

TravelTalk

March - April 2018 Newsletter



Inside:

Tax Free Shopping in
Shreveport-Bossier *page 3*

318 Restaurant Week
Returns *page 3*

Shreveport Golf Event
Recognized *page 3*

Nominations Sought for 2018 P.R.I.D.E. Awards



The 2018 P.R.I.D.E. Awards is May 10 at Sam's Town Hotel & Casino.

The 2018 P.R.I.D.E. Awards, an annual awards presentation hosted by the Shreveport-Bossier Convention and Tourist Bureau, will be held Thursday, May 10, at Sam's Town Hotel & Casino in Shreveport. A reception will start at 5:30 p.m. with the dinner and awards presentation following at 6 p.m. This year, the Tourist Bureau is excited to welcome Lt. Gov. Bill Nungesser as an award presenter.

The acronym P.R.I.D.E. stands for "Proud Residents Involved in Developing our Economy." The awards are held each year during the first full week in May, in conjunction with National Travel and Tourism Week, which will be observed May 6-12, 2018.

The evening will feature an awards program honoring the most outstanding individuals in Shreveport-Bossier's hospitality and tourism industry. Nominations are currently being sought for 18 award categories, ranging from Outstanding Attraction Professional to Outstanding Culinary Professional. All hospitality industry professionals from hotels, restaurants and attractions can be nominated.

"The P.R.I.D.E. Awards are an excellent opportunity to honor individuals who go above and beyond in their jobs every day," said Stacy Brown, president of the Tourist Bureau. "The evening's final award, the P.R.I.D.E. Master Award, is the

region's highest honor among tourism professionals." Last year the industry recognized John Cariere, owner of Fairfield Manor Bed and Breakfast and Fairfield Place Bed and Breakfast.

There is no charge associated with nominating an individual for awards consideration. To submit nominations, visit www.Shreveport-Bossier.org/Pride. Nominations close at midnight, Wednesday, April 18. Tickets will be on sale March 1 - April 30 and tickets cost \$40. For more information, contact Charlie Rice, executive assistant at the Tourist Bureau, at crice@sbctb.org.

NOMINATE TODAY!



Do you know an outstanding individual in Shreveport-Bossier's hospitality and tourism industry? If so, nominate today by visiting

www.Shreveport-Bossier.org/Pride

Dates to Remember:

Hospitality Breakfast

- 3/7 8 a.m.
Fairfield Manor
Bed & Breakfast
- 4/4 8 a.m.
Ralph & Kacoos

Hotel and Lodging Association Meeting

- 3/8 Noon
Margaritaville Resort Casino
- 4/12 Noon
Residence Inn

For more HLA info, contact Felicia Anderson at fanderson@caesars.com.

SBAA Seminar

- 3/20 9 a.m.
Woman's Department Club

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Blog: www.20x49.com
 Events: www.SBFunGuide.com

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- 3/3** Blake Shelton: Country Music Freaks Tour
CenturyLink Center
- 3/10** The Band Wars – Let the Battle Begin
Festival Plaza
- 3/13-17** 318 Restaurant Week
Various Shreveport-Bossier Restaurants
- 3/16** 12th Annual Blues Festival
Shreveport Municipal Auditorium
- 3/17** Louisiana Redbud Festival
100 N.W. Front St., Vivian
- 3/17** Patty in the Plaza
Festival Plaza
- 3/23** Justin Moore "Hell On A Highway" Tour
with Dylan Scott
Shreveport Municipal Auditorium
- 3/24** An Evening with Jason Mraz
Solo Acoustic Show
Shreveport Municipal Auditorium
- 3/24** ASEANA Spring Festival
Asian Gardens Of Shreveport
- 3/24** Bloom Festival
R. W. Norton Art Gallery
- 3/24** Bossier City Makers' Fair
Louisiana Boardwalk Outlets
- 3/24** Crawfest at Betty Virginia
Betty Virginia Park
- 4/7-11/24** Bossier City Farmers' Market
Pierre Bossier Mall
- 4/7** Cork Wine Festival 2018
Festival Plaza
- 4/13-21** Holiday in Dixie
Festival Plaza
- 4/21** Spring Bloom at American Rose Center
American Rose Center
- 4/22** Foo Fighters Concert
CenturyLink Center
- 4/27-29** Artbreak
Shreveport Convention Center
- 4/28** Ark-La-Tex Ambassadors BBQ Cook-Off
Festival Plaza
- 4/28** Artini 2018
Louisiana State Exhibit Museum

Submit your events to www.SBFunGuide.com, an online community events calendar, for future promotions.

»»» Your Bureau at Work



Ronald Oswalt

The Shreveport-Bossier Sports Commission recently named **Ronald Oswalt** to the position of Strategic Partnerships and Sponsorships Director. Oswalt's responsibilities include establishing business partnerships and sponsorships that generate value to the hosted events and return on investment to partners.



Brandy Evans

Brandy Evans, vice president of communications, hosted a group of four journalists Feb. 9-12, during a Mardi Gras-focused familiarization tour. Journalists from outlets including *Group Tour Media*, *Louisiana Road Trips Magazine*, *Simply Southern Mom* blog, and *On the Go with Jeannine* participated in the Us Up North Food Tour hosted by Chef Hardette Harris, attended the Krewe of Highland Bal, experienced the Krewe of Gemini parade, rode on floats in the Krewe of Highland parade, and more.

Brandy Evans, vice president of communications; **Erica Telsee**, group sales manager; and **Jennifer Boone**, area director of sales at the Courtyard Shreveport-Bossier City/Louisiana Boardwalk, participated in the Louisiana Office of Tourism four-city brand launch, Feb. 13 in Dallas. The state invited the media and public to come and learn about the new brand, "Louisiana Feed Your Soul," at the Dallas Farmers Market and MotherTrucker. Partners on the Louisiana-wrapped food truck served king cake amid Mardi Gras music, passed out beads and cups, and visitors were invited to use the selfie station.



David Bradley

David Bradley, vice president of convention and tourism sales; **Suzanne Card**, convention sales manager; Lauren Rabb, Hilton Shreveport; and Jessica Rodgers, Shreveport Convention Center, attended the Religious Conference Management Association EMERGE Conference, Jan. 30 – Feb. 1, in Omaha, Neb. The convention and tourism sales department hosted a "Gaming for Good Booth" at



Jennifer Boone, area director of sales at the Courtyard Shreveport-Bossier City/Louisiana Boardwalk; **Erica Telsee**, group sales manager; and **Brandy Evans**, vice president of communications, participated in the Louisiana Office of Tourism four-city brand launch, Feb. 13 in Dallas.

registration, which raised \$1,000 for the Stephen Center, a homeless shelter in Omaha. The booth featured giant games including Jenga, Connect Four and corn hole for attendees to play. The team brought back three requests for proposals and several leads for potential future business in Shreveport-Bossier.



Gina dePingre



Suzanne Card

Gina dePingre, sales and service coordinator, attended the Event Service Professional Association Conference in Nashville, Tenn., Jan. 4-6. There, she learned about new service manager trends and practices.

Suzanne Card, convention sales manager, secured the bid to host the Louisiana Chiefs Association of Police annual convention in Shreveport, July 10-12, at Shreveport Convention Center. There will be

approximately 300 association members attending the conference from all over the state utilizing approximately 535 overnight hotel rooms at the Hilton Shreveport, the host hotel.

On Feb. 5, Tourist Bureau board member **Mary Dunn** gave a tour of the Boom or Bust Byway to **Aly Velasquez**, marketing associate, and **Shalisa Roland**, communications intern, to help them prepare for upcoming marketing initiatives to support the scenic byway.

Shreveport-Bossier Continues to Benefit from Louisiana Tax Free Shopping for International Shoppers

Shreveport-Bossier continues to see economic gains from Louisiana Tax Free Shopping initiative aimed at international visitors. The 2017 VisaVue Travel report indicated that international visitors spent more than \$1,900,000 on their Visa cards in Shreveport-Bossier.

The LTFS program offers international visitors to Louisiana the opportunity to receive cash refunds for sales taxes paid on tangible items purchased at participating tax-free stores. Visitors can apply for refunds at the Louisiana Boardwalk Outlets in Bossier City. A recent report released by LTFA showed that international visitors reclaimed taxes on more than \$80,000



International visitors can apply for tax refunds at the Louisiana Boardwalk Outlets in Bossier City.

worth of merchandise in 2017.

Local stores that benefit from LTFS include the Louisiana Boardwalk Outlets, Best Buy,

Guitar Center, Antiques on Gladstone, and more. Visitors from Canada, South Africa, Germany, Mexico, and Australia,

to name a few, stopped into the Downtown Visitor Center in 2017.

"Retail shopping is one of the top activities for international visitors coming to Louisiana," said Stacy Brown, president of the Shreveport-Bossier Convention and Tourist Bureau.

Since 1989, more than 800,000 international customers have taken advantage of Louisiana Tax Free Shopping and recorded over \$600 million in international tax-free sales. Hotel, restaurant and food, and service sales taxes are not refundable. Encourage your international guests to take advantage of Louisiana Tax Free Shopping. For more information, visit www.louisianataxfree.com.

318 Restaurant Week Returns March 13-17



To view the full list of participating restaurants, visit www.318RestaurantWeek.com.

318 Restaurant Week will return to Shreveport-Bossier, March 13-17, featuring fixed-price lunches for \$10 and dinner specials for \$20 from more than 35 local eateries, as well as 5 unique, one-night-only dining experiences.

Visitors and residents alike can meet chefs and dine with fellow "foodies" at multi-course food and drink events ranging from a hip-hop-themed cocktail-making class to elaborate fine dining experiences. Space is limited at each of the one-night-only dinners and tickets are available now. Diners who

participate in 318 Restaurant Week are asked to share their experiences on social media using the hashtag #Eat318.

To view the list of the more than 30 participating restaurants, visit www.318RestaurantWeek.com. Like 318 Restaurant Week on Facebook to receive daily updates from participating restaurants, information on giveaways and more. 318 Restaurant Week is sponsored by the Shreveport-Bossier Convention and Tourist Bureau, *The Times*, Waitr, ANECA Federal Credit Union, Cumulus Media, and KSLA.

David Toms Foundation Junior All-Star Shreveport Wins National Award

In February, the American Junior Golf Association awarded the David Toms Foundation Junior All-Star Shreveport to be the Junior All-Star Tournament of the Year. The award recognizes the tournament as the best Junior All-Star event on the entire AJGA schedule for 2017. The Shreveport-Bossier Sports Commission is a sponsor of this golf tournament and provides volunteers and assistance for the event.

"We very much appreciate all of the efforts by the Shreveport-Bossier Sports Commission in making this a great event for Louisiana kids and the national players that come in to play at Southern Trace and experience what Shreveport-Bossier has to offer," said Darren Nelson, senior regional director at the American Junior Golf Association.



The seventh annual David Toms Foundation Junior All-Star Shreveport will be held June 11-14 at Southern Trace.

The seventh annual David Toms Foundation Junior All Star Shreveport will be held June 11-14 at Southern Trace Country Club.



Industry Briefs:

The Spring/Summer edition of the **2018 Festivals and Annual Events Guide** is now in circulation. It features events from March - August 2018. Pick one up at the Shreveport Downtown Visitor Center, located at 629 Spring St., Shreveport, call 1-800-551-8682 to request one or visit www.Shreveport-Bossier.org/brochures to download a digital version.

The **Red River Revel Arts Festival** announced its 2018 Governing Board took office on Jan. 1. The Board includes President Scott R. Wolf, Vice President Hal Martin, Treasurer Michael Ostendorff, and Secretary Sarah Garrett. The 2018 Red River Revel will be held Sept. 29-Oct. 7.



Bossier City's first pub has changed its name to **Flying Heart Brewing & Pub**. The brewery merged with Wooden Spoon Pizza, the new in-house New York-style pizza kitchen. The pizza kitchen continues to be owned and operated by partner Jeff Judge. It now features a full bar with three guest taps, and is open for lunch and dinner seven days a week.

Board of Directors:

Tanita Baker,
Chairwoman
Shreveport-Bossier African
American Chamber of
Commerce*

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

Jason McKinney,
Treasurer
Louisiana Restaurant
Association*

Patricia Wooldridge,
Secretary
Caddo Rural Municipalities*

Dick Bremer,
Greater Shreveport
Chamber of Commerce*

Sandy Cimino,
Bossier Chamber
of Commerce*

Joanna Folse-Alexander,
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& Lodging Association*

Ashley Davis,
Bossier City
Mayor's Office*

Mary Dunn,
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Attractions Association*

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& Lodging Association*

Kellie Morris,
Caddo Parish
Commission*

Shelli Murphy,
Shreveport-Bossier
Attractions Association*

Africa Price,
Shreveport
Mayor's Office*

Gary Theus,
Shreveport-Bossier Hotel
& Lodging Association*

*Appointing Organization



Shreveport-Bossier
Convention & Tourist Bureau
629 Spring St.
Shreveport, LA 71101



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