

Travel Talk

News from Louisiana's Other Side - Shreveport-Bossier Convention & Tourist Bureau



Sept.
- Oct.
2009

Shreveport-Bossier Leads State's Hotel Occupancy As Repeat Visitation Increases

Despite a drop in travel figures for destinations nationwide, recent research shows that Shreveport-Bossier continues to hold steady with Louisiana's highest occupancy rates and a 13 percent spike in repeat visitation.

According to Smith Travel Research, Shreveport-Bossier's hotel occupancy is the highest in the state at 66.3 percent — over New Orleans' 57 percent and over Baton Rouge's 57.7 percent. The sister cities also topped the state's overall occupancy average of 56.9 percent.

To date, Shreveport-Bossier has a lodging inventory of 9,794 rooms and is expected to reach the 10,000 room mark later this year.

In a recent Visitor Intercept Survey conducted for the tourist bureau by Randall Travel Marketing, repeat visitation to Shreveport-



Loyal visitors flock to Shreveport-Bossier, as repeat visitation is up 13 percent over 2008.

Bossier saw a growth of 13 percent over last year's figures, based on preliminary data. In total, 87 percent of visitors are coming more than once a year.

Dining, shopping and gaming continue to rank high as popular activities for visitors to the sister cities. In addition, overall excellence ratings of Shreveport-Bossier as a travel destination nearly tripled, according to the report.

By the Numbers: Louisiana Hotel Occupancy

Shreveport-Bossier: 66.3 percent
Baton Rouge: 57.7 percent
New Orleans: 57 percent
State average: 56.9 percent

Video Contest Winner Named



Roger Braniff, of Greenwood, is the winner of the tourist bureau's first video contest.

Congratulations Roger Braniff, of Greenwood, La., on winning the \$2,500 grand prize in the Show Us Your Shreveport-Bossier video contest.

When it comes to Braniff's film, *Welcome to the Other Side*, hang on for the fastest three-minute ride around Shreveport-Bossier as he highlights a variety of things about his hometown. To view

Braniff's video and many others, log on to www.Shreveport-Bossier.org.

Dates to Remember:

Hospitality Breakfast

9-2, 8 a.m., DiamondJacks Casino & Resort.
10-7, 8 a.m., Louisiana State Fair.

Freaky Fam & Jam

10-29, 4 p.m.-7:30 p.m., Sam's Town Hotel & Casino.

Attractions Assn.

9-9, 11 a.m., Savoie's, Louisiana Boardwalk. Information: Gina Hobbs, 461-0625.

Louisiana Restaurant Assn.

9-23, Fourth Annual Bowling Tournament. Four-person teams welcome. Holiday Lanes, Bossier City. Information: Gretchen Hamilton, 741-6543.

Shreveport-Bossier Hotel & Lodging Assn.

9-8; 10-13, 11 a.m., Location TBA. Information: Bob Gansfuss, 629-4458.

Calendar of Events

September/October

- 9/1-5 Shreveport Farmer's Market. Festival Plaza.
 9/1-7 Animalopolis at the IMAX Theater. Sci-Port: Louisiana's Science Center.
 9/1-7 Dinosaurs Alive IMAX. Sci-Port Louisiana's Science Center.
 9/1-19 Graffiti Exhibition. Artspace.
 9/1-20 Albino R. Hinojosa: An American Realist. R.W. Norton Art Gallery.
 9/1-26 Yogie and Friends Summer Green Up. Yogie and Friends Exotic Cat Sanctuary.
 9/1-26 Willis-Knighton Master Series. Riverview Theater and Riverview Hall.
 9/1-12/27 So Fly Sundays. Funny Bone Comedy Club, Louisiana Boardwalk.
 10/1-24 Shreve Town Ghost Walk. Downtown Shreveport.
 Through 12/9 Sci-Port en Español. Sci-Port: Louisiana's Science Center.
 Through 12/27 Trapped Truth Society Open Prose and Poetry Reading. Johnny's Pizza, Gilbert Drive.
 Through 12/9 Latin Night. Boomtown Hotel and Casino.
 10/3 28th Annual A Taste of Shreveport, a presentation by the Knights of Columbus. Fox Creek Farms.
 10/3 First Saturday Tour: Halloween Tour - Where the Wild Things Are. R.W. Norton Art Gallery.
 10/3 Mad Scientist Cycle for Sci-Port. Sci-Port: Louisiana's Science Center.
 10/3-10 Red River Revel Arts Festival. Festival Plaza.
 10/17 Big Bad VooDoo Daddy. Strand Theatre.
 10/17 Brew - A Premier Beer Tasting and Concert. Festival Plaza.
 Through 11/21 Chimpanzee Discovery Day. Chimp Haven.
 10/22-11/8 State Fair of Louisiana. State Fairgrounds.
 10/23-24 State Fair PRCA Championship Rodeo. Hirsch Memorial Coliseum.
 10/24 Ceol Na Pioba Solo Bagpipe Competition. Karpeles Manuscript Library Museum.
 10/24 Man of La Mancha. Riverview Hall.
 10/24 Run with the Nuns III. Harrah's Louisiana Downs.
 10/24 Wayne Troups Concert. State Fair of Louisiana.



Be sure to submit your Shreveport-Bossier events regularly at www.ShreveportBossierFunGuide.com

Your Bureau at Work For You



Dianna Douglas
Regional Convention
Sales Manager

Regional Convention Sales Manager Dianna Douglas traveled to New Orleans, Aug. 20-21 and to Baton Rouge, Aug. 25-28, to conduct sales calls with potential clients. Dianna also will travel to Washington, D.C., Sept. 8-11, for the Hospitality Sales and Marketing Association International's Affordable Meetings Trade Show.

Convention Sales Manager Lisa Hayes and Convention Sales Manager Suzanne Manfredi traveled to Baton Rouge in July to conduct sales calls with existing association clients.

Suzanne also traveled to Las Vegas, Aug. 27-



Lisa Hayes
Convention Sales Manager

30 for the first ever Connect Marketplace Tradeshow to meet with SMERF (Social, Medical, Education, Religious and Fraternal) Market Meeting Planners.

President Stacy Brown, Vice President of Communications Brandy Evans, Vice President of Convention Marketing and Bureau Services Kim Brice and Vice President of Tourism Marketing Kelly Wells attended the Destination Marketing Association International annual convention, July 28-30, in Atlanta, Ga. to learn more about current trends and research from industry experts.

Navigating Social Media

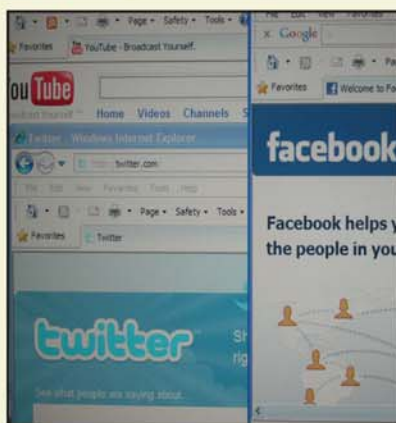
In a time of information overload, many consumers are using cyber methods to – in their opinions – cut through the noise of both advertising and traditional media.

According to an April 2009 Nielsen Global Online Consumer Survey of more than 25,000 Internet consumers from 50 countries, the most trusted forms of advertising are recommendations from personal acquaintances or opinions posted by consumers online.

Ninety percent of consumers surveyed trust recommendations from people they know, while 70 percent trust consumer opinions posted online. Both statistics shed light on the impact of social media and the importance of using those methods to expand your reach to web savvy consumers.

Here are a few tips from www.imediaconnection.com and TourismInternetMarketing.com to help navigate social media:

- Learn the difference between social channels. Each type of social media comes with a different set of rules, a different audience, different user expectations and different preferences.
- Make sure you have time and resources. Social media



Don't let social media overwhelm you. Your business could benefit from being involved.

marketing is not a set-it-and-forget-it type of advertising. By engaging in social media, you are entering a conversation with your prospects and clients.

- Investigate the demographics of each social channel in order to find out which is most appropriate for your business.
- Above all, be authentic. Don't try to fake, spin or hide behind your posts — it won't work.

- Make sure your online voice is consistent with your brand.
- Get your top executive involved. Employees love it. Customers love it. There is no more powerful way to humanize your brand.

Where to start?

Remember, not all social media outlets will be a right fit for your organization. Here are a few good places to start:

- Facebook Fan Page – Give updates about your business and gain fans, www.facebook.com.
- Trip Advisor – See how your customers are rating your lodging property, www.tripadvisor.com.



Convention Calendar - September/October

Date	Event	Hotel
9/4-9/11	National Baptist Convention of America, Inc. – 2009 Annual Session	Hilton Hotel Shreveport
9/10-9/12	Bossier City Centennial Balloon Rally – 2009 Balloon Rally	Econo Lodge Inn & Suites
9/10-9/11	River Cities Corvette Club, Inc. – Corvette Revue	Best Western Chateau Suite Hotel
9/10-9/11	HDW, Inc. – 2009 Fall Dealers Meeting	Hilton Hotel Shreveport
9/14-9/17	Louisiana Housing Council – Annual Conference	DiamondJacks Casino and Resort
9/14	Louisiana Home Builders Association	Horseshoe Casino & Hotel
9/15-9/18	United Methodist Higher Education Foundation – 2009 Annual Board of Trustee Meeting	Hilton Hotel Shreveport
9/23	Hull Consulting – Educational Seminar	Ramada Inn and Conference Center
9/23-9/24	LSU Law School Center of Continuing Professional Development – Legal Education Seminar	Hilton Hotel Shreveport, Shreveport Convention Center
10/1	Louisiana Association of Convention and Visitors Bureaus	Homewood Suites Shreveport
10/2	Louisiana Neurosurgical Society – Fall Seminar	Holiday Inn Downtown/Riverfront
10/3-10/5	American Water Works Association – 2009 Regional Convention	Hilton Hotel Shreveport
10/3-10/6	Air Force Security Police Association – 2009 Annual Reunion	Hilton Hotel Shreveport
10/7-10/10	Louisiana Society of Health System Pharmacists	Sam's Town Hotel & Casino Shreveport

Bureau VP Recognized, Freaky Fam and Jam Oct. 29

Vice President of Tourism Marketing Kelly Wells was named a Certified Destination Marketing Executive by Destination Marketing Association International and Perdue University, July 30, at the annual convention in Atlanta, Ga.

Recognized by the destination marketing industry as its highest educational achievement, CDME is an advanced educational program for veteran and career-minded destination marketing executives looking for senior-level professional development courses. There are fewer than 150 CDME recognized professionals in the country.

The focus of the program includes leadership, productivity, the implementation of business strategies and individual growth, be-



Kelly Wells (center) was named a Certified Destination Marketing Executive by Destination Marketing Association International, July 30, at the annual convention in Atlanta, Ga.

coming a more effective organizational and industry leader. ■

Mark your calendars, today for the fourth annual Freaky Fam and Jam, Oct. 29.

This year's spooktakular Halloween-themed event will kickoff at Sam's Town Hotel & Casino. It will include stops at Shreveport-Bossier's latest and greatest restaurants and nightlife venues.

Fam and Jam was created to expose tourism industry partners to new tourism-related venues on Louisiana's Other Side, while in a fun, team building and networking environment. The cost to participate is \$35 and includes a T-shirt.

For more information, contact Kathy Melancon at 429-0654 or kmelancon@sbctb.org. ■

Board of Directors

Industry Briefs

Homewood Suites Welcomes New Sales Manager

Alison Young is sales manager at the Homewood Suites by Hilton Shreveport. The Shreveport native joined the property in March. A graduate of Louisiana Tech University, she has nine years of sales and marketing experience in retail, advertising and commercial kitchen equipment. At the Homewood Suites by Hilton, Young works with corporate accounts and group sales. In addition, she is a diplomat with the Greater Shreveport Chamber of Commerce and leads her own Mary Kay business.

Hampton Inn, TownePlace Suites Hire New Sales Coordinator

Karli Stine joined the Hampton Inn and TownePlace Suites staff in June. After graduating from Northwestern State University last year, the Lake Charles native worked as a logistics sales representative with C.H. Robinson in Shreveport before joining the Hampton Inn and TownePlace Suites in Bossier City.

Tourist Bureau Receives Request for Proposal for MPI Event

Regional Convention Sales Manager Dianna Douglas received a Request for Proposal from New Orleans-based BBC Destination Management giving Shreveport-Bossier an opportunity to host the spring 2010 Meeting Planners International Professional Development Day Program. The one-day event would give Shreveport-Bossier a platform to showcase the sister cities to professional meeting planners. The event also includes networking and educational seminars.

Marty Young,
Chairman
Attractions Assn.*

John Hubbard,
Vice Chairman
Bossier Chamber of
Commerce*

Frederick Henson,
Treasurer
African-American
Chamber of
Commerce*

Jim Johnson,
Secretary
Bossier Rural
Municipalities*

Joyce Jeffrey,
Bossier Mayor's
Office*

Keisha Shields,
Shreveport-Bossier
Hotel Lodging
Assn.*

Luke Turner,
Bossier Parish
Police Jury*

Kathy Jackson,
Caddo Rural
Municipalities*

Ray Ferland,
Shreveport-Bossier
Hotel Lodging
Assn.*

Bob Gansfuss,
Shreveport-Bossier
Hotel Lodging
Assn.*

Betty Matthews,
Caddo Parish
Commission*

Debra Hamilton,
Bossier Office of
Community Ser-
vices*

Sarah Parsons,
Shreveport-Bossier
Hotel Lodging
Assn.*

Jerry Kolniak,
Louisiana
Restaurant
Assn.*

Thaddeus Pugh,
Shreveport Mayor's
Office*

Valarie Gunn,
Greater Shreveport
Chamber of
Commerce*

*Appointing
Organization



Convention & Tourist Bureau
629 Spring Street
Shreveport, LA 71101