

TravelTalk

January - February 2018 Newsletter



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Shreveport-Bossier Convention and Tourist Bureau wins Readers' Choice Award

ConventionSouth, the national multimedia resource for planning events in the South, honored the Shreveport-Bossier Convention and Tourist Bureau with a 2017 Readers' Choice Award.

"Our colleagues and industry peers validated that Shreveport-Bossier is a tremendous meeting and convention destination by voting for us," said Stacy Brown, president of the Tourist Bureau. "We are incredibly honored to win such a high award and it only affirms our commitment to keep providing quality customer service and unparalleled hospitality."

According to Talty O'Connor, president and publisher of *ConventionSouth* magazine, the Tourist Bureau is among 300 convention and visitor bureaus, meeting facilities and hotels located across the South to receive this year's Readers' Choice Award. Throughout the year, meeting professionals nominated the meeting sites they believe provide exemplary service for group events. The nominated sites



The Shreveport Convention Center located in downtown Shreveport.

are then compiled onto an online ballot where meeting professionals and fans are asked to vote for the best of the best. With more than 6,000 voters participating in the selection process and the highest social media interaction to date, this has been the most successful and engaging year yet.

Since creation in 2001, this is the third time that the Tourist Bureau has received the award, making it an even greater honor to present

it with a 2017 Readers' Choice Award. The Tourist Bureau was featured as an award recipient in the December 2017 Awards Issue of *ConventionSouth* magazine.

Celebrating more than 30 years as a leading meeting planning resource, *ConventionSouth* magazine is based in Gulf Shores, Ala., and is distributed to more than 18,000 meeting professionals located across the country who book meetings held within the South.

Dates to Remember:

Hospitality Breakfast

- 1/2** 8 a.m.
Consortium Venue
- 2/7** 8 a.m.
Sam's Town Casino and Hotel

Hotel and Lodging Association Meeting

- 1/11** Noon
Wyndham Garden Shreveport
- 2/8** Noon
Homewood Suites by Hilton Shreveport/Bossier

For more Hotel and Lodging Association info, contact Felicia Anderson at fanderson@caesars.com.

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Blog: www.20x49.com
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SEE IT. BET IT. TASTE IT.

www.Shreveport-Bossier.org

>>> Your Bureau at Work

- 1/12** **Shreveport's 1st Annual Pardi Gras Bal**
Silver Lake Ballroom
- 1/13** **Krewe of Sobek Parade**
Parade begins at the Fairground Fields parking lot in Shreveport
- 1/13** **The Music of the Rolling Stones**
Shreveport Riverview Theater
- 1/14** **Krewe of Harambee's Annual Pig Roast and Float-Loading Party**
Krewe of Harambee Den
- 1/15** **Krewe of Harambee Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Mardi Gras Parade**
Parade begins at Shreveport Municipal Auditorium
- 1/19-21** **Ark-La-Tex Antique Festival**
Bossier Civic Center
- 1/19-20** **Monster Nation**
CenturyLink Center
- 1/27** **JLSB King Cake Classic 5K/10K Run for the Beads Fun Run**
Centenary College Gold Dome
- 1/27** **Shreveport Symphony: The Great C Major**
Riverview Theater
- 2/2** **Clay Walker**
Horseshoe Casino & Hotel Riverdome
- 2/2** **Krewe of Centaur Float-Loading Party**
Krewe of Centaur Den
- 2/3** **Vivian Black History Festival & Parade**
Downtown Vivian
- 2/3** **Krewe of Centaur Parade XXVII**
Parade begins on Clyde Fant Parkway in Shreveport
- 2/4** **Krewe of Barkus and Meoux Pet Parade**
Events on the Red
- 2/9** **Krewe of Gemini Float-Loading Party**
Krewe of Gemini Den
- 2/10** **Krewe of Gemini Grand Parade XXIX**
Parade begins on Clyde Fant Parkway in Shreveport
- 2/11** **Marilynn's Place Mardi Gras Bash VII**
Marilynn's Place
- 2/11** **Krewe of Highland Parade**
Parade begins at the corner of Gilbert Drive and Gregg Avenue in Shreveport
- 2/15** **Luke Combs "Don't Tempt Me with a Good Time" Tour with Ashley McBryde**
Shreveport Municipal Auditorium

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



Kevin Flowers

Kevin Flowers, convention sales manager, attended the Your Military Reunion Connection Marketplace in Savannah, Ga. where he met with 20 military reunion planners, including two for the USS Shreveport Association Reunion. Both of those planners are coming in January for a site visit with the possibility of bringing the reunion to Shreveport in the fall of 2018.

The Battle on the Hardwood 2018, organized by the **Shreveport Bossier Sports Commission**, had 39 high schools from four states participate. The tournament lasted five days with 60 matchups.



Kelly Wells

Kelly Wells, executive director of the Shreveport-Bossier Sports Commission, and his team are preparing for the 2018 T-H Marine Bass Fishing League and the 2018 YETI FLW College Fishing National Championship, both to be held May 30-June 2, 2018. Each will have an hour of televised coverage on NBC Sports and a combined \$1.4 million economic impact.

Stacy Brown, president, attended the Southeast Tourism Society Fall Forum and board meeting in Biloxi, Miss. Dec. 4-6.



Chris Jay

Chris Jay, social media and public relations manager, attended Digital Summit in Dallas, Dec. 4-7, for professional development courses in content marketing,

social media, public relations and more. Instructors at the annual conference included filmmaker Morgan Spurlock, as well as speakers from CBS News, Microsoft and MGM Resorts International.



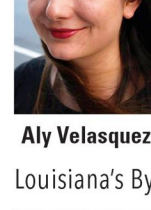
Suzanne Card

Suzanne Card, convention sales manager, traveled to Baton Rouge for sales calls in November with Tracy Young, sales representative at Hilton Shreveport. The pair met with about a dozen state association meeting planners about hosting future meetings in Shreveport-Bossier.



Evelyn Cassell

Stacy Brown, president, **Evelyn Cassell**, Boom or Bust Byway coordinator, and **Aly Velasquez**, marketing associate, attended the Louisiana Byways Program Statewide Educational Conference, Dec. 13-14, in Marksville. The purpose of the conference was to teach attendees how to enhance the visitor experience along Louisiana's Byways.



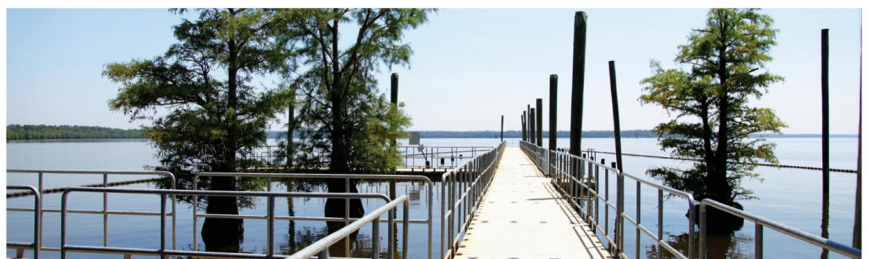
Aly Velasquez

Louisiana's Byways.



Que'brelyn Douglas

Que'brelyn Douglas, sports sales and services coordinator, attended the TEAMS Sports Conference in Orlando, Fla., Oct. 30 -Nov. 2. She met with more than 20 potential sports event planners.



The Boom or Bust Byway, part of Louisiana Byways Program, highlights the economic booms and busts experienced by the resilient people of Northwest Louisiana.

New Mardi Gras Marketing Strategies to Generate Overnight Room Nights

The Shreveport-Bossier Convention and Tourist Bureau is ramping up its efforts to drive overnight visitation during the Mardi Gras season. New creative has been implemented to encourage visitors to stay the weekend with the message, "Come for Mardi Gras... Stay for Adventure, Gaming and Food." Advertising via targeted digital ads, print magazines, newspapers, and radio, as well as social media and public relations efforts is the cornerstone of this campaign.

Last year's campaign generated 164,545 website visits, 1.4 million online impressions and 4,346 hotel bookings. Hotel occupancy rose by double digits for both parade weekends in 2017.



The 2018 Mardi Gras Gris Gris Guide features parade and bal dates, Mardi Gras-inspired food and spirits, parade routes, and more.

For the second time in a row, the Tourist Bureau is hosting a Mardi Gras Road Show. The 2018 event is in Hot Springs, Ark. on Jan. 12. This Mardi Gras-themed party will be hosted at the historic

Superior Bathhouse Brewery in the heart of downtown Hot Springs. The festivities will include Tubbs Hardware and Cajun Gifts X-treme King Cakes, live street jazz music by the Shreveport Second Line Jazz

Band, Mardi Gras beads tossed into the crowd, and the 2018 *Mardi Gras Gris Gris Guide* will be passed out.

Annually, the Tourist Bureau hosts the Red River Mardi Gras Bash, which is an American Bus Association Top 100 Event. In its 12th year, motor coach groups will attend an exclusive party during the Krewe of Centaur Parade on Feb. 3.

To learn more about Shreveport-Bossier Mardi Gras events, go online to www.ShreveportMardiGras.org. Request a copy of the 2018 *Mardi Gras Gris Gris Guide*, which is distributed throughout Louisiana and East Texas, by calling 1-800-551-8682 or download it on the website.

Trace Adkins Inducted into Walk of Stars



Adkins was inducted into the Northwest Louisiana Walk of Stars on Oct. 20, 2017.

Acclaimed country music star Trace Adkins was inducted into the Northwest Louisiana Walk of Stars during a private induction ceremony on Friday, Oct. 20, at Horseshoe Casino and Hotel. Adkins cast his hand and shoe prints in concrete, which is now on display at the Northwest Louisiana Walk of Stars in the Red River District.

Adkins will also serve as the 2018 Grand Marshall of the Krewe of Centaur Parade on Saturday, Feb. 3. The Sarepta native will ride on a

float during the parade. The parade will roll at 4 p.m. and begins on Clyde Fant Parkway at Lake Street in downtown Shreveport.

The Grammy-nominated singer is known for hits "You're Gonna Miss This," "Songs About Me," "Every Light In The House," and "Ladies Love Country Boys." He also competed on NBC's "All-Star Celebrity Apprentice," raising more than \$1.5 million for the Wounded Warrior Project and the American Red Cross.

Gator Raceway Now Open



Race high-speed go-karts at Gators and Friends Adventure Park.

Gator Raceway opened in September 2017 at Gators and Friends Adventure Park, located in Greenwood. The 1600-foot racetrack features super-wide lanes for passing at high speeds. The Sodi gas-powered go-karts have top speeds of over 35 miles per hour with precise steering, which allows drivers to make quick and tight curves and accelerate quickly.

Gator Raceway also offers driving experiences for children in separate races without adults. Double-seater carts are available for children

under the age of seven.

Gator Raceway is open Wednesday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Racing prices range from \$14 to \$20 per person. Group rates are available.

Gators and Friends Adventure Park also features zip lining over alligators, daily feeding shows, an exotic petting zoo, and pony rides. The park recently changed its name from Gators and Friends Alligator Park and Exotic Zoo to Gators and Friends Adventure Park and updated its website, www.gatorsandfriends.com.

Shreveport-Bossier Convention & Tourist Bureau

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Industry Briefs:

The **2018 Official Visitor's Guide to Shreveport-Bossier** theme is "Dive into Adventure" and features Shreveport Aquarium on the cover. It includes stories about what's new and the "Ultimate Shreveport-Bossier Bucket List." Pick one up at the Downtown Shreveport Visitor's Center, located at 629 Spring St., Shreveport, call 1-800-551-8682 to request one or visit www.Shreveport-Bossier.org/brochures to download the digital version.

Ki' Mexico was named one of *Thrillist's* "31 Best Mexican Restaurants in America."

The **East Bank District & Plaza** is now open along the 700 block of Barksdale Boulevard in Bossier City. The Bossier City Chamber of Commerce

held a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Nov. 25, 2017. The East Bank District features bars, Flying Heart Brewing, East Bank Gallery, a coffee shop, hotel, salon, antique shops, and more.

Wooden Spoon Pizza is now open at Flying Heart Brewing in Bossier City. Owned and operated by the Judge family, who also operates a bakery in Bossier City, Wooden Spoon serves hand-tossed, New York-style pizza in the brewery's recently expanded seating area.

Chef Anthony Felan opened his new eatery, **Fat Calf Boucherie**, which is located at Red River Brewing Company in Shreveport. Felan formerly served as executive chef at Wine Country Bistro.

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