On February 9 the bureau staff hosted a Director of Sales meeting at the Holiday Inn Downtown to introduce hoteliers to bureau staff and explain how each department of the tourist bureau works for the hotels in the area. For more information on ways the tourist bureau can assist your property, attraction or event contact Brandy Evans, vice president of communications at bevans@sbctb.org or (318) 429-0638.

City officials, property developers and Jimmy Buffet himself held an official groundbreaking ceremony for the Margaritaville Resort Casino on Wednesday, Feb. 29. Construction has already begun on the almost $200 million project, and the resort casino is expected to open in June 2013.

Shreveport-Bossier's own Bill Joyce and Brandon Oldenburg, co-founders of Moonbot Studios, recently won an Oscar for Best Animated Short Film for “The Fantastic Flying Books of Mr. Morris Lessmore”. The Shreveport-Bossier Convention & Tourist Bureau would like to congratulate the Moonbot team on their Oscar win.

The Best Western Richmond Suites may look a little different in recent days. The property is now the Baymont Inn and Suites. The Sleep Inn and Suites Medical Center has a new general manager: Mr. Ven Srinivasan, CHA, can be reached at gm.la227@choicehotels.com.

Bassmaster Classic 2012: Another Successful Event for Area

The 2012 Bassmaster Classic was, by all accounts, a huge success with just under 94,000 people attending events like the weigh-ins and outdoor expo. This year’s Classic was the second most attended on record in the history of the organized sport with the best here in 2009.

“We had to turn people away at the launches each morning for safety reasons,” said Chris Jay, public relations and social media manager for the Shreveport-Bossier Convention & Tourist Bureau. “Every event, every day of the Bassmaster Classic was incredibly well attended.”

This was the second year Shreveport-Bossier hosted the event, billed “the Super Bowl of bass fishing.” In 2009, the sister cities proved that they could compete with larger markets when the area broke the record for Classic attendance estimating more than 137,000 attendees.

At the final weigh-in on Sunday, Feb. 26, four-time Classic champion and B.A.S.S. Angler of the Year, Kevin VanDam, told the nearly at-capacity crowd, “This is the Best Classic ever and I guarantee we will be in Shreveport-Bossier again.”

Another indication of the successful weekend comes from hoteliers. Thursday through Sunday, area hotels nearly sold out with only a handful of properties reporting less than 100 percent occupancy. It’s been reported that many restaurants had an hour to two hour wait time. Outdoor Expo vendors said this was one of their best years with some selling out of their wares.

The Shreveport-Bossier Sports Commission, along with the Shreveport-Bossier Convention & Tourist Bureau, would like to thank industry partners and community leaders for their support and cooperation in planning the 2012 Bassmaster Classic.

Bureau Board of Directors Appoints New Officers

The board of directors of the Shreveport-Bossier Convention & Tourist Bureau has announced the appointment of its officers for 2012. These four officers are appointed to a leadership role by their fellow board members. For 2012, these officers are Luke Turner, chairman; Betty Matthews, vice chairman; Jerry Koliak, treasurer; and Mary Dunn, secretary. Each officer serves a one-year term.

The board of directors has also announced the appointment of two new members: Ray Tromba, appointed by the Office of the Mayor of Bossier City, and Tommy Clark, appointed by the Bossier Chamber of Commerce. The board of directors consists of 17 volunteer members. Board members are appointed by various groups along with the Shreveport-Bossier Convention & Tourist Bureau. The board of directors of the Shreveport-Bossier Convention & Tourist Bureau consists of 17 volunteer members. Board members are appointed by various groups including the City of Shreveport, the City of Bossier City, Caddo and Bossier parishes, the three regional chambers of commerce, Hotel and Lodging Association (HLA), Louisiana Restaurant Association (LRA), and others.

Luke Turner, chairman

**On Saturday, March 3, we had a great time in Shreveport-Bossier City this past weekend for the Bassmaster Classic. I have a great appreciation for the passion and excitement surrounding bass fishing. I've had a lot of fun over the years while supporting and helping to promote Shreveport-Bossier as the ‘CMAF Classic’ and about their favorite race car drivers. We enjoyed our stay at the Eldorado Casino where the accommodations were outstanding.**
Submit your events on the Fun Guide for FREE

Nominations for 2012 P.R.I.D.E. Awards

May, National Tourism Awareness Month, is just around the corner, and that means it’s time again to celebrate tourism and hospitality industry employees/individuals in Shreveport-Bossier. Every year the Shreveport-Bossier Convention and Tourist Bureau hosts the P.R.I.D.E. (Proud Residents Involved in Developing the Economy) Awards Gala to recognize outstanding frontline and managerial staff, who are the backbone of tourism. This year’s event, themed “These Cities are Our City,” will be held from 6-9 p.m., on Thursday, May 10, at Diamond/Jack’s Casino and Resort. Our tourism employees are so very integral to the success of the hospitality and tourism industry,” said Stacy Brown, president of the tourist bureau. “We want them to know that tourism isn’t just about the hotel, it’s about them too.”

To produce the annual awards gala, the tourist bureau asks industry partners such as hotels, restaurants, attractions, festivals and events to submit nomination forms with the names of individuals they wish to recognize for their superior skills and job dedication. The nomination forms are available at www.shreveport-bossier.org/partners/business-events/. Gala ticket prices are $25 each or $250 for a table of 10. Attendees can pay online at the same link. The deadline to submit nominations is April 20.

This year, several categories have been added to the awards including Outstanding Bartender, Outstanding Southern Hospitality Ambassador, and “Other” Outstanding Employee. Other staple categories include Outstanding Chef, Outstanding Table Games Professional, Outstanding Event of the Year and many more.

For additional information, please contact Kathy Melancon, product development manager, at kmelancon@stcb.org.

Delegates Flocked to 2012 Louisiana Tourism Industry Summit

The 2012 Louisiana Tourism Industry Summit, an annual conference organized by the Louisiana Travel Promotion Association (LTPA), took place Jan. 24-26 at the Shreveport Convention Center. More than 400 tourism professionals from throughout Louisiana attended. Lt. Governor Jay Dardenne spoke at the annual “Breakfast with the Lieutenant Governor” session. Throughout the conference delegates networked with fellow tourism industry professionals, attended educational break-out sessions, and learned about emerging travel industry trends.

During the conference, delegates participated in familiarization tours of Shreveport-Bossier. Four themed tours organized by the Shreveport-Bossier Convention & Tourist Bureau gave delegates an up close look at Shreveport-Bossier’s thriving film industry, unique local eateries, haunted places, and popular shopping destinations.

“It was a great conference with a total of 415 attendees,” said Cindy Tullier, executive assistant for the Louisiana Travel Promotion Association. “The event seemed to go flawlessly. The BOIDES Exhibition at Sci-Port was an eaching experience and the restaurant tasting was superb for the opening event.”

In addition to the Lt. Governor’s presentation, highlights of the confer- ence program included an opening reception at Sci-Port, Louisiana’s Sci- ence Center, a travel industry update from the Louisiana Office of Tourism, and the annual Louisiana Travel Fair Breakfast.

The Shreveport-Bossier Convention & Tourist Bureau would like to thank industry partners, volunteers and vendors for working diligently to make the 2012 Louisiana Tourism Industry Summit a success.

Convention Business Off to Great Starts

Meetings and convention business is off to a great start with events to start 2012 off such as the Louisiana Tourism Industry Summit, Northwest Louisiana Small Business Summit and the 2012Baseline Classic Outdoor Expo.

The line-up this year of conventions and conferences that are being assisted by the Shreveport-Bossier Convention and Tourist Bureau looks promising with major organizations like the National Baptist Convention, Global Strike Command and first-time events such as the American Advertising Federation and Travel Alliance Partners.

So far this year, there are 51 definite convention bookings and another 21 tentative bookings. The tentative bookings have already chosen Shreveport-Bossier as their host destination. They have not chosen their host hotel. This represents 24,048 requested hotel rooms. Also, some 82 leads for conventions have been issued and for the first quarter of 2012.

This does not reflect all of the conventions and sporting groups that are coming to Shreveport-Bossier,” said Kim Brice, tourism bureau vice president of convention marketing. “These represent the conventions and meetings that we have either issued a lead for and/or provided services for through the tourist bureau.”

Most booked business is the result of trade shows, local references, direct sales and positive repeat business. In 2012, the sales staff of the tourist bureau will focus more on direct sales and face-to-face meetings with potential and existing clients.

“We have seen more results from our one-on-one sales calls and so there will be a renewed focus on that,” Brice said. “We are also placing a heavier emphasis on the military, oil and gas, and medical markets.”