 1,500 total room nights earlier this month with the nearest competitor from the Austin, TX area, and the furthest competitor coming in from Turkey. This event was not anticipated for 2019, but through the longstanding relationship with the event organizers, the area welcomed the group with open arms. Lake Charles is proud to be the host city for the event for the next two years.

"Pro Watercross was a perfect end to the summer season, giving people a reason to get out and appreciate our natural resources and waterways. The athletes put on a show, and the level of professionalism that they demonstrated was truly incredible. We're looking forward to next year, and we appreciate all the entities who worked together to make this event possible," said Zartler.

2019 was year one of a three-year commitment with the event returning in 2020 and 2021.

CERTIFIED DESTINATION MANAGEMENT EXECUTIVES



Shanna Landry, director of administration/satellite office and Eric Zartler, sales director, at the Lake Charles/Southwest Louisiana Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB), have earned the Certified Destination Management Executive (CDME) designation,

the only integrated executive program specifically designed for the destination management industry. The focus of the program is on vision, leadership, productivity and the implementation of business strategies.

The CDME designation is the tourism industry's highest individual educational achievement. The program is designed to better prepare senior destination organization professionals to become more effective organizational and community leaders and to identify and respond to the constant change and increasing competition in the industry.

"Congratulations to those who have earned their CDME credential, the tourism industry's highest individual achievement," said Don Welsh, President and CEO of Destinations International. "These leaders are now equipped with the knowledge needed to adapt to and manage the increasing change and competition facing our industry."