



2020

BUSINESS PLAN



Shreveport-Bossier Convention and Tourist Bureau

WWW.SHREVEPORT-BOSSIER.ORG

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Letter FROM THE PRESIDENT

"Life," the famous quote goes, "is what happens while we're making other plans."

That old saying may be true in general, but a destination management organization without a strategic plan is like a train without tracks. This overview of the Shreveport-Bossier Convention and Tourist Bureau's strategic plan for 2020 outlines our organizational goals for the coming year, provides an overview of the strategies that we'll employ to reach those goals, and updates many of the metrics that will be used to evaluate our efforts.

But, a plan alone won't get us anywhere. After all, you need tracks *and* a train. This year, our team has shown that they are willing to do the hard work required of leaders, whether that meant successfully hosting the internationally televised FIVB Women's Volleyball Intercontinental Olympic Qualifier (the only such event held this year in North America), constructing a cutting-edge social media broadcast room, or going the extra mile (and, in some cases, several thousand extra miles!) to book a difficult-to-land conference.



More than ever, our marketing and sales efforts are data-driven, targeted and trackable. Our companywide use of the latest technology has certainly helped drive up hotel occupancy rates, as has a healthy American economy overall. But it takes a team – including executive leadership, staff, board members, and community stakeholders – to drive this train.

All aboard – we're heading full steam ahead into 2020!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stacy A. Brown". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'S'.

Stacy Brown, CDME
President



Our MISSION

The Shreveport-Bossier Convention and Tourist Bureau is the official destination marketing organization attracting sports, meeting, leisure, and gaming visitors that result in economic growth through visitor expenditures and an enhanced quality of life in Louisiana's Caddo and Bossier parishes.

Executive SUMMARY

The Shreveport-Bossier Convention and Tourist Bureau conducted visioning and planning sessions with its board of directors and staff in September 2019. Lafe Jones & Associates, a strategic planning firm based in Alexandria, Louisiana, facilitated the sessions. The objective of the planning sessions was to review the current strategic plan and develop a consensus for the Tourist Bureau's goals and planned activities for 2020.

Our STRATEGIC VISION

The Shreveport-Bossier Convention and Tourist Bureau will be known locally, regionally and nationally as Northwest Louisiana's catalyst for record economic growth by facilitating collaboration and providing leadership and regional branding, community pride, and targeted destination development and management.



Our KEY STRENGTHS

- Strong marketing efforts that enhance the positive promotion of the destination through advertising, social media, public relations, and other partnerships.
- Growth and collaboration in efforts to secure convention, group, and international sales bookings coupled with quality service.
- Growth and collaboration in the sports market to secure and coordinate events and provide quality service.
- New ambassador program that instills civic pride and informs residents and hospitality partners of the community's tourism assets.
- Educational opportunities and cross-promotional efforts for restaurant and attraction partners.
- Collaborative relationships with community partners on various projects such as crisis management, convention and group bookings, holiday marketing, and rural tourism initiatives.
- Bureau staff expertise and experience led by the Tourist Bureau's board of directors' vision, diversity, teamwork, creativity, and positive reputation.
- Organizational financial stability, management, and accountability.
- Reporting of the organization's research, visitor economic impact, and other key performance indicators to communicate a return on investment and results.

Our KEY CHALLENGES

- Need for a community-led and collaboratively constructed destination master plan.
- Lack of a nationally recognized brand.
- Need for increased engagement with elected officials about negative community messages and perceptions, specifically about crime, safety, and litter.
- Aging of infrastructure, attractions and hotel properties.
- Need for large attractor(s) with brand recognition that would generate increased visitation and spending by out-of-town visitors.
- Need for effective two-way communication with hotel properties, restaurants and attractions.
- Need for increased board advocacy on destination and Tourist Bureau issues.
- Need for a larger multi-purpose sports venue.
- Competition for tourism dollars with other nearby states that promote gaming and sports betting.
- Impact of short-term rentals on Tourist Bureau's revenue and enforcement of quality and safety standards.
- Need for research-based product development enhancements for the communities.

Our Visionary Goals & DESIRED FUTURE



- 1 Be known as a collaborative organization that unites the business community, hospitality industry, local governments, and citizens to enhance the tourism industry.
- 2 Be known for promoting a positive destination image informed by leading research, planning, and development that supports excellent customer service, civic pride, and advocacy.
- 3 Be known as the organization that stimulates collaboration on product development that leads to the improvement, rejuvenation, and overall economic growth of the community.
- 4 Be known as a major regional financial and economic development driver recognized by government agencies, business leaders, and the general public for our efforts and contribution.
- 5 Be known as a national model of effective turnkey convention, group, and sports sales, as well as event management that drives record revenue, attendance, and quality service.



Board & Staff GOALS

#1

Be known as a collaborative organization that unites the business community, hospitality industry, local governments, and citizens to enhance the tourism industry.

- » Develop a community-centric destination master plan that provides a research-driven approach to capitalize on the destination's strengths, identifies new opportunities for growth, and creates a plan for long-term development.
- » Facilitate ongoing partnerships to address issues identified in the 2019 Destination Next plan that specifically addresses litter and the perceived crime issues that residents, business leaders, government employees, and visitors identified as top issues that adversely affect tourism.
- » Develop an advocacy plan to help the gaming industry remain competitive.
- » Develop a plan to address the revenue loss from short-term rentals that currently do not pay hotel occupancy taxes.
- » Develop an advocacy plan for the board of directors to support collaborative projects that move the destination forward for future development.

#2

Be known for promoting a positive destination image informed by leading research, planning, and development that supports excellent customer service, civic pride, and advocacy.

- » Secure community partners to participate in the creation of the destination master plan that will address product development, branding, infrastructure, and other destination enhancement initiatives.
- » Develop resources needed to conduct ongoing research and data analysis to support destination marketing efforts.
- » Educate locals and hospitality workers on the destination's tourism assets to create community ambassadors that promote all the fun things to see and do in Shreveport-Bossier through programs like the Be a Fan of Shreveport-Bossier ambassador program.

#3

Be known as the organization that stimulates collaboration on product development that leads to the improvement, rejuvenation, and overall economic growth of the community.

- Utilize the research-driven product development opportunities that come from the destination master plan to create collaboration, resources, and partners for future projects.
- Develop research-based guidelines and funding protocol to support future product development efforts.
- Conduct a feasibility study to address an immediate need for a multi-use complex that can supplement the growing demands of sports tourism.

#4

Be known as a major regional financial and economic development driver recognized by government agencies, business leaders, and the general public for our efforts and contribution.

- Continue to create positive marketing campaigns that have a strong return on investment by generating overnight leisure visitation and brand awareness.
- Report Tourist Bureau accomplishments and return on investment regularly to local and state leaders.
- Continue to make operational improvements to ensure ongoing and effective financial reporting and compliance.

#5

Be known as a national model of effective turnkey convention, group and sports sales, as well as event management that drives record revenue, attendance and quality service.

- Maintain the Destination Marketing Accreditation Program status. DMAP is an independent, international entity that defines quality and performance practices for destination marketing organizations. Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) that receive this accreditation have to meet or exceed 58 mandatory and 30 voluntary industry standards.
- Continue executive staff service on national boards of directors in tourism, convention, and sports marketing to stay connected and competitive in sales efforts.
- Attend the most effective sales trade shows to secure new groups for tourism, convention and sports that provide a positive economic benefit and return on investment to the community.

Communications

DEPARTMENT GOALS

The Communications Department is responsible for positive promotion of the destination through advertising, social media, public relations, printed marketing collateral, and visitor experiences. Promotion efforts inspire travel for leisure, group, convention, and sports visitors.

#1

Raise awareness and visitation to **www.Shreveport-Bossier.org** for trip planning ideas by three percent.

Changing consumer behavior and changes in search engine results pages are contributing to a decline in destination website traffic. Google's ever-evolving methods for displaying travel and destination content in search results plays a significant role in this downturn. To address that, the Communications Department is working with Google to update Shreveport-Bossier's Google maps, destination travel guides and knowledge panel. As a result, modest growth is being predicted.

- » Combine **www.Shreveport-Bossier.org** and **www.SBFunGuide.com** under one URL, but maintain two brands to drive traffic.
- » Promote the destination and website URL in local, regional and national print publications and broadcast outlets, as well as link targeted digital advertisements to the website.
- » Utilize search engine marketing to drive online visitation for trip-planning and events information.
- » Distribute *Getaways* e-newsletter with things to do, short articles, and links to the website for brochure downloads, video views and other trip-planning content.
- » Increase the number of in-bound links to **www.Shreveport-Bossier.org** from other Tourist Bureau managed sites like **20x49.com** and social media platforms.

#2

Create a baseline of hotel bookings through an expanded partnership with Expedia.

The Communications Department will expand a partnership with Expedia.com and create a new year-round campaign to drive hotel bookings. In 2019, three regional campaigns netted 25,866 direct bookings and almost double that for indirect bookings to the destination for those same time periods, according to Expedia reports. This will be a new, monthly campaign to establish future booking goals.

- » Create a year-round digital campaign that inspires travel for festivals, dining experiences, attractions, gaming, and other events.



#3

Generate 160 leisure media mentions in print, tv and radio in regional drive markets such as Texas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Arkansas. Generate 32 media mentions in group and convention trade publications and secure 15 media mentions for group and convention related events in local media outlets.

The public relations industry has shifted. As newspapers, magazines and broadcast media shift resources and downsize, public relations has evolved, allowing PR professionals to bypass the media, better control the message, and obtain better return on investment with social media and digital media. Future reporting will be narrower in scope and focused solely on the department's efforts – news releases or personal contact with the media. This will be reflected in new reporting and tracking efforts.

- »»» Distribute 40 news releases locally, regionally, and nationally.
- »»» Work with media on photo and information requests to secure media coverage.
- »»» Host a minimum of three organized media familiarization tours, as well as state-led tours and individual media requests.

#4

Provide compelling and frequent content on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and LinkedIn.

Creating compelling content that people want to interact with and share is the most important goal. Research and trends indicate that video is the most compelling content, and a new internal broadcast room will allow the Communications Department to create quality, professional and shareable content on a regular basis. Social advertising will supplement the changing algorithms of Facebook and Instagram to target visitors interested in the destination.

- »»» Create regular video content for **20x49.com Live**.
- »»» Spend marketing dollars on social media advertising to support regional promotions, attractions, restaurants, and events.
- »»» Create regular blog content for **20x49.com**.
- »»» Update all social media platforms with compelling content on a regular basis.

#5

Create website, social media and public relations content that raises the awareness of the Boom or Bust Byway.

The Boom or Bust Byway is a 132-mile road trip through Caddo, Bossier, Webster, and Claiborne parishes. It is not very well-known, so a strategic marketing plan is being optimized to generate social media buzz, website content and media mentions. Advertising, social media marketing, and public relations efforts are being implemented to promote rural tourism along this route.

»»» Distribute 12 news releases annually.

»»» Spend marketing dollars on print and broadcast outlets.

»»» Create regular content for the blog.

»»» Update all social media platforms with compelling content on a regular basis.

#6

Create a welcoming environment at the Downtown Shreveport Visitor Center and Airport Visitor Center that encourages exploration and expenditures by visitors in Shreveport-Bossier.

This includes providing printed collateral, recommendations, and other information to help visitors explore the community. A new visitor kiosk will be constructed in 2020 at the Shreveport Regional Airport to improve the guest experience.

»»» Provide printed collateral, recommendations and other information to help visitors explore the community.

»»» Complete a new visitor kiosk at the Shreveport Regional Airport.

#7

Provide collaborative support, resources, and other efforts to boost the following initiatives:

»»» Be a Fan of Shreveport-Bossier attractions cross-promotion

»»» Louisiana Holiday Trail of Lights

»»» Be a Fan of Shreveport-Bossier ambassador program

»»» 318 Restaurant Week

»»» Shreveport-Bossier Attractions Association

»»» Retire Shreveport-Bossier

»»» Rockets Over the Red Fireworks Festival

Convention & Tourism Sales

DEPARTMENT GOALS

The Convention and Tourism Sales Department provides expert sales and customer service strategies to secure returning and new group tours and conventions for the destination through direct sales, promotions, site visits, trade shows, and other initiatives.



#1

Increase hotel room bookings by four percent in 2020.

In 2019, the Tourism and Convention Sales Department booked groups and conventions that generated approximately 65,000 room nights.

- » Attend state, regional, and national convention and group conferences to foster new relationships while strengthening current client connections to secure events.
- » Generate potential new business leads through phone prospecting, direct mail, promotions, familiarization tours, and sales calls.
- » Work with local business-people to leverage their memberships in various regional, national, and international trade organizations and associations to generate potential new business.
- » Offer unique convention and tourism-related programs such as discount restaurant programs for conventioners, hands-on group experiences, and other services to enhance the cultural immersion of groups.
- » Focus on booking more international travel through the FIT (Frequent Individual Travelers) program, motor coach and group travel, reunions, corporate, and military-related business.

#2

Support positive promotion and awareness of the destination as a high-value tourism and convention destination that attracts large events, international group tour operators, and international trip planners.

- Utilize digital marketing strategies to generate prospective new business leads that are supported by strategic advertising, public relations, and social media tactics.
- Seek new customers through familiarization tours and site visits that expose potential customers to the various assets of the destination.
- Seek new opportunities to collaborate with partners, locals, and associations to identify new business clients.
- Connect hotel, attraction and restaurant partners to international tour operators and trip planners to grow the international visitor segment.

#3

Increase tourism industry participation in the group and convention market to spur greater economic benefits and development of the Shreveport and Bossier City riverfronts.

- Promote more off-site meetings that generate business for casinos, hotels, attractions, restaurants, meeting venues, and transportation providers.
- Promote the community's tourism assets such as festivals, cultural attractions, shopping areas, dining, and gaming to conventioners to encourage increased visitor spending in the destination.
- Continue to organize Rockets Over the Red Fireworks Festival, held the Saturday after Thanksgiving, to support and grow tourism in November and December, an otherwise slow period.

#4

Add value to tourism businesses and civic leaders through education, networking, communication, and support that enhances the sales process for clients.

- Educate potential, new, and existing convention clients about group experiences, regional events, dining, shopping, and gaming through follow-up email communications, printed collateral, and positive promotions.
- Share leads with local attractions, transportation providers, hotels, restaurants, and other tourism-related businesses to increase direct sales between local businesses and convention planners.
- Include civic leaders and local business partners in bid presentations and other efforts to secure conventions for the destination.

Shreveport-Bossier

SPORTS COMMISSION GOALS

The Shreveport-Bossier Sports Commission is a division of the Shreveport-Bossier Convention and Tourist Bureau that works in partnership with the City of Shreveport, City of Bossier City, Caddo Parish Commission, Bossier Parish Police Jury, and Red River Waterway Commission. The Sports Commission brings government, business and hospitality partners together to develop, support and promote the growth of sports events that impact overall destination marketing, tourism and sales efforts in the region.



#1

Increase hotel room bookings by four percent in 2020 by hosting 115 new and returning events.

In 2019, the Sports Commission is projected to host 105 sports events that are predicted to generate approximately 36,226 room nights, and attract an estimated 170,000 athletes and spectators.

- ▶▶▶ Partner with local and regional colleges and high schools to host sports events.
- ▶▶▶ Work with private and public venues to identify one or more key events to develop, support, and market for 2020 and beyond.
- ▶▶▶ Generate sporting event leads by attending sports industry trade shows and implementing direct sales efforts with local, regional, and national sports rights holders.
- ▶▶▶ Provide superior service that creates a competitive advantage over other destinations.
- ▶▶▶ Coordinate volunteers to assist with sporting events to engage community support and enthusiasm, while reducing costs for organizers.
- ▶▶▶ Increase the volunteer database by 125 local residents and increase community support for events.
- ▶▶▶ Expand marketing for sporting events.
- ▶▶▶ Continue working with rural communities that have identified opportunities and readiness to host sporting events.

#2

Maintain revenue and trade sponsorship revenue of \$650,000 to support sporting events.

- Work with local, regional and national public and private businesses to generate partnerships and sponsorship dollars to support larger sporting events and conferences.

#3

Raise brand awareness of Shreveport-Bossier through positive promotion of the destination by hosting sporting events that generate positive publicity in local, regional, national, and international markets.

- Identify new and existing sports events to bid on.
- Work with local partners to secure and grow grassroots events to expand regional draw.
- Conduct a funding application workshop to educate potential grant applicants.
- Research the economic impact of sporting events utilizing the industry-approved Economic Impact Calculator to ensure a positive return on investment to the community.
- Attend trade shows, arrange site visits for rights holders, and host sports-related trade shows.
- Work with local venues to add new sports events.
- Advocate for the renovation of current venues and the addition of new venues to accommodate growing demand for sporting events.
- Work with Team Louisiana Sports Association to grow the sports industry locally, within the state, and nationally through sales missions to Colorado Springs, Colo. and Indianapolis, Ind.
- Secure sporting events that are televised regionally and nationally.
- Book sporting events that are attended by local, regional, national, and international participants and spectators.



2019 BOARD OF DIRECTORS & STAFF

2019 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Rob Brown, Chairman
*Shreveport-Bossier Hotel
& Lodging Association*

Jason McKinney, Vice Chairman
Louisiana Restaurant Association

Ashley Davis, Treasurer
Bossier City Mayor's Office

Africa Price, Secretary
City of Shreveport Mayor's Office

Dick Bremer
*Greater Shreveport
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Joanna Folse-Alexander
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& Lodging Association*

Pam Glorioso
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Bossier Parish Police Jury

Emma Hebert
*Shreveport-Bossier Hotel
& Lodging Association*

Kellie Morris
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Tanita Gilbert-Baker
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American Chamber of Commerce*

Shellie Murphy
*Shreveport-Bossier
Attractions Association*

Gary Theus
*Shreveport-Bossier Hotel
& Lodging Association*

Beth Smiley
*Shreveport-Bossier
Attractions Association*

Randy Slagle
Caddo Parish Rural Mayors

ADMINISTRATIVE DEPARTMENT

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President

Charlotte Rice
Executive Assistant

Ruth Hunter
Finance Director

COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

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Vice President of Communications

Pat Gill
Internet/Systems Manager

Chris Jay
*Social Media/
Public Relations Manager*

Aly Velasquez
Marketing Associate

Elisabeth Crews
Graphic Design Manager

Kayla Willie
Communications Intern

Lila Davis
Visitor Services Manager

Betty Walpool
Visitor Services Specialist

Faye Taylor
Visitor Services Specialist

Sandra Welch
Visitor Services Specialist

Shalisa Roland
Boom or Bust Byway Coordinator

Kyle Staton
Runner

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Vice President of Sales and Service

Jessica Rodgers
Regional Convention Sales Manager

Suzanne Card
Convention Sales Manager

Erica Telsee
Tourism Sales Manager

Kevin Flowers
Convention Sales Manager

Gina dePingre'
Sales and Service Coordinator

SHREVEPORT-BOSSIER SPORTS COMMISSION

Kelly Wells
Executive Director

Sheila Norman
*Director of Operations
and Event Management*

Teresa Micheels
Volunteer and Project Manager

Nicholas Kopka
Logistics Manager

Matthew Hammock
Partner/Sponsor Manager



*Shreveport-Bossier
Convention and Tourist Bureau*

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