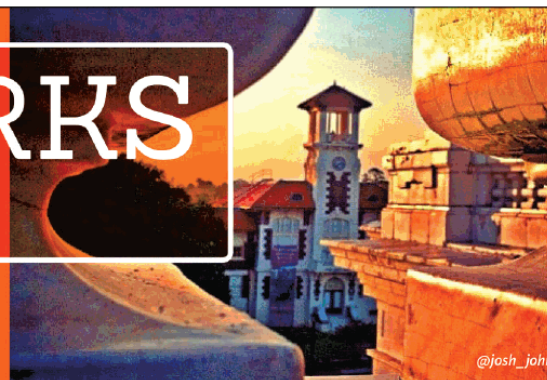


# TOURISM WORKS for SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA

LAKE CHARLES/SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA  
CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

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## NOTHING BUT NET & A HOMERUN! LHSAA Chooses Southwest Louisiana



In a majority vote last week, the Louisiana High School Athletic Association (LHSAA) agreed to award the Louisiana High School State Baseball Championships to the Sulphur area for another year with the tournament being held May 14-16, 2020. Additionally, LHSAA voted to continue hosting 28 teams for the Boys' Basketball State Championships at the Burton Complex in Lake Charles to take place March 10-14, 2020 along with the Girls' State Basketball Championships returning to Lake Charles March 3-7, 2020.

"We were thrilled to receive news that the LHSAA awarded these prestigious tournaments to Southwest Louisiana. This only showcases the work that Eric Zartler, our sales director, has been doing with LHSAA for years! The hospitality community, governmental entities and volunteers work hard to ensure the success of the tournaments and that everyone has a memorable experience from the teams to the LHSAA's enthusiastic fanbase. These tournaments bring an economic impact that is felt throughout the community, and the CVB is proud to work alongside the Calcasieu Parish Police Jury and Sulphur Parks & Recreation to accomplish bringing these tournaments to Calcasieu Parish," said Kyle Edmiston, President/CEO of the CVB.

## NATIONAL GET OUTDOORS DAY



Earlier this month, Creole Nature Trail Adventure Point celebrated National Get Outdoors Day, and the public was invited to come out to learn about outdoor adventures to be had in Southwest Louisiana. Gumbeaux Gator was on hand for photos, and there was a nature art exhibit by Calcasieu Parish students. Attendees also received coloring books, water bottles and a chance to hold baby alligators. For more information on Adventure Point and the great outdoors, visit [AdventurePoint.info](http://AdventurePoint.info).

## FROM THE DESK OF KYLE EDMISTON, PRESIDENT/CEO

With the recent retirement of Shelley Johnson, I am both humbled and honored that the Board of Directors asked me to step into the role of President/CEO. My goal is to build upon the foundation and high expectations that she has established over the course of her 30-plus-year career. Having previously served as the President/CEO of Ruston and Lincoln Parish, as well as the state tourism director for Louisiana, I have worked closely with Shelley for many years in a variety of capacities. However, since January 2018, I have had the distinct privilege of working directly alongside her and the staff at the CVB, and it is without a doubt a rewarding experience to be part of such a dynamic team of passionate, dedicated tourism professionals.

Recently, the Louisiana Office of Tourism announced research results from last year. The state welcomed a record 51.3 million visitors in 2018, representing an increase of nine percent over the 47.1 million visitors reported by DK Shifflet in April 2017. With the increase in visitation, the economic impact grew to \$18.8 billion, a gain of seven percent over 2017. Tax revenue generated through travel and tourism spending saves each household in Louisiana \$1,082 a year in taxes that would be needed to maintain current services.

Investing in tourism to promote and market Louisiana leads to thousands of direct and indirect jobs for our state. At the end of 2018, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data shows 237,200 jobs

were the result of visitor spending in Louisiana, adding 2,600 new tourism-related jobs over 2017. A total of 6,700 new tourism-related jobs have been created in Louisiana since 2016.

The team at the CVB and I are looking forward to strengthening and enhancing the tourism industry with our daily efforts. We will continue to work with community leaders, groups and organizations to increase the visibility of Southwest Louisiana as a desirable destination for meetings, conventions, events, leisure travel, tours, tournaments, events and festivals.



*Kyle Edmiston*  
Kyle Edmiston,  
President/CEO

## OUTDOOR WRITERS FAM



Will Precht, senior media/public relations manager, and Kelli Fontenot, media/public relations manager with the CVB hosted 4 outdoor writers and photographers May 13 - 16. These writers included Justin Hoffman with *Wide Open Spaces* and *Ontario Out of Doors* from Ottawa, Canada; and three writers from Alabama including Ed Mashburn with *Great Days Outdoors*; Alan Clemons with *Grand View Outdoors*, and John Felsler with *Game & Fish*. Clemons is also the president of the Southeastern Outdoor Press Association. While in Southwest Louisiana, the writers went on guided fishing excursions with Grosse Savanne and Big Lake Guide Service. They experienced Rikenjak's Brewing Co., Restaurant Calla, and Jack Daniel's Bar & Grill. They also visited Crying Eagle Brewing Co. and Bayou Rum Distillery.

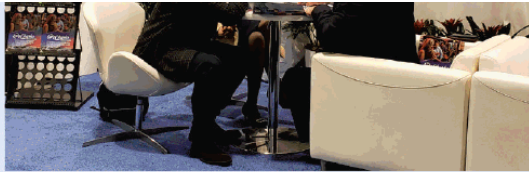
## IPW RECAP

The world recently descended upon Anaheim for U.S. Travel



Taylor Beard Stanley, senior sales manager at the Convention & Visitors Bureau recently attended the HelmsBriscoe Annual Business

Association's IPW. This is a national showcase of America where U.S. travel exhibitors connect with travel buyers and media from more than 70 countries to promote their destination and build relationships that lead to future business. This is U.S. Travel Association's leading international inbound travel trade show, driving \$5.5 billion in travel to the United States. Kyle Edmiston, president/CEO of the CVB attended the show along with



Anne Klenke, tourism director, reaching the international tour market; and Will Precht, senior media/public relations manager,

conducting media appointments. Shelley Johnson represented the Creole Nature Trail District Board of Commissioners.



Conference in Houston, Texas, May 29-31. Over 1,000 HelmsBriscoe representatives from all over the world came together to attend educational sessions, network and learn more

information about destinations where they can bring their clients meetings events, and conferences. Emphasizing South Central region meetings, Taylor was able to meet one-on-one with over 20 associates which help organize over 200 meetings per year with the goal of enticing meetings or conferences to be hosted in Southwest Louisiana.

## GOOGLE MY BUSINESS WORKSHOP



The CVB and the Southwest Louisiana Economic Development Alliance teamed up to host Miles Partnership through the Louisiana Office of Tourism for a Google My Business workshop geared toward business owners in the Lake Area on Wednesday, June 12. Local businesses have something unique to offer visitors, and the more

robust their digital footprint on Google, the better the awareness becomes online for consumers to find and appreciate the variety of experiences to be had in Southwest Louisiana. The workshop was free, and local businesses were able to take advantage of knowledge by one of the biggest industry leaders in destination marketing.

## TOP 20 LOCAL FAVORITES



The Top 20 Local Favorites Restaurant Competition is underway with voting occurring through Sunday, June 23. Visitors want to know where the locals like to eat! So, make sure that they are getting the best suggestions as the Top 20 Restaurant page on VisitLakeCharles.org is one of the most frequented pages on the website. To cast your vote, log onto [VisitLakeCharles.org/Vote](http://VisitLakeCharles.org/Vote).

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