

TravelTalk

March - April 2019 Newsletter



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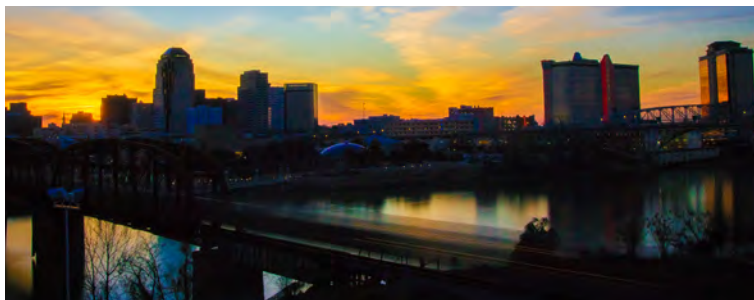
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Shreveport-Bossier Convention and Tourist Bureau Launches Initiative to Assess Destination

The Shreveport-Bossier Convention and Tourist Bureau has launched an initiative to assess Caddo and Bossier Parishes as a tourist destination. The assessment took the form of a 360-degree survey designed by Destinations International titled "DestinationNext." The survey provides an exploratory review from major stakeholders in Shreveport-Bossier across a series of metrics, including attractions and entertainment, economic development, air access, branding, the quality of convention and meeting facilities, mobility and access, communications and internet infrastructure, and quality of sports and entertainment facilities.

401 participants responded to the survey, which was administered to partners impacted by Shreveport-Bossier's ability to attract and inspire visitors to the sister cities including residents, tourism stakeholders, local governing bodies, tourism clients, sports rights holders, and economic development organizations.

The initial results were compiled



401 tourism stakeholders participated in the "DestinationNext" survey distributed by the tourist bureau.

and presented to industry leaders at the "DestinationNext Workshop" at Sam's Town Hotel and Casino on Feb. 12. The workshop sparked a productive conversation about Shreveport-Bossier as a tourist destination. The survey indicated that both the tourist bureau and the destination have a vision and community mandate to achieve goals to grow the destination. Survey participants rated several of the destination's assets as above the industry average of perceived performance including accommodations, convention and meeting facilities, partnership strength and support, funding

support and certainty, and regional cooperation. Assets that were rated below the industry average of perceived performance include air access and branding. Concerns were also raised about improving litter cleanup and crime prevention throughout the cities.

The results of the survey and feedback from the workshop will form the basis of a destination-wide tourism strategy that will take the region to the next level. The results of the survey are available in the tourist bureau's Simpleview Extranet system. To learn more about tourism in Shreveport-Bossier visit www.Shreveport-Bossier.org/Partners.

Dates to Remember:

Hospitality Breakfast

3/6 8 a.m.,
American Rose Center

4/3 8 a.m.,
Sam's Town Hotel & Casino

Hotel and Lodging Association Meeting

3/14 Noon
Texas Roadhouse

4/11 Noon
Hilton Garden Inn Shreveport

For more Hotel and Lodging Association information, contact Joanna Folse-Alexander at joannafolse@yahoo.com.

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Blog: www.20x49.com

Events: www.SBFunGuide.com

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www.Shreveport-Bossier.org



- 1/6-3/5** **The Enchanting World of Fantasy Masks Exhibit**
Louisiana State Exhibit Museum
- 3/2** **Krewe of Gemini Grand Parade XXX**
Parade Begins on Clyde Fant Parkway at Lake Street
- 3/3** **Krewe of Highland Parade XXIV**
Parade Begins on Gilbert Drive at Gregg Avenue
- 3/4** **Willie Nelson & Family**
Shreveport Municipal Auditorium
- 3/5** **Fat Tuesday Children's Parade**
Pierre Bossier Mall Parking Lot
- 3/5** **Fat Tuesday in Shreve Town, A Walking Parade**
Parade Begins on Commerce Street at Milam Street
- 3/9** **Ark-La-Tex Craft Beer and BBQ Festival**
Louisiana State Exhibit Museum
- 3/16** **Chimpanzee Discovery Days**
Chimp Haven
- 3/16** **P!NK: Beautiful Trauma World Tour**
CenturyLink Center
- 3/18-23** **318 Restaurant Week**
Various Restaurants
- 3/23** **Battle of The Gumbo Gladiators**
Festival Plaza
- 3/23** **Bloom Festival**
R.W. Norton Art Gallery
- 3/30** **ARTINI**
East Bank District and Plaza
- 3/30** **ASEANA Spring Festival**
Asian Gardens of Shreveport
- 4/6** **Cork - A Red River Revel Wine Event**
Festival Plaza
- 4/6** **Defenders of Liberty Mud Run**
Barksdale Air Force Base
- 4/12** **Foreigner The Hits on Tour**
Horseshoe Casino & Hotel Riverdome
- 4/20** **The Doobie Brothers**
Horseshoe Casino & Hotel Riverdome
- 4/24** **2019 Grillin' for Grads BBQ Cook-off**
Festival Plaza
- 4/28** **Monty Python's Spamalat**
The Strand Theatre

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

▶▶▶ Your Bureau at Work



David Bradley

David Bradley, vice president of convention and tourism sales, was nominated as one of Connect's "15 Over 50." This award honors event professionals that have spent their career moving the meetings industry forward.



Gina dePingre

Gina dePingre, bureau service manager, attended the Event Service Professionals Association Conference in Charlotte, N.C., Jan. 11-13. The annual conference is dedicated to professional development and education for event service professionals from CVBs, hotels and convention centers.



Erica Telsee

Erica Telsee, group sales manager, attended the American Bus Association Marketplace in Louisville, Ky., Jan. 26-28. She met with several tour operators



Suzanne Card

and received several bookings and leads. **Bradley, Suzanne Card**, convention sales manager, Lauren Rabb, sales manager at Hilton Shreveport, and Jessica Rodgers, sales manager at Shreveport Convention Center, attended RCMA's



Stacy Brown

EMERGE Conference in Greensboro, N.C., Jan. 29-31. The annual three-day conference is a premier event for faith-based meeting planners and suppliers. The team attended several appointments with meeting planners.



Brandy Evans

Stacy Brown, president, and **Brandy Evans**, vice president of communications, attended Washington Mardi Gras, in



(Pictured left to right) Brandy Evans, SBCTB Chairman Stacy Brown, Lt. Governor Billy Nungesser and Rob Brown attended Washington Mardi Gras, Jan. 31-Feb. 2.

Washington, D.C., Jan. 31-Feb. 2, where they met and networked with event planners, state and federal officials.

The Communications Department hosted the Shreveport-Bossier Mardi Gras Pop-Up Party at event1013 in downtown Plano, Texas on Feb. 9. The promotional event included free gumbo, king cake, Mardi Gras beads, and door prizes for attendees, as well as travel planning information. The event was well attended and generated valuable media coverage in outlets throughout Texas including *County Line Magazine*, *Plano Magazine* and *DFWChild.com*. It was also spotlighted in the weekly Tourism Best Practices e-newsletter.

Card attended the Police Jury Association of Louisiana Convention in Lake Charles, Feb. 13-15. During the conference, she promoted Shreveport-Bossier to generate interest in the group's 2020 convention, which will be held at Shreveport Convention Center, Feb. 12-14, 2020. The event will attract approximately 1,000 meeting delegates and generate an estimated economic impact of more than \$745,000.

Telsee, Joanna Folse-Alexander, vice president of sales and marketing at Sunrise Hospitality, and Amy Keifenheim, sales and event developer at Monroe-West Monroe Convention and Visitors Bureau, attended the Travel South Domestic Showcase in Myrtle Beach, S.C. on Feb. 24. The group shared a booth at the event and jointly promoted their destinations to tour operators.

Annual Red River Mardi Gras Bash Boosts Group Tourism

The Shreveport-Bossier Convention and Tourist Bureau hosted the 13th Annual Red River Mardi Gras Bash during the Krewe of Centaur Parade XXVIII in downtown Shreveport on Saturday, Feb. 23. The party, an American Bus Association Top 100 Event, has been designed for group tours visiting for Mardi Gras. The 2019 Red River Mardi Gras Bash had an estimated economic impact of more than \$150,000 and drew over 400 attendees.

"The Red River Mardi Gras Bash is an easy, one-stop-shop experience designed exclusively for groups," said Erica Telsee, group sales manager at the Shreveport-Bossier Convention



The major event is an exclusive party for tour groups to enjoy one of the largest Mardi Gras parades in Louisiana.

and Tourist Bureau. "Our event takes all of the challenges out of attending a Mardi Gras parade with a large group."

Attendees enjoy this exclusive party and front row experience to the Krewe of Centaur parade – one of the largest Mardi Gras

parades in Louisiana. The climate-controlled party tent is located along the riverfront, and tickets to the bash include live entertainment, savory Cajun and Creole food, king cake, a commemorative Mardi Gras bead and t-shirt, and several hands-on experiences.

The sponsors of the 2019 Red River Mardi Gras Bash are Raising Cane's Chicken Fingers, SOBO Promotional Products, Lilah's King Cakes, Shreveport Coca-Cola, Ralph and Kacoo's, Horseshoe Casino and Hotel, and Holiday Inn Shreveport Downtown.

To learn more about Mardi Gras in Shreveport-Bossier, visit www.ShreveportMardiGras.com.

318 Restaurant Week Returns, March 18-23



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

318 Restaurant Week returns to Shreveport-Bossier, March 18-23, featuring fixed price lunches for \$10 and dinner specials for \$20 from more than 50 local eateries, as well as 10 exclusive, one-night-only dining experiences.

Visitors and locals alike can meet chefs and dine with fellow "foodies" at multi-course food and drink events. The dining experiences range from the casual Where There's Smoke event at Real BBQ & More to the upscale Full Moon/High Tide Spring Equinox Seafood Experience at Shreveport Aquarium. 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.

318 Restaurant Week is sponsored by the Shreveport-Bossier Convention and Tourist Bureau, Louisiana Seafood Promotion and Marketing Board, ANECA Federal Credit Union, KSLA, Boomtown Casino and Hotel, Hilton Shreveport, and SOBO Promotional Products.

To learn more and view the list of participating restaurants, visit www.318RestaurantWeek.com.

Kayak Bass Fishing National Championship to Be Held in Shreveport-Bossier for the First Time, March 28-30

The Kayak Bass Fishing (KBF) National Championship will be held in Shreveport-Bossier for the first time, March 28-30. The competition annually attracts approximately 750 kayakers to compete for a \$100,000 prize. Contenders will fish on five bodies of water in a 25-mile radius of Shreveport-Bossier including Cypress Black Bayou, Cross Lake, Lake Bistineau, Wallace Lake, and Caddo Lake.

"Without the partnerships and support of the Red River Waterway Commission and Harrah's Louisiana Downs, we could not bring in events of this caliber," said Kelly Wells, executive director of the Shreveport-Bossier Sports Commission. The Sports Commission worked with both local organizations to win the bid to host the event. "This competition provides awareness



Approximately 750 kayakers will compete in this national fishing championship on five bodies of water.

nationally and internationally for future kayakers to visit Shreveport-Bossier and enjoy some of the best fisheries in the country," he said.

For more information about the Kayak Bass Fishing National Championship, visit www.ShreveportBossierSports.com.

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Newsletter



Industry Briefs:

Sci-Port Discovery Center announced the re-opening of the second floor four months ahead of schedule on Feb. 1. The science museum now also features a "Bricks and Bots" Gift Shop that includes thousands of pounds of Legos for children to play with. The Power of Play Children's Museum and the IMAX Theater re-opened in Spring 2018 and the Space Center and Planetarium re-opened in Fall 2018.

The Shreveport-Bossier Attractions Association will host an Adult Easter Egg Hunt in the East Bank District on April 4. Attendees will be encouraged to explore Bossier City's newest entertainment district while hunting for Easter eggs filled with

coupons and giveaways from local attractions. Admission is free and open to participants 18-years and older.

The Louisiana Office of Tourism announced that the application period for Competitive Grant Program for FY20 is now open. The grant is aimed at increasing and improving out-of-state visitation and economic impact in all areas around the state. The program awards grants up to \$10,000 to help fund marketing initiatives for tourism events held throughout Louisiana from July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020. The application deadline is April 24. More information and a link to the application can be found on the Louisiana Office of Tourism Grants webpage, www.crt.state.la.us.

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