

# Industry Briefs

The **Shreveport Regional Airport** announced that Vision Airlines, a new low-cost airline that will provide service from Shreveport to Destin, Florida beginning in April. This is part of a mega-expansion plan for Vision Airlines to offer low-fare, direct flights to many mid-sized communities. The tourist bureau is assisting with marketing the new flight.

**Sci-Port: Louisiana's Science Center** announced that Cathy Williamson - a Caddo Parish Education Coordinator - was named the Distinguished Informal Science Educator of the Year by the Louisiana Science Teachers Association. The award is designed to recognize one non-classroom teacher who has made extraordinary contributions to the advancement of science education.

**Courtyard by Marriott at the Boardwalk** has been nominated for awards including Courtyard Opening Hotel of the Year. General Manager Scott Douglas has been nominated for Courtyard Opening General Manager of the Year, but says his staff makes it easy by going above and beyond. Winners of the awards will be announced in March at Courtyard's annual conference.

**ZeneScene** has a new mobile application and website for a location-based social network. ZeneScene is a customizable search engine to serve as Shreveport-Bossier's premier entertainment hub that can be accessed and shared via website and a new free iPhone and Android application download on iTunes.

Log on to [www.shreveport-bossier.org/partners](http://www.shreveport-bossier.org/partners) for industry events and updates



Convention & Tourist Bureau  
629 Spring Street  
Shreveport, LA 71101

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news from shreveport-bossier convention and tourist bureau

# TRAVEL TALK

March-April 2011

## Four governing bodies adopted resolution to form regional sports

The four governing bodies of Caddo and Bossier Parish – Shreveport City Council, Caddo Parish Commission, Bossier City Council and Bossier Parish Police Jury – have partnered in an unprecedented manner to bolster sports tourism by forming the Shreveport-Bossier Sports Commission, a division of the tourist bureau.

The goal of Shreveport Mayor Cedric Glover and Bossier City Mayor Lorenz Walker and its allied partners is to strengthen and facilitate sporting events.

"We believe that in the spirit of regional sports efforts, we can coordinate, promote, market, manage and facilitate sporting events, thereby increasing the positive economic impact on the entire Northwest Louisiana region," said Mayor Glover.

Mayor Walker said, "The tourist bureau has the staff expertise, resources and successful collaboration with multiple organizations to undertake this new endeavor."

The benefit to sports rights holders is the Shreveport-Bossier Sports Commission under the tourist bureau will be able to provide a simple, one-stop shop.

"Doing business in Shreveport-Bossier will become more streamlined, maximizing resources and enhancing sporting events in the region," said Rick Avery, president of the Bossier Parish Police Jury.

"In the past people saw the Red River as the great divide," said John Escude, former president of the Caddo Parish Commission. "Now more and more it is something that unites us because we are greater together pursuing the same goal – to leave our community better than we found it."



Shreveport Mayor Cedric Glover and Bossier City Mayor Lorenz Walker

## INSIDE:

**Shreveport-Bossier stop on New Market Tour** page 2

**New Opportunities for hotels** page 3

**ZeneScene** on back

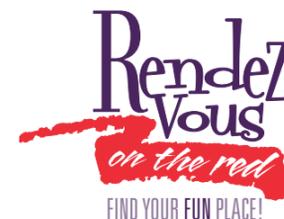
## Dates to Remember:

**Shreveport-Bossier Hotel and Lodging Association**  
March 10, 5-7 p.m., Sam's Town Casino  
April 12, noon, Petroleum Club

**Hospitality Breakfast**  
March 2, 8 a.m., Hilton Shreveport  
April 6, 8 a.m., Bossier Hotel & Suites

**Tourism on the Town:**  
March 10, 5-7 p.m., Sam's Town Casino  
April 14, 5-7 p.m., DiamondJack's Casino and Resort

**Louisiana Restaurant Association**  
March TBA, Information: Kelly Mc-Lemore, 377-0108.  
April 18, member meeting, 6 p.m., Vince's South Port Restaurant



## Rendezvous on the Red – it's not the downtown you think you know

Rendezvous on the Red sounds like fun, right? Well, it is and you will want to make plans from April 1-May 31 to take in the sights, sounds and tastes of both Shreveport and Bossier City's riverfronts.

This exciting new marketing campaign is bringing together partners from both sides of the Red River to really excite and ignite a new passion and interest in the downtown areas. During this time period, there will be nearly a dozen things happening on any given Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

For some residents and visitors this new campaign will help them discover all the great attractions, restaurants, special events and festivals in the downtown areas. For others this is an opportunity to rediscover all the things they used to enjoy in the downtowns. There will be a website, [www.rendezvousonthered.com](http://www.rendezvousonthered.com) to help people plan their visit, get parking locations, and tips for really enjoying both downtown Shreveport and Bossier City's riverfront.

"We're pleased to again offer an affordable and convenient way for our customers to get away this summer," Andrew C. Levy, Allegiant Travel Company President, said. "We are confident the Shreveport-Bossier area will appreciate the value of flying nonstop to Orlando and the great deals we offer on hotels and car rentals."

- NewsOK.com (Oklahoman) - Online



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[www.shreveport-bossier.org](http://www.shreveport-bossier.org)

# FUN GUIDE!

Calendar of Events

## March/April

- 3/3-13 A Streetcar Named Desire. Shreveport Little Theatre.
- 3/4 The Sounds of New Orleans: A Tribute to Louis Armstrong. Riverview Theatre.
- 3/5 Krewe of Gemini Mardi Gras Parade.
- 3/5 First Saturday Tour: The Perils of Pigments. R.W. Norton Art Gallery.
- 3/6 Krewe of Highland Mardi Gras Parade.
- 3/6 Special Exhibition: Great Masters of Cuban Art: 1800-1958. R.W. Norton Art Gallery.
- 3/6 Christopher O'Riley. Emmett Hook Center-First United Methodist Church.
- 3/8 Krewe of Aesclepius Fat Tuesday Parade. Louisiana Boardwalk
- 3/11 Rascal Flatts - Nothing Like This Tour. CenturyTel Center.
- 3/11 Black Tie Bingo - Louisiana Lagniappe. Sam's Town Hotel and Casino.
- 3/19 Louisiana Redbud Festival. Vivian Town Square.
- 3/19 Harbingers of Spring Trail Walk. Walter B. Jacobs Memorial Nature Park.
- 3/19 Brain Awareness Day. Sci-Port: Louisiana's Science Center.
- 3/20-22 NCAA Division I Women's Basketball Championship. CenturyTel Center.
- 3/24 A Chorus Line. Strand Theatre.
- 4/1 Spring Break Day Camps. Sci-Port: Louisiana's Science Center.
- 4/1-3 God of Carnage. Riverview Theatre.
- 4/2 Cork...A Red River Revel Wine Event. Festival Plaza.
- 4/3 The Moral Compass of Jacob Lawrence: African American Painter. Meadows Museum of Art at Centenary College.
- 4/5 Pamoja Art Society. Pamoja Cultural Center.
- 4/5-6 Elmo's Heathy Heros. CenturyTel Center.
- 4/8-9 38th Annual Hot Rod Reunion. Boomtown Hotel & Casino.
- 4/9-10 LFAA 3D and 900 round Achery Championship Tournament. Shreveport.
- 4/8-17 Holiday in Dixie. Festival Plaza.
- 4/10 Tim McGraw. CenturyTel Center.
- 4/14 Life Drawing. Artspace.
- 4/27 Introduction to Creative Writing by Icess Fernandez. Bossier Parish Library Historical Center.
- 4/28 The Abolition of Slavery. Karpeles Manuscript Library Museum.
- 4/29-May 1 Artbreak. Shreveport Convention Center.
- 4/30 ARTini Party. Boomtown Hotel & Casino.
- 4/30 Spring Bloom Celebration. Gardens of the American Rose Center.
- 4/30 4th Annual Aseana Spring Festival. Downtown Shreveport.

shreveportbossierfunguide.com



Submit your events on the Fun Guide for FREE

## Your Bureau at Work

Shreveport-Bossier will be included for the first time in the New Market Tour that will include several group tour dates from October 2011 to May 2012. Other stops on the tour include Forth Worth, Texas; Little Rock, Ark.; Memphis, Tenn.; and New Orleans.

Vice President of Convention Marketing **Kim Brice** is a board of director for the Destination Marketing International Association. She represented Shreveport-Bossier at a board meeting held in February in Washington, DC and made follow-up sales calls.

**Dianna Douglas**, regional sales manager, booked her first conference as a result of attending the Meetings Quest Tradeshow, Nov. 2010 in Washington, DC. The IMIL Head Start Grant-ee Training – "I Am Moving, I Am Learning" meeting will be held, March 28-31, 2011. Hilton Shreveport and the Shreveport Convention Center will be the host sites. Paltech Inc., a private, northern Virginia based company plans 50-plus government contracted meetings nationwide.

**Internet & Systems Manager Pat Gill** is working with Zero Defects Design to make some upgrades to ShreveportBossierFunGuide.com.



Pat Gill  
Internet & systems  
Manager

Users can now make comments on events and organizations, view maps of event venues and generate code to include an organization's events on their own website

**Suzanne Manfredi**, convention sales manager, attended the annual Louisiana Society Association Executives Conference in Lafayette.

She networked and made sales calls in Lafayette and Alexandria, as part of that trip. The Louisiana Federation of Housing, Inc. based in Lafayette are considering Shreveport-Bossier as host city for its 2012 or 2013 annual meeting.

Suzanne received eight requests for proposals from planners at the Religious Conference Managers Association annual conference in Tampa, Florida. The Skills USA Championship Conference, she had been working on, turned definite and the group will meet here, April 6-8, 2011.

**Brandy Evans**, vice president of communications, has been speaking to local groups about the importance of tourism. She spoke to the Shreveport Rotary, Altrusa and Elvis Angels Fan Club. If you would like to get an update on tourism, contact her at bevans@sbctb.org or 429-0638.



Dianna Douglas  
Regional Sales  
Manager

## Mardi Gras - once a best kept secret

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

For groups, the Shreveport-Bossier Convention and Tourist Bureau hosts an annual Mardi Gras Bash on the banks of the Red River in downtown Shreveport for both major parade weekends - Krewe of Centaur, Feb. 26 and Krewe of Gemini, March 5. About 450 people with the various group tours participated in both Bashes and had an economic impact of about \$86,482.

Participants, who came from Texas, Tennessee, Arkansas and as far away as North Carolina, were treated to a visit from the Mardi Gras krewes, Cajun food, live music, a tour of the floats, and an up close spot on the parade route to catch hundreds of Mardi Gras beads and doubloons.

"The group tour market consists of mostly seniors who love to celebrate Mardi Gras in a fun, family-style atmosphere," said Erica Howard, leisure sales manager. "The Mardi

Gras Bash allows us to generate new business, as well as maintaining repeat business year after year."

In conjunction with this year's Bash, the bureau hosted 13 travel writers. Although the focus of the tours was Mardi Gras, the journalists visited area attractions. They represented traditional and online publications and write about travel for families, culture, romance, luxury and more.

Equally as important, the tourist bureau hosted six meeting planners from Washington, DC; Pennsylvania; and Texas. The planners anticipate bringing meetings here as early as September and November 2011, while others are looking at future years.



Mardi Gras has a \$17 million direct economic impact on the region. Some 400,000 people come out to enjoy it.



## Tourist bureau reaches out to hotels with new opportunities

The tourist bureau, recognizing the importance of a diversified tourism mix, brought in nationally renowned sales trainer Janie Wiltshire. In February, Janie met with the tourist bureau sales staff and local hoteliers to share her expertise on making successful sales calls and closing the deal, qualifying potential business clients, and getting the most out of databases.

Kim Brice, vice president of convention marketing, said this training was invaluable. Forecasts are expected to be down for the oil and gas business that boosted many hotels occupancy to 80 and 90 percent in 2010, so a shift in effort is required.

"Hoteliers must get back to working the leads we send and become proactive on bidding on future conventions and group tours," Kim said.

The tourist bureau sales team is seeing meeting planners confidence rise in booking groups as far out as 2019. Previously, conferences were being planned in a 12-18 month period prior to the event. So far this year turned definite conferences are up 66 percent compared to the same time period last year.

To better meet area hotel needs, the tourist bureau now holds strategic sales meetings by markets focusing on downtown Shreveport, East Bossier and West Shreveport. "Our goal is to plan better and find out the specific needs of our hotels for the various markets we serve," Kim said. "We have found that not all hotels have the same needs."



Hoteliers gathered for sales meeting at Holiday Inn West, which hosted the first West Shreveport hotel meeting in February

For Training on the IDSS database to receive leads, please contact Kim Brice at kbrice@sbctb.org or 429-0629



Tourist Bureau Board Chairman Fredrick Henson, Lt. Gov. Jay Dardienne, and Vice Chairman Luke Turner shown here at the state capital in Baton Rouge. They were there supporting tourism at the Joint Legislative Budget Committee.



The Shreveport-Bossier Convention & Tourist Bureau sponsored the closing luncheon of the Louisiana Travel Promotion Association conference on January 27 in Baton Rouge. Shreveport-Bossier will host the conference in 2012. Billy the Exterminator, guest of the tourist bureau, signs autographs at the 2011 LTPA Summit closing luncheon. To view a YouTube video of Billy and "Killin' n' Grillin'" star Randall Reeder participating in a celebrity chef's cook-off go here, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DYM0wRRXsrQ>

## CONVENTION CALENDAR

DATE	EVENT
March 3 - 5	Louisiana Association of Educational Office Professionals
March 11 - 12	Louisiana Dental Hygienists Association
March 16 - 19	National Constables Association
March 21 - 23	Louisiana Assessor's Association
March 25 - 27	United States Speciality Sports Association
April 6 - 8	Skills USA Louisiana
April 12 - 14	Louisiana Society for Clinical Laboratory Science
April 21 - 23	Helmsbriscoe Meeting Planners
April 27 - May 1	American Orchid Society

For a complete list of upcoming conventions visit [www.shreveport-bossier.org/meetings/calendar](http://www.shreveport-bossier.org/meetings/calendar)