

# 2015 STRATEGIC PLAN



SHREVEPORT-BOSSIER  
CONVENTION AND TOURIST BUREAU

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## STACY BROWN, PRESIDENT

Shreveport-Bossier Convention and  
Tourist Bureau

# IN 2018 WE SAW A DOUBLE DIGIT INCREASE IN HOTEL OCCUPANCY.

The resurgence of business travel, particularly in the oil and gas industry, played a significant role. But the Tourist Bureau's efforts to double down on sales, marketing and sports events was a major reason why tourism climbed out of its two year slump.

Convention and tourism sales saw a remarkable 28 percent increase in hotel bookings. This is one of the largest growths in the convention market in recent years. Our regional Mardi Gras and summer marketing campaigns saw a 15 percent and 10 percent respective increase in hotel bookings through Expedia.com. Sports saw an eight percent increase in hotel bookings.

**"WITH SMART PLANNING NOW, OUR FUTURE  
LOOKS BRIGHTER THAN EVER."**

Now that's something to be proud of! As I reflect on that in light of hosting the unplanned Miss USA and Miss Teen USA pageants in partnership with the community, I just can't help but applaud the leadership of the Tourist Bureau's board of directors for recognizing the pageants as an opportunity to establish our destination on a national platform and our staff, the cities, parishes and community for pulling it off.

My team rolled up their sleeves, demonstrated ingenuity, and worked extremely hard putting in long hours to execute two pageants at once, which I should add had never been done before, all while pushing to achieve and exceed their 2018 goals.

Paula Shuggart, president of the Miss Universe Organization, said the people, the community and the support was why her group knew our destination could pull off such a world-class event in an extremely short period of time. She and other meeting and sports events organizers know that to be true, too.

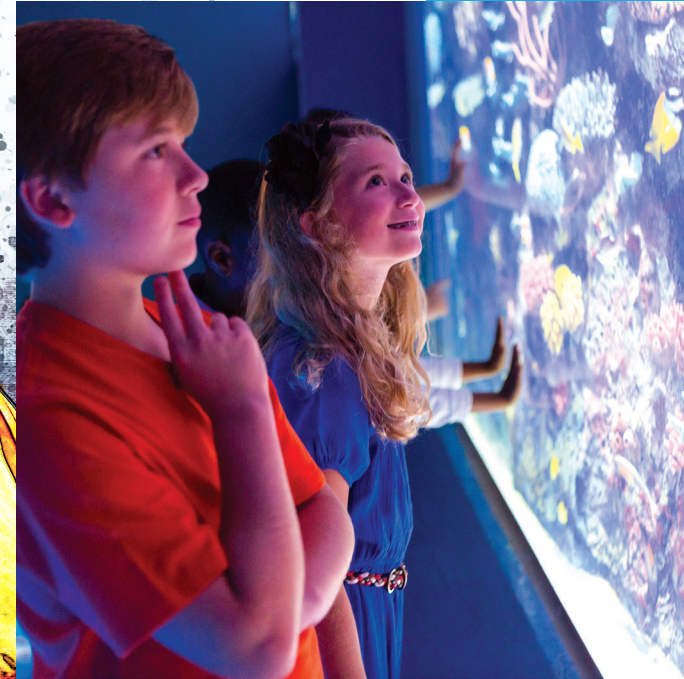
Now, it's time for us to look ahead. The economy has picked up. So that gives us a real opportunity to look at our tourism product in a whole new light and be a catalyst for future growth and development. Tourism is economic development and must be treated as such.

At the direction of the board of directors, we will do a destination assessment and create a tourism product development plan. We want to work collaboratively with our local government partners, economic development organizations, cultural and arts groups, hospitality industry, concerned citizens, and others with a vested interest in a tourism master plan and regional brand.

Tourism will continue to be an economic driver for northwest Louisiana. We are all committed to its proper growth. With smart planning now, our future looks brighter than ever.

*Stacy A. Brown*





ONLINE  
[Shreveport-Bossier.org](http://Shreveport-Bossier.org)







# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Shreveport-Bossier Convention and Tourist Bureau conducted visioning and planning sessions with the Tourist Bureau's board of directors and staff in September 2018. Lafe Jones & Associates, a strategic planning firm based in Alexandria, Louisiana, facilitated the sessions. The objective of the planning sessions was to develop a consensus for the strategic direction of the Tourist Bureau. Lafe Jones & Associates has constructed this strategic plan outline that will be used to develop goals, objectives, tactics, and timelines for implementation by managers and staff members.

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## OUR MISSION

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

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## 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, targeted destination development, and management.

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## OUR KEY STRENGTHS

- Tourist Bureau staff and board of directors' vision, diversity, teamwork, expertise, creativity, and reputation with local stakeholders.
- Financial stability, management and accountability.
- Sales and convention/meeting coordination, visibility, results, and service.
- Sports and community event successes, service and coordination.
- Marketing and communication messages, vehicles and expertise.

## WEAKNESSES AND CHALLENGES

- Lack of a nationally recognized "unique brand identifier" for the area.
- Negative community messages, specifically about crime and safety.
- Aging and lack of variety of infrastructure/assets, attractions and properties.
- Perceived lack of collaboration and cooperation between cities and organizations.
- Lack of ongoing and consistent communication to and from properties and attractions.

## OUR VISIONARY GOALS AND DESIRED FUTURE

- Be known as a national model of effective turnkey sales/convention/event management, recognized for record volume, revenue, attendance, and service.
- Be known as the collaborative conduit that unites and inspires civic and political leadership, area attractions and properties and businesses on destination management issues.
- Be known as a major regional financial and economic development driver recognized for our efforts and contribution by government agencies, business leaders and the general public.
- Be known as the community brand definers by leading research-driven planning and development, maintaining the community and regional brand and encouraging excellent service, community pride and positive messaging about the area.
- Be known as the community catalyst for ongoing product development and improvement, as well as destination rejuvenation and management.





## 2018 OFFICERS

**Chairman | Tanita Gilbert-Baker**  
African-American Chamber of Commerce

**Vice Chairman | Rob Brown**  
Shreveport-Bossier Hotel & Lodging Association

**Treasurer | Jason McKinney**  
Louisiana Restaurant Association

**Secretary | Patricia Wooldridge**  
Caddo Rural Municipalities

## 2018 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Kellie Morris**  
Caddo Parish Commission

**Africa Price**  
City of Shreveport Mayor's Office

**Sandy Cimino**  
Bossier Chamber of Commerce

**Ashley Davis**  
Bossier City Mayor's Office

**Pam Glorioso**  
Bossier Office of Community Services

**Carlton Golden, Jr.**  
Bossier Parish Police Jury

**Open**  
Bossier Rural Mayors

**Dick Bremer**  
Greater Shreveport Chamber of Commerce

**Shelli Murphy**  
Harrah's Louisiana Downs

**Mary Dunn**  
Shreveport-Bossier Attractions Assoc.

**Joanna Folse-Alexander**  
Shreveport-Bossier Hotel & Lodging Association

**Emma Hebert**  
Shreveport-Bossier Hotel & Lodging Association

**Gary Theus**  
Shreveport-Bossier Hotel & Lodging Association

## CONVENTION DEPARTMENT

**David Bradley**  
Vice President of Sales and Service

**Dianna Douglas**  
Regional Convention Sales Manager

**Suzanne Card**  
Convention Sales Manager

**Erica Telsee**  
Tourism Sales Manager

**Kevin Flowers**  
Conventions 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

**Que'brelyn Douglas**  
Sports Sales Manager

**Nicholas Kopka**  
Logistics Manager

## ADMINISTRATIVE DEPARTMENT

**Stacy A. Brown**  
President

**Jerri Corder**  
Vice President Finance and Administration

**Charlotte Rice**  
Executive Assistant

**Ruth Hunter**  
Finance Director

## COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

**Brandy Evans**  
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

**Lila Davis**  
Visitor Services Manager

**Betty Walpool**  
Visitor Services Specialist

**Faye Taylor**  
Visitor Services Specialist

**Sandra Welch**  
Visitor Services Specialist

**Kyle Staton**  
Runner



# BOARD & STAFF GOALS

01

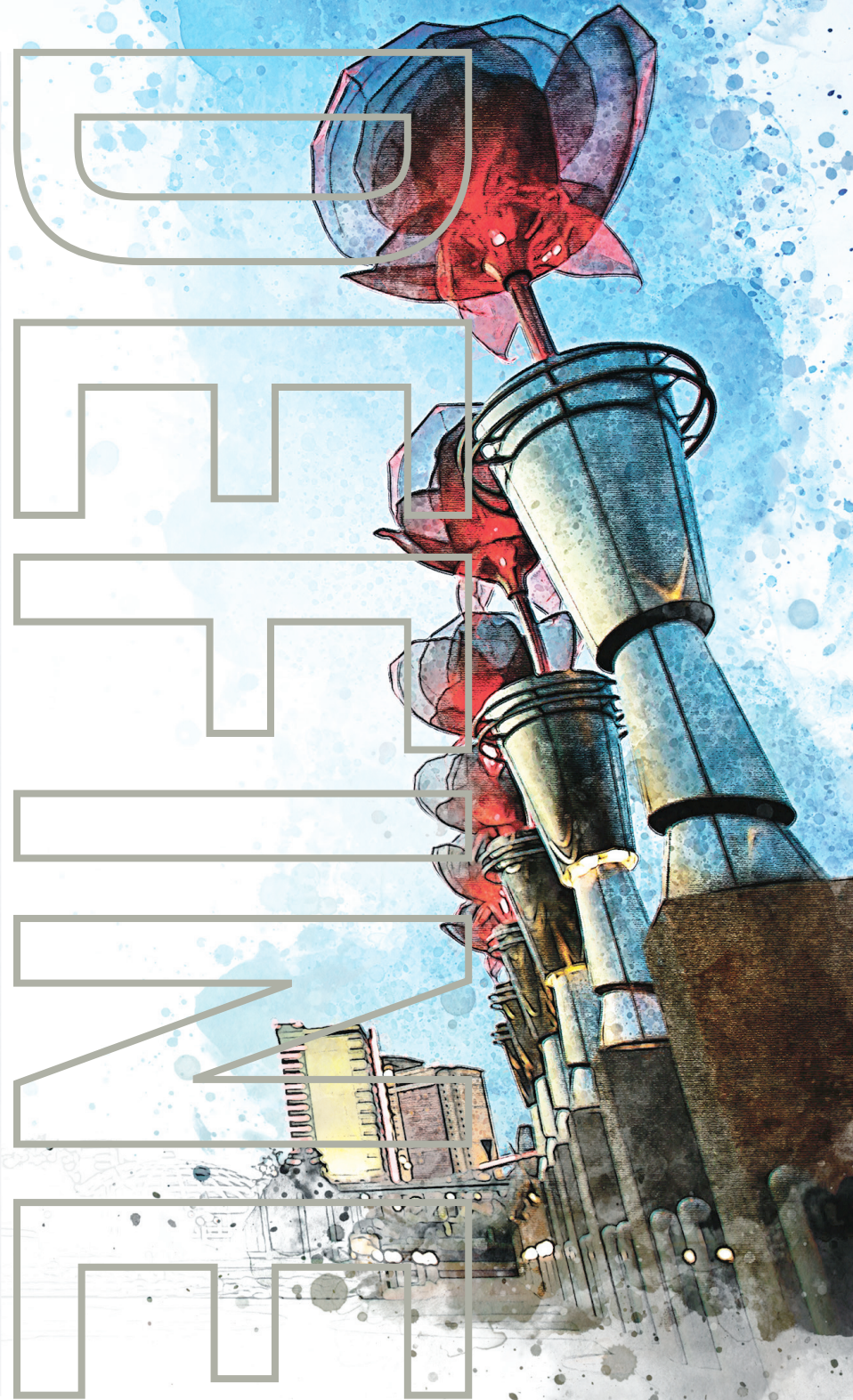
Be known as the collaborative conduit that unites and inspires civic and political leadership, area attractions and properties and businesses on destination management issues.

- Year one launch Destination Next, a future study that identifies trends and opportunities that will shape the future of destination marketing and management.
- Use research results to create a tourism master plan that addresses destination opportunities and challenges.
- Address product development for future tourism growth.

02

Be known as the community brand definers by leading research-driven planning and development, maintaining the community and regional brand and encouraging excellent service, community pride and positive messaging about the area.

- Use input from Destination Next to develop a regional brand with community partners.
- Year one: solicit partners to collaborate on a regional brand and garner financial commitments and professional input from stakeholders.



03

Be known as the community catalyst for ongoing product development and improvement, as well as destination rejuvenation and management.

- Year one determine budget, purpose and application for dollars for product development.
- Year two launch a brain trust of a cross section of community leaders and investors to create private and/or public/private partnerships that incentivize tourism growth based upon the tourism master plan.

04

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.

- Create positive marketing campaigns that have a strong return on investment by generating overnight leisure visitation and brand awareness locally, regionally and nationally.
- Foster policies and procedures that support no exception audits.
- Meet regularly with local and state leaders to communicate the importance of tourism.

05

Be known as a national model of effective turnkey sales, convention and event management, recognized for record volume, revenue, attendance, and service.

- Maintain DMAP accreditation, an elite group of 200 destination marketing organizations that have met rigorous standards of industry accreditation. It is an independent global accreditation body and a leader in defining quality and performance issues in destination marketing.
- Serve on state and national boards of directors in the tourism, convention and sports markets.



# ADVERTISING AND MARKETING GOALS

01

Raise local awareness and utilization of [www.Shreveport-Bossier.org](http://www.Shreveport-Bossier.org) by 28 percent and [www.SBFunGuide.com](http://www.SBFunGuide.com) by 36 percent.

- Redesign [www.SBFunGuide.com](http://www.SBFunGuide.com) to make it more visually appealing and easier for consumer usage.
- Utilize effective search engine marketing to increase visitation to both sites.
- Review all 12 marketing websites to ensure information is current.
- Create awareness of [www.SBFunGuide.com](http://www.SBFunGuide.com) by promoting events in local publications, digital advertisements and digital billboards.
- Promote regional campaigns including Be A Fan of Shreveport-Bossier and 318 Restaurant Week with the goal of driving local and regional consumers to landing pages.

# AWARENESS MAKES A DIFFERENCE



02

## **Increase hotel room occupancy during Mardi Gras, Summer and Fall campaigns by 15 percent or 93,650 hotel room nights over 2018 based on Expedia.com reports.**

- Manage three regional multi-media campaigns to inspire visitation and booked accommodations, while complementing the marketing efforts with internal advertising plans and social media budgets.
- Target consumers in a three-hour driving radius of Shreveport-Bossier in segmented markets including baby boomers, millennials and women between the ages of 30 to 49 with children.
- Create website landing pages to reflect advertising content including nightlife, casinos, dining, festivals, and events.

03

## **Strengthen partnerships and create opportunities for Shreveport-Bossier Attractions Association members.**

- Plan four educational seminars with topics recommended by the SBAA education committee.
- Encourage SBAA member engagement through the SBAA Facebook group.
- Manage Be A Fan of Shreveport-Bossier discount attendance program for the month of May.
- Routinely remind the SBAA of the free marketing, social media, grants, and public relations assistance.
- Coordinate a joint meeting with the Shreveport-Bossier Hotel & Lodging Association and SBAA so the two organizations can network and share tourism industry trends.

04

## **Raise local awareness of the Boom or Bust Byway through public relations, social media and advertising.**

- Generate 50 media mentions in print, broadcast, and online publications.
- Execute a paid advertising plan to drive awareness of the byway's communities and events, as well as inspire travel.
- Create regularly updated content for the website, blog and social media sites.
- Promote the byway to the Frequent Individual Traveler (FIT) at tradeshow, email promotions and other efforts.



# PUBLIC RELATIONS AND SOCIAL MEDIA GOALS

01

Increase visitation to Shreveport-Bossier.org from [www.20x49.com](http://www.20x49.com) by 15 percent. Currently, [www.20x49.com](http://www.20x49.com) is the second-largest referrer of traffic to [www.Shreveport-Bossier.org](http://www.Shreveport-Bossier.org).

- Include a minimum of three links back to Shreveport-Bossier.org content in all blog articles.
- Generate a monthly report that shows traffic numbers from [20x49.com](http://20x49.com) to Shreveport-Bossier.org to help measure ongoing success.
- Write blog articles about all seasonal giveaways and content sections that are hosted on [www.20x49.com](http://www.20x49.com).

02

Generate 17,500 media mentions in leisure publications, a 21.3 percent increase over 2017.

- Take full advantage of Cision Communications Cloud capabilities by pursuing advanced platform training.
- Increase usage of PRWeb subscription by distributing a PRWeb release to accompany every traditional release.
- Attend a leisure travel media tradeshow in 2019 – Travel Media Showcase or equivalent.



03

### Increase video content and overall number of video plays by 30 percent over 2018 numbers.

- Build a newsroom at the Tourist Bureau to create destination content.
- Beginning in March 2019, launch weekly branded live video broadcasts from the Tourist Bureau's newsroom.
- Educate partners on how to participate in cross-posting video on popular platforms such as Facebook and Instagram.

04

### Provide compelling and frequent content on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn

- Create content that is appealing to convention meeting planners and group tour operators to support the sales team's efforts when attracting new business on LinkedIn.
- Post regular destination leisure content on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Flickr, and YouTube.

05

### Generate local media coverage of the Tourist Bureau's efforts and results.

- Release an annual report of the success of the Tourist Bureau that highlights major marketing campaigns, room nights booked, estimated economic impacts from conventions, the number of local jobs supported, and tax dollars generated.
- Distribute news releases reporting the success of local, regional, and national campaigns and include information about the total estimated economic impact and room nights generated.
- Send news releases to notify the press of new business clients booked through the sales department and include information about the total estimated economic impact and room nights
- Write a monthly Sunday column for the Times about a tourism and/or convention story.



# GUEST SERVICES EXPERIENCE GOALS

01

Provide engaging printed collateral and resources to help the visitor center provide a quality experience to visitors.

- Redesign the content of the *Downtown Shreveport Walking Guide*, *Free Things to Do* rack card and *Family Adventure Guide*.
- Create and distribute annual publications including *The 2019 Official Visitors' Guide to Shreveport-Bossier*, *Shreveport-Bossier 2019 Festivals and Annual Events*, *Gris Gris Guide to Mardi Gras*, *Holly Jolly Handbook*, quarterly *Calendar of Events* brochures, *Eat Here Guide 2019*, and map of Shreveport-Bossier.
- Create an interstate rack card that highlights places to rest and visit for interstate travelers.

02

Launch the first-ever virtual reality experience in the Downtown Shreveport Visitor Center and Greenwood Welcome Center.

03

Expand the Be a Fan of Shreveport-Bossier Ambassador Program to one each quarter.

## QUALITY EXPERIENCES





# STRATEGIC PLAN OUTLINE





# FOCUS

## GOALS OF THE TOURISM AND CONVENTION SALES DEPARTMENT

01

Increase total hotel room nights four percent over 2018 goals. In 2019, the tourism and convention sales goal is to book 58,240 room nights. It is estimated the department will end the year at approximately 56,000 definite and assist room nights.



### THE STRATEGY

Continue to focus on markets that have proven return on investment with a heavy emphasis on citywide events.

- Continue to attend national and regional tradeshows to foster new relationships, while maintaining existing relationships with clients that currently book in the destination.
- Continue to leverage the partnership with Shreveport Convention Center, meeting venues, resort casinos, and hotels with meeting space.
- Focus on SMERF and group tour operators with a proven record of producing in the region by attending tradeshows, making sales calls and enhancing other sales initiatives.
- Generate leads through prospecting, direct mail, promotions, e-newsletters, advertising, familiarization tours, and sales missions that target primary and productive markets.
- Increase production with the international market by working with Tactics by Tico, a well-known and respected Louisiana agency, to open doors and opportunities with receptive tour operators and industry partners to create packages to attract Frequent Individual Travelers (FIT).



02

Raise brand awareness of Shreveport-Bossier through positive promotion of the destination through meetings, international receptive operators and group sales efforts.

## STRATEGY

Market Shreveport-Bossier as a premier convention and tourism destination at tradeshows, trade publications, new social media tactics, online marketing, and direct sales efforts.

## TACTICS

- Ensure all marketing collateral is current and represents the brand to keep a consistent message in the marketplace.
- Research clients and customers to gauge their awareness, experiences in the destination and intent to book in the future.
- Host familiarization tours and site visits to expose potential, new and existing customers to the destination.
- Continue to refine the tactic with social media tools, digital marketing and collateral that increase traffic and potential leads to the website.

04

Add value to key partnerships for elected and civic leaders, hotel, restaurant, attraction, and retail segments through resources, education, networking, and regular communication.

## STRATEGY

Actively promote and sell the group experience programs, area attractions and events.

- Promote the group experiences and assist their sales efforts by providing follow up leads from tradeshows.

03

Align resources to identify and drive product development in downtown Shreveport and downtown Bossier City riverfronts to foster greater economic development that spurs a larger tourism base for the entire destination.

PAGE.16

## STRATEGY

Continue to identify new tourism products that enhance the downtown area, as well as support existing tourism products.

## TACTICS

- Continue to program Rockets Over the Red Fireworks Festival and support area holiday events by fostering an increase in motor coach and group travel to boost the November to December shoulder months.
- Foster more group visitation and off-site meetings at downtown attractions to enhance groups' experiences and increase economic impact on attractions, hotels and restaurants.
- Work with booked groups to ensure their awareness of event happenings to boost visitation and exploration of the destination.
- Educate potential, new and existing clients about group experiences and regional events through email marketing, printed collateral, advertising, and follow-up communications.
- Provide leads to local attractions and area businesses to promote and sell their goods and/or services to meetings and groups.
- Provide excellent service such as customized itineraries, printed collateral, and other assistance to help planners and tour operators optimize their experiences in the destination.
- Host quarterly sales and training meetings for industry partners.
- Add value to hotel and meeting partners by providing database training, site visits with potential clients, bid presentations, and other assistance as needed to book business.





# EVENTS

## GOALS OF THE SHREVEPORT – BOSSIER SPORTS COMMISSION

01

In 2019 the Shreveport-Bossier Sports Commission sales goal is to book 34,576 room nights, an eight percent increase over the 2018 goal. The total number of attendees for 2018 will surpass 168,322. In 2019, the goal is 175,221 attendees.

The Sports Commission plans to facilitate 122 new and returning events in the Shreveport-Bossier area for 2019 compared to 117 events in 2018.

### THE STRATEGY

Continue to focus on events and sports organizations and venues that have a positive and proven return on investment and work collaboratively with the sports and business communities.

- Work with local and regional colleges and high schools to host events in Shreveport-Bossier.
- Work with private and public venues of all sizes in Shreveport-Bossier and Caddo and Bossier parishes and identify one or more key events for each venue to contract for 2018 and beyond. Potential sporting event leads will be generated by attending sports-related trade shows and through direct interaction and building relationships locally, regionally and nationally with venues and rights holders.
- Provide superior service that differentiates Shreveport-Bossier from other destinations.
- Facilitate volunteer coordination to assist sporting events with hosting their event, thereby reducing their cost and providing incentive to continue holding or expanding their events in Shreveport-Bossier. Also, grow the volunteer database and community support for these events.
- Work with local, regional and national public and private partners to generate partnerships and sponsorship support that allow the destination to hold larger sporting events and conferences.
- Increase the revenue and trade sponsorship goal to \$650,000.
- Work with rural areas to identify possible venues to place sporting events and/or identify the needs and wants of the rural communities to boost grassroots efforts in holding or attracting regional, state and possible national events.
- Expand traditional and digital promotion of our hosted sporting events.
- Hold a funding application workshop to educate potential grant applicants.
- Obtain and implement an online volunteer event sign-up system. The goal for 2019 is to enroll an additional 125 new volunteers.

02

Raise brand awareness of Shreveport-Bossier through hosting sporting events that generate positive publicity locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.

## STRATEGY

Market Shreveport-Bossier as a premier sporting event destination at trade shows and through direct sales efforts and relationships.

## TACTICS

- Identify new events to bid on and work with local partners to secure.
- Research the economic impact of sporting events to ensure the return on investment to the community.
- Attend trade shows, arrange site visits for rights holders and host sports-related trade shows in Shreveport-Bossier or within the state.
- Work with area venues to add new venues and improve or expand current venues to host larger sporting events in the Shreveport-Bossier area.
- Continue to be a part of Team Louisiana Sports Association to grow the sports industry locally and statewide.
- Bring in sporting events that are televised regionally or nationally.
- Bring in sporting events that are covered locally, regionally, nationally or internationally.

03

Partner with the local community to drive sports venue development in the region to foster greater opportunity to expand hosting sporting events and the size of current sporting events that would spur economic development and quality of life.

## STRATEGY

Work to identify and partner with the cities and parishes, private and public entities and/or sports organizations to drive venue improvements, expansion or development in the Shreveport-Bossier area. The plan is to foster greater opportunity to host sporting events that would spur economic development and enhance quality of life for area residents.

## TACTICS

- Meet with local sports organizations to determine their needs for local sports venues, the venue's utilization, and if there is a need for venue expansion.
- Work with the cities and the organizations to determine if venue expansion or development is feasible.
- Work with venues or interested public or private partners to assist with moving potential venue opportunities forward at the grassroots level or through public relations. Evaluate the role of the Sports Commission in sports venue product development.



# BIG PLANS



SHREVEPORT-BOSSIER  
*Louisiana's*  
**OTHER  
SIDE**