

# TOURISM WORKS

for SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA

LAKE CHARLES/SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA  
CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

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## LAKE CHARLES/SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA CVB VOTES SUPPORT FOR PORT WONDER



The Lake Charles/Southwest Louisiana Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) Board of Directors voted recently at their November meeting to financially support and partner with the City of Lake Charles, the Department of Wildlife & Fisheries and other private and public entities on the proposed Port Wonder attraction, to be located



right alongside the shore of Lake Charles. The \$20+ million lakefront project will be a perfect addition to encourage visitors traveling on I-10 to stop to explore the many options that Lake Charles/Southwest Louisiana has to offer.

The proposed venture will include site improvements, renovation of the parking garage and the construction of an iconic structure that will house the Children's Museum of Lake Charles and the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries' Science Center and Educational Complex. Pending final approval, the collaboration of these two entities will consolidate

two unique projects under one roof for an educational, entertaining and delightful visitor experience.

"Bringing this imaginative, new attraction to the forefront of the destination at one of the key entry points to Lake Charles will greatly enhance the lakefront and opportunities for visitors to enjoy spending time in the area, with the added benefit of an educational component when it comes to the sustainability of our unique lands, estuaries and waterways that are home to nature's bounty of plants and animals," said Shelley Johnson, executive director of the CVB.

The City of Lake Charles and the Children's Museum of Lake Charles have successfully solicited other funding partners, both governmental and private, and expect Port Wonder to be fully funded contingent upon final TIG approval. For more information on Port Wonder and other attractions in the area, go to [VisitLakeCharles.org/PortWonder](http://VisitLakeCharles.org/PortWonder).



## THE BUSINESS OF TOURISM

From the Desk of  
Shelley Johnson, CDME,  
LCTP, Executive Director



With incredible visitor growth in the destination over the past 5 years, Southwest Louisiana is continuing to see an increase in creative endeavors across all sectors. From new restaurants, shops and festivals to partnerships that give rise to new attractions and experiences benefitting visitors and locals alike, Southwest Louisiana is simmering with promise and synergy. The bureau is poised to amplify the message of the diverse offerings of Calcasieu Parish as well as promoting the South's Premier Gaming Resort Destination, the natural wonders of the Creole Nature Trail All-American Road and Southwest Louisiana as a popular destination for youth sports.



Images are powerful sources of inspiration, and the CVB is working toward a complete visual library of every visitor-friendly location including attractions, shops, restaurants, venues and accommodations by partnering with Threshold 360. With dynamic images of the destination, the bureau can enhance its website, blog and social presence, as well as build virtual itineraries and have more visual representation online, accessible by Google and other search engines. This partnership, coupled with the Louisiana Google Partnership, will be highly advantageous for the destination.

To entice meetings and conventions, the sales team will embark upon promoting an incentive program to bolster growth and the attractiveness of Lake Charles/



Southwest Louisiana as a meeting destination. The incentive concentrates on shoulder seasons for the area and will give Southwest Louisiana an advantage whenever competing with similar destinations that have essentially the same capacity to host meetings and conventions.

The bureau will continue to invest in community partnerships as well as strategically beneficial partnerships with Brand USA for international promotions, the Louisiana Office of Tourism, the Louisiana Travel Association, and others as to light the way for a stronger and brighter future. The staff at the bureau is eager to begin working to bring new business, events and media coverage to Southwest Louisiana.



Shelley Johnson, CDME, LCTP  
Executive Director

*Shelley Johnson*

## HERE'S LOOKING AT YOU 2018 - CVB BY THE NUMBERS



**ADDED** \$732.09 million to the economy of Calcasieu Parish through travel expenditures.

**CONTACTED** 5,672 prospective clients.

**REACHED** more than 1,348,775 people through our website, the Creole Nature Trail and Mardi Gras websites, print ads and the visitor information center.

**BOOKED** over 74,200 room nights.

**INTERACTED** with 39,784 visitors at our Visitor Information Center.

**PRODUCED** 361 sales leads and alerted our accommodations to these leads.

**SOLD** Calcasieu Parish at 47 national, international and state travel shows, meetings and conventions.

**MADE** 337 in person sales calls.

**CONDUCTED** 59 site inspections and fam tours hosting 237 tour operators, meeting planners and hosted travel writers.

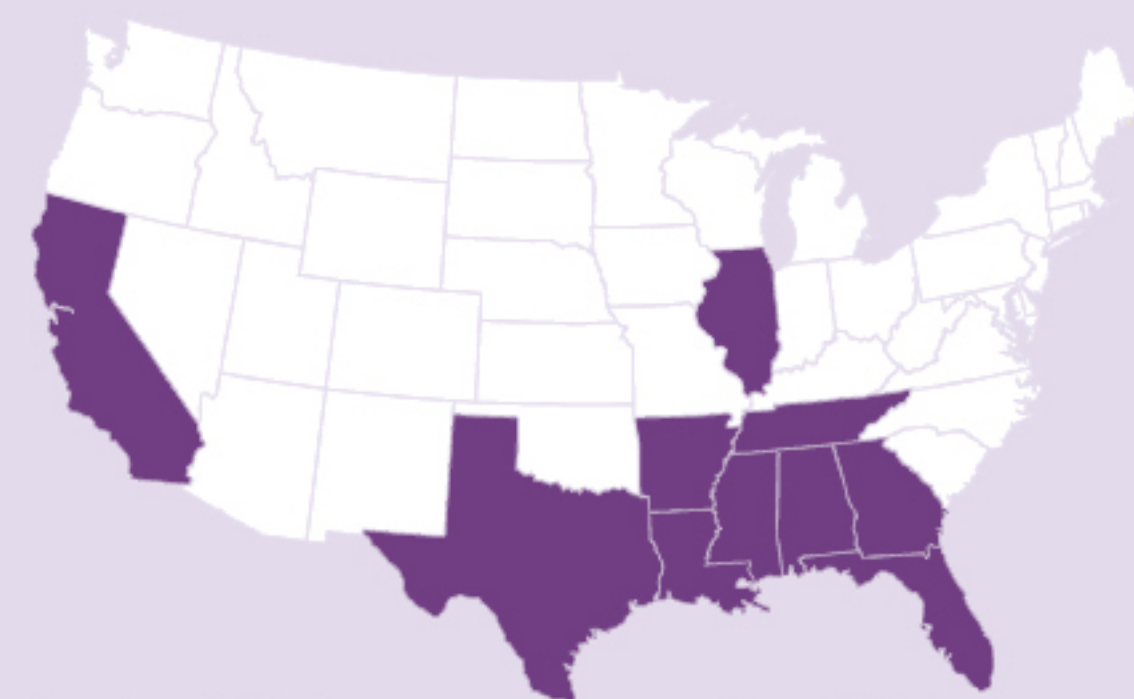
**OBTAINED** and tracked more than \$7.6 million worth of free media exposure for Southwest Louisiana in more than 1,000 articles through via public relations.

**INCREASED** our Facebook fan base from 83,533 to 88,739 with 11,335,778 impressions and our Twitter following from 5,413 to 5,811 with 918,926 organic impressions. Our Instagram follower count increased to 10.5K. Year-to-date video views on YouTube were 499,537 on mobile and 150,127 on desktop.



## GATOR BITES

TOP 10 STATES  
WITH THE MOST VISITORS TO SWLA\*\*



- |                |               |
|----------------|---------------|
| 1. Louisiana   | 6. Alabama    |
| 2. Texas       | 7. Georgia    |
| 3. Mississippi | 8. California |
| 4. Arkansas    | 9. Tennessee  |
| 5. Florida     | 10. Illinois  |

TOP 5 FOREIGN COUNTRIES  
WITH THE MOST VISITORS TO LOUISIANA\*

- |                   |              |
|-------------------|--------------|
| 1. Canada         | 4. Mexico    |
| 2. France         | 5. Australia |
| 3. United Kingdom |              |

## STATE VISITOR PROFILE\*\*

- ◆ 48% of SWLA visitors origin market is Houston, TX.
- ◆ 43% of SWLA visitors are 55+ years old, and the average age is 50.
- ◆ 95% of SWLA visitors stay in hotels.
- ◆ Average spend per day is \$147.

TOP 10 ACTIVITIES  
IN THE REGION\*\*

- |                               |                        |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Gaming                     | 6. Live Music          |
| 2. Visit Friends/Relatives    | 7. Touring/Sightseeing |
| 3. Shopping                   | 8. Medical             |
| 4. Movies                     | 9. Theater/Dance       |
| 5. Culinary/Dining Experience | 10. Golfing            |

\*Source: Louisiana Welcome Centers

\*\* Source: Year-End 2017 Louisiana Visitor Profile, DK Shifflet, Aug. 2018

## DID YOU KNOW?



The staff of the CVB hits the ground running each year. Here's a snapshot of the upcoming shows, media opportunities and events.

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| Jan. 23-24  | LA Travel Association Annual Meeting                            |
| Jan. 23-25  | LA High School Athletic Association (LHSAA) Convention          |
| Jan. 25-29  | American Bus Association  |
| Jan. 29-30  | Showbird Extravaganza   |
| Jan. 29-31  | Religious Conference Management Association Emerge              |
| Feb. 6-8    | Association Management Companies (AMC) Institute Annual Meeting |
| Feb. 12-15  | Receptive Tour Operator Summit West & Sales Calls               |
| Feb. 21-22  | LA Association of Fairs & Festivals                             |
| Feb. 24-27  | Travel South Domestic Showcase & Media Event                    |
| March 2-5   | Mardi Gras Media Tour   |
| March 3-5   | Your Military Reunion Conference                                |
| March 4-9   | LHSAA Boys Top 48 Basketball Championships                      |
| March 10-13 | Rendezvous South  |

1205 N. Lakeshore Drive, Lake Charles, LA

**LAKE CHARLES**  
SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA  
CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

1-800-456-SWLA | [www.visitlakecharles.org](http://www.visitlakecharles.org)

Photos courtesy of LindseyJanies.com, ParkerBrandUp.com,  
Michael Palumbo & the American Press.