Industry Briefs

Shelli Briery was hired at Horseshoe Casino and Harrah’s Louisiana Downs to handle public relations, community relations and internal communication for both properties. Before joining the Caesar’s family, she worked at KTAL for more than eight years as the morning news anchor and reporter.

Would you like to learn about the latest tourism trends? If so, please contact Brandy Evans, vice president of communications, and arrange for her to come and share the latest news and trends in the industry. She can be reached at 429-0638 or bevans@sbctcb.org.

Millennium Studio’s will begin moving into their offices in January and they will be off and running with a new film in pre-production.

A Film Alliance Group has been formed and is meeting on a monthly basis to support LIFE a group of film supporters who represent the group during the legislative session and promote filmmaking in the Shreveport-Bossier area.

The Louisiana Travel Promotion Association (LTPA) will hold their annual active session and promote filmmaking in the Shreveport-Bossier area.

Tourist bureau unveils new downtown center

The Shreveport-Bossier Convention and Tourist Bureau unveiled its new downtown visitor center, Tuesday, Nov. 30, at a ribbon-cutting ceremony followed by an open house for the public.

“When visitors and residents come into our downtown we want them to know right away what a progressive, happening place this is,” said John Hubbard, bureau board chairman. “When they walk into our visitor center, we don’t want to just tell them what a great place this is to live, work and play. We want to show them.

The center is a dramatic improvement from the previous one. “We tried to meld the old with the new, and we wanted to represent the historical buildings that once stood here,” said Stacy Brown, bureau president.

Some of the amenities of the new 6,000-square-foot visitor center include: a freestanding computer kiosk; display cases that show off annual festivals and museums; exhibit panel displays; wireless Internet access, flat screen TVs with videos and scrolling events; and a Cypress tree in the corner.

The reviews from our visitors have been glowing,” Brown said. “They love the new space and find it very informative and engaging.”

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Mardi Gras Bash approaching, volunteers needed

Mardi Gras in Shreveport-Bossier was once a best kept secret. But visitors and groups are having such fun that word is spreading that northwest Louisiana knows how to party.

For groups of 10 or more, the bureau hosts an annual Mardi Gras Bash on the banks of the Red River in downtown Shreveport for both major parade weekends. This year, the Krewe of Centaur’s parade rolls on Saturday, Feb. 26, while the Krewe of Gemini parades on Saturday, March 5.

Participants of the Bash are treated to a visit from the royal courts of the Mardi Gras krewes, Cajun food like crawfish etouffee and gumbo, live music, a private tour of the floats before the parades start, and an up close spot on the parade route to catch hundreds of Mardi Gras beads and doubloons.

If you would like to volunteer and network with the out-of-town group tours either weekend for the Bash, please contact Erica Howard, leisure group sales manager, at 222-9881 ext. 104 or ehoward@sbctcb.org.

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

Louisiana’s OTHER SIDE

Convention & Tourist Bureau
625 Spring Street
Shreveport, LA 71101

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Dates to Remember:

Shreveport-Bossier Hotel and Lodging Association
Jan. 9, noon, Petroleum Club
Feb. 6, noon, Petroleum Club

Hospitality Breakfast
Jan. 5, Airspace
Feb. 2, DiamondJacks Casino & Hotel

Tourism on the Town:
Jan. 5, 6:30 p.m., Sci-Pac: Louisiana’s Science Center
Feb. 16, 6-7 p.m., Hilton Garden Inn

Louisiana Restaurant Association
LRA Information: Kelly McLemore, 377-0108.

Special thanks to the Shreveport Chamber of Commerce and Bossier Chamber of Commerce for the joint ribbon-cutting ceremony.

photo courtesy of Tom Pace

Area Mardi Gras festivities pump more than $17 million into the local economy from out-of-town visitors.

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On the fun side, the Shreveport-Bossier Convention and Tourist Bureau and its partners pulled out all the stops, starting with a Second Line Parade that sent everyone dancing through the convention center and into the Ballroom...
Stacy Brown, bureau president, attended the Southeast Tourism Society board meeting. She currently sits on the organization’s board of directors. STS is a non-profit membership organization promoting tourism within the 12 southeastern states by sharing resources, fostering cooperation, networking, and providing continuing education, cooperative marketing, consumer outreach, advice and consultation.

Erica Howard, leisure sales manager, attended the United States Tour Operator Association in New Orleans. While there she had appointments with 10 tour operators for the purpose of bringing those tour companies to Shreveport-Bossier. She also attended the Globus annual meeting. Globus is a United Kingdom group tour company, which is bringing a series of tours to Shreveport-Bossier in Fall 2011.

In November 2010, Kathy Melancon, product development and research manager, traveled with the Shreveport-Bossier Film Office to Los Angeles, CA. Meetings were held with several major film and television studios, as well as several independent filmmakers. Several announcements will be made about new companies and film projects coming to the area.

Also in November, Suzanne Manfredi, convention sales manager, traveled to Baton Rouge and New Orleans to meet with numerous clients including the Louisiana Retired Teachers Association, Louisiana Legislative Black Caucus and Louisiana Academy of Family Physicians. All are confirmed or looking to book future conventions in Shreveport-Bossier.

Chris Jay has joined the bureau as public relations/social media manager. Chris has nine years of experience in content and attraction-based marketing and public relations, as well as a background in professional writing and media production. He looks forward to helping area attractions build a buzz and grow their audiences through innovative new approaches to spreading the word.

Stacy Brown Bureau President

Fun Guide for FREE

January/February
1/19 CMF Grammies at Horseshoe Casino. CMT Bar.
1/21 The Odd Couple. Strand Theatre.
1/23 Beginner Waltz Lessons by USA Dance. Sandy's Dance Center.
1/26 The Odd Couple. Strand Theatre.
1/28 St. Patrick's Day Ball. Bossier Civic Center.
1/29 Beginner Bird Walk. Wild Bird Center.
1/30 The Odd Couple. Strand Theatre.
1/31 Beginner Waltz Lessons by USA Dance. Sandy's Dance Center.

Beginning of the Month Events
Submit your events on the Fun Guide for FREE

Groupon Launches “Daily Deals” in Shreveport - Bossier

Groupon, an international company that offers products and services from popular local businesses at a huge discount through daily e-mail e-coupons, has begun featuring offers from Shreveport-Bossier businesses. Local businesses such as Holiday Lanes in Bossier City and Athena’s Greek & Lebanese Grill in Shreveport have been featured on Groupon.com’s Shreveport site. Groupon currently offers its “daily deals” in over 50 American cities, as well as 100 additional markets in Asia, Europe, and South America.

Groupon negotiates discounts ranging from 50 percent to 90 percent off services ranging from car washes to theatre tickets. The company then promotes these discounts through a “Daily Deal” e-mail newsletter, as well as social networks like Twitter, Facebook, and Google+. The e-mail newsletter also features a write-up about the business being promoted that day.

"Our thought was that we may take a cut in our profits from the Groupon sales, but we’d get new customers through the door and make up for them," said Robin Williams, head of marketing for Holiday Lanes.

Submit your events on the Fun Guide for FREE

Shreveport-Bossier experiencing largest increase in international visitors in nearly a decade

Louisiana saw an increase in international visitors in 2010. Locally, the trend was similar. According to Visit Shreveport-Bossier’s report published by the research and development team at the Louisiana Office of Tourism, international tourists generated more than $2.3 billion in visa and cash expenditures while visiting Louisiana for the first two quarters of 2010.

“This numbers are indicative of a growing interest in Shreveport-Bossier from abroad,” said Stacy Brown, bureau president. “We have seen an increase in international visitors, in particular in the group tour market.”

The top three visiting countries to the sister cities were Canada, United Kingdom and Mexico, according to the report released in August 2010.

In 2010, the bureau announced it booked a major new group - Globus, a United Kingdom group tour company. Globus had not visited Louisiana since Hurricane Katrina, and its first tour back to Louisiana was Sept.

21-23, 2010, and Globus stopped here. They have booked another nine international groups to visit Shreveport-Bossier in 2011.

In addition, the bureau has been working with another international group called Sweet Magnolias Tours. They will be bringing a group of 200-250 from Ireland on October 22-25, 2011 to spend three nights. The group is being led by Robert McElveen, the “George Strait” of European Country music and a Shreveport native. “I foresee more growth,” said Jody Hanson, sales and marketing director for Travel and Tourism Marketing. “As we come out of the recession people want to go back to traveling.”

She also explained that “Visitors from the U.K. typically come to Shreveport-Bossier for festivals, historical buildings, and casinos. They want to experience the music and history you all have to offer. Packaging all these things together is what draws them.”

Zer0 to 40: Conventions Get a Head Start for 2011

The bureau is expecting a banner year for conventions slated to be held in Shreveport-Bossier. There are 40 confirmed conventions so far for 2011. This is up from a total of 36 definitive bookings in Dec. 2009 compared to Dec. 2010. This is due in part to the recovering economy, according to Kim Brice, vice president of convention marketing.

Brice said, “This shows that even though business was down in 2009 and flat in 2010, the increase in 2011 business indicates there will be an increase in the number of convention delegates is increasing in 2011. In past conventions held here on average 250 room nights. Conventions in 2011 such as Louisiana Municipal Association have 3,100 room nights; Kappa Kappa Iota, 555; and Women of Faith, 550.

This is good news for the local economy. The estimated economic impact of 2011 booked conventions is nearly $6 million.

Interested in partnering with the bureau on sales missions?

Contact: Kim Brice, vice president of convention marketing at kbrice@sbctb.org or Kelly Wells, vice president of tourism at kwells@sbctb.org.

Festivals, gaming, history and music attract international visitors to Shreveport-Bossier.

For a complete list of upcoming conventions visit www.shreveport-bossier.org/meetings/calendar.

Get a Head Start for 2011

Your Bureau at Work

Submit your events on the Fun Guide for FREE