



**20  
18**

St. Tammany Parish Tourist & Convention Commission

**ANNUAL REPORT**





## A Message from President and CEO **Donna O' Daniels**

Every now and then, someone I've just met will express surprise that St. Tammany Parish has a Tourist Commission. Even some longtime residents seem to think that tourism is for places like New Orleans or New York, not the Northshore.

I explain that, yes, St. Tammany does have tourists. We play host all the time to families who come for sports tournaments, executives here for association meetings, international travelers in search of adventure, as well as the young couple from Houston looking for a romantic getaway, cyclists exploring the Tammany Trace or girlfriends tracking treasures in the shops of downtown Covington or Olde Towne Slidell.

It's easy to understand how locals might not know what we do. After all, we're marketing to folks from outside the parish, courting media or potential group travelers from somewhere else. But whether or not residents know we are working on their behalf, the economic impact is real. And it's big. Tourism generates an estimated \$804.72 million in annual spending in parish businesses, creating jobs, spurring growth and saving each parish household \$1,082 each year in taxes.

We're proud at the St. Tammany Tourist Commission of the recognition we've received regionally, locally, and internationally for excellence in our industry. In 2018, we were awarded Tourism Office of the Year by the Southeast Tourism Society, received the Tourism Marketing Campaign of the Year from the LA Travel Association, and Accreditation by Destinations International. We're also proud of our role in letting the outside world know the Northshore's a great place to visit as well as, through positive economic impact, making it an even better place to live for those of us who call it home.



# Who We Are & What We Do

The St. Tammany Parish Tourist and Convention Commission is a public, quasi-governmental agency. Created in 1976 by an act of the Louisiana Legislature, the commission is governed by a seven-member board of directors appointed by the St. Tammany Parish Council. In other destinations, our organization may be called a Destination Management Organization (DMO) or Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB).

## **WHAT WE DO**

We work with our tourism partners to promote our community as an attractive travel destination and

enhance St. Tammany Parish's public image as a dynamic place to live and work. Through the impact of travel, we strengthen the economic position of our parish and provide opportunity and jobs for people in our community.

## **HOW WE ARE FUNDED**

A three percent hotel tax funds the St. Tammany Parish Tourist Commission. We also receive 25% of the four percent state sales tax levied on lodging. Our office does not receive any funding from St. Tammany Parish resident taxes.



## THE ST. TAMMANY PARISH TOURIST & CONVENTION COMMISSION STAFF

**Donna O’Daniels**

President & CEO

**Rae Shipley**

Assistant to President & CEO

**Tanya Leader**

VP Sales

**Christina Cooper**

VP Communications, Marketing & PR

**Devan Richoux, CPA**

VP of Administration and CFO

**Zondra White Jones**

Senior Sales Manager

**Anna Strider**

Manager of Marketing & PR

**Roberta Carrow-Jackson**

Digital Media Specialist

Visitor Services

**Louise Lovich**

### TOURIST COMMISSIONERS:

Mark Myers, Commission Chair

Marlaine Peachey, Vice Chair

Bonnie Eades, Secretary/Treasurer

Thomas J. (T.J) Smith, Jr.

Patti Elish

Alex Carollo

Katherine Diemont

### HOW WE BENEFIT THE COMMUNITY

The St. Tammany Parish Tourist Commission works to encourage people to visit our destination. We promote the Northshore’s festivals, culture, cuisine, areas of interest and quality of life. When more people visit St. Tammany Parish and stay in our hotels, other agencies receive additional funding from the state sales tax levied on lodging. These agencies include St. Tammany Corporation (45%), The Harbor Center (9%), Recreation District One (9%), and St. Tammany Parish Government (12%). There are 11,490 St. Tammany residents whose jobs are supported by visitor revenue.



## OUR MISSION

The St. Tammany Parish Tourist  
And Convention Commission's  
Mission is to:

Market and promote  
St. Tammany Parish as a highly  
desirable destination for visitors,  
thereby increasing the economic  
impact of tourism on the area.

# 2018: A Record-Breaking Year for Tourism in Louisiana and **St. Tammany Parish**

Lt. Governor Billy Nungesser announced that 2018 tourism numbers led to our seventh consecutive record-breaking year and the largest year-to-year increase in visitation to Louisiana. A record-breaking **51.3 million tourists** visited Louisiana in 2018, a nine percent increase over 2017 (as reported by DK Shifflet).

### WHY TOURISM MATTERS

The travel and tourism industry is the 4th largest employer in the State of Louisiana and visitors to Louisiana spent **\$18.8 billion**, an increase of seven percent over 2017. The travel and tourism industry generated **\$1.9 billion in state and local tax revenue** in 2018.

In addition, 2,600 tourism-related jobs in Louisiana were added between 2017 and 2018.  
(US Bureau of Labor Statistics)

Tax revenue created by travel and tourism spending **saves each Louisiana household \$1,082** per year by offsetting revenue that would be needed to maintain current services.

# St. Tammany Parish Tourism By The Numbers:



**53,915,953**  
consumers reached

The STPTCC placed advertising in 2018 that included publications such as Garden and Gun, Taste of the South, Louisiana Cookin', AAA Southern Traveler, The Local Palate, Texas Monthly, Country Roads, American Road Magazine and Cooking with Paula Deen, and began the Tammany Taste of Summer campaign.

**594K**

LouisianaNorthshore.com, the parish's official tourism website, had 594,483 user sessions in 2018.



## GOOD PRESS!

Media outreach garnered St. Tammany positive coverage in numerous outlets including AAA Southern Traveler, Garden & Gun, Shermans Travel, Louisiana Cookin, New Orleans Bridal Magazine, Condé Naste Traveler, Southern Living, Eater, Travel Weekly, Expedia, and more.

## YOUR COST:

**\$0**

Visitor dollars pay for the STPTCC; parish residents pay **NOTHING** for its services.

STPTCC's sales department assisted more than **100 group and sports organizations, family reunions, tour operators and weddings** in 2018.

**100+** 

**\$274+**  
**MILLION**

earned in tourism revenue in 2018.

The STPTCC sales department booked 9,895 hotel room nights in 2018 with direct spending of **2.97 million.**

**9895**  
**ROOM**  
**NIGHTS**



**110K**

The number of St. Tammany Parish Visitor Guides distributed through welcome centers, hotels, and attractions in 2018.



**BIG**  
**BUCKS!**

Collected from visitors:  
**\$45,950,000 in state taxes and**  
**\$37,670,000 in local taxes** in 2018.

**\$ 804 MILLION**  
 Tourists spent **\$804,072,000** in St. Tammany Parish in 2018.

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**JOBS**   
 Tourism employed more than **11,490** St. Tammany residents in 2018 (up 8%).  
 UNO Hospitality Research Center

  
**LOUISIANA**  
 ST. TAMMANY PARISH IS THE **4<sup>th</sup> LARGEST** TOURISM ECONOMY IN LA.

The tourist commission film office has facilitated over 500 industry projects in the past decade, including "The Highwaymen," "The Green Book," "NCIS: New Orleans," "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button," just to name a few.

**ROLL THE CREDITS** 

**EACH HOUSEHOLD SAVES:**  
**\$1,082**  
 in taxes because of tourism revenue.

  
**WE WON!**

**2018 Accreditation from Destinations International**  
 The globally recognized Destination Marketing Accreditation Program (DMAP) serves as a visible industry distinction that defines quality and performance standards in destination marketing and management.

**2018 Tourism Office of the Year: Southeast Tourism Society**  
 Tourism offices and Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) across a 12-state region compete for this prestigious "Shining Example" award. Tourism offices are evaluated on the overall performance of the organization and their demonstrable accomplishments through effective tourism marketing (advertising, promotions, public relations, etc.)

**2018 Tourism Campaign/Promotion of the Year Louisiana Travel Association**  
 Destinations representing parishes from around the State of Louisiana submit marketing campaigns for consideration by an out-of-state panel of judges, and our "Tammany Taste of Summer" campaign won in 2018. The Louey is awarded to the promotional campaign that is creative, innovative and that grabs the attention of potential travelers. Return on Investment (ROI) stats on the effectiveness of a campaign is considered.

  
**OUR VISION**  
 To establish St. Tammany Parish as a premier travel destination.



DOUG



# A Partnership with **Our Community**

The St. Tammany Parish Tourist Commission is an active community partner promoting tourism and small businesses in St. Tammany. We offer marketing services, including media outreach and website and visitor guide listings; family reunion consulting; group tour planning and assistance; social media promotion and more **free of charge** to tourism-related businesses and events in the parish.

## **TOURISM PARTNER TRAINING SESSIONS**

The St. Tammany Parish Tourist Commission sponsors free year-round training sessions for industry partners.

## **SIMPLEVIEW PARTNER TRAINING**

Our Sales staff sends out leads to our hotels and industry partners through Simpleview, our CRM management software, considered the gold standard in the industry for tourism marketing organizations.

The STPTCC offered a free training session on using Simpleview to our hotels in 2018. Hotel partners are able to upload information directly to the LouisianaNorthshore.com website through our extranet.

## **INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS SEMINAR**

The STPTCC hosted an International Partners Seminar to educate hoteliers about increasing the economic impact of international visitors and how to negotiate FIT contracts with receptive operators.

## **HOSPITALITY FAMILIARIZATION TOUR**

Our front line hospitality agents are an important key to success in tourism. The St. Tammany Parish Tourist Commission's sales team sponsors yearly hospitality tours of the parish for hoteliers and other industry front line personnel.

## **STAFF BOARD & COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

Society of American Travel Writers

Southeast Tourism Society

Louisiana Travel Association

Louisiana Association of  
Convention & Visitor Bureaus

Louisiana Tourism Coastal Coalition

The Harbor Center

Mid-South Women in Tourism

Leadership Northshore

Leadership St. Tammany

Falaya Fest

Carnival in Covington Committee

Louisiana Tourism Leadership  
Academy Alumni Taskforce

Society of Governmental  
Meeting Planners – Louisiana Chapter

Olde Towne Slidell  
Main Street Association

East St. Tammany Chamber

Greater Madisonville Area  
Chamber of Commerce

Madisonville Old Fashioned 4th of July

Team Louisiana



**The Communications Department** uses a multi-pronged approach to promote and market the parish to leisure travelers, business visitors, and the film/TV industry to positively impact the parish economy. The department produces all collateral materials to promote the parish, drafts and administers the commission’s marketing plan and ad placement, handles media relations, oversees the LouisianaNorthshore.com website, social media and coordinates film commission efforts.

*It is noteworthy that **the STPTCC Communications Department produces all collateral materials in-house** and is responsible for photography, copy, art direction, and editing, saving agency costs of up to 25%. (Randall Travel Marketing, 2017 Tourism Research Study)*



**MARKETING AND ADVERTISING**

- Advertising budget 2018: **\$528,772**
- Advertising Reach/Circulation: **53,915,953**
- Advertising leads: **27,577**
- Website visits: **594,483**

**2018 INITIATIVES INCLUDED:**

- Introduction of a new magazine-format inspirational Explore the Northshore Visitor Guide. Distributed 80,000 copies



# Communications Department **Marketing & Initiatives**

to visitors in the drive market requesting information on St. Tammany Parish as well as to St. Tammany Parish hotels and attractions.

- Leverage User Generated Content, UGC, (content posted by visitors and shared publicly on social channels) to inspire leisure travel to the Northshore, including curating content with a Tripadvisor Premium Destination Partnership. Created custom widgets on the LouisianaNorthshore.com website, and introduced product tagging to Stackla content so that visitors could find St. Tammany attractions and services featured in the UGC.
- Increase visitation during August, a slow month traditionally, with a new Tammany Taste of Summer campaign promoting the Northshore's culinary scene. YOY Comparison of the STR report showed that Occupancy was up 14% over August 2017 in St. Tammany Parish, and RevPar was up 18%. Utilize geofencing technology to target meeting and

group tour planners at annual conventions, as well as leisure travelers staying in 20 select New Orleans hotels.

- Increase Louisiana Northshore's presence in the State of Louisiana's Inspiration Guide distributed to 300,000 potential Louisiana visitors by offering cooperative advertising opportunities to Northshore partners.

## **PUBLIC RELATIONS**

The Communications Department handles media relations including outreach and pitching of story ideas, press releases, and hosting media familiarization (FAM) tours.

## **MEDIA FAMILIARIZATION TOURS (FAM)**

On FAM tours, we cater the itineraries to the media's interest and outlets and showcase some of the best chefs, attractions, and memorable experiences St. Tammany has to offer. **We hosted 11 FAM tours in 2018** with members of the media from **Louisiana Cookin', Garden and Gun, Cooking with Paula Deen Magazine, USA Today** and more.



## DIGITAL & SOCIAL MEDIA ACHIEVEMENTS

### LOUISIANANORTHSHORE.COM

2018 Website sessions:

594,483 up 38.8% from 2017

Users: 421,277 up 40%

Pageviews: 1,084,591 up 34.7%

Contracted with Threshold 360 to include 360 videos of our hotel, attractions, and restaurant partners on Google and in our website listings.

Top 5 visiting states to our website:

1. Louisiana
2. Texas
3. Mississippi
4. Florida
5. Georgia

**INSTAGRAM followers 5,848**

a 34% increase YOY.

**YOUTUBE subscribers 223**

an increase of 99% YOY.

Our most popular video was a 48-second piece by Brand USA called Come Explore St. Tammany Parish. Published on June 25, it has had 174K views to date with 95.3% retention and 5.8K impressions.

**TWITTER followers 4893**

increased by 7% YOY. The top tweet of the year, "10 Ways to Taste St. Tammany" page, with 6,121 impressions and 17 engagements.

The last quarter of 2018 saw the highest overall engagement, with 99.8K impressions on all tweets.

**FACEBOOK followers 34,878**

up 14% YOY. One of our most popular posts was on June 22 with a link to a Northshore Summer Weekend Getaway Contest entry form. It reached 63,659 people, had 2,627 reactions, comments and shares, and 2,605 post clicks.

These foster a personal connection with the media and can result in earned media exposure for years to come and a tremendous ROI.

Media contacts and FAM tours in 2018 resulted in these stories, and more:

- **Condé Naste Traveler:** 3 Best Day Trips from New Orleans
- UK Based - **Cruise & Travel Lifestyles:** Big Fun on the Bayou and Beyond
- **Expedia:** Best Places to Escape in Every State
- UK Based - **The Telegraph:** Review of the Southern Hotel
- **Travel Weekly:** Swamp Tours Offer Wild Break from Bourbon Street

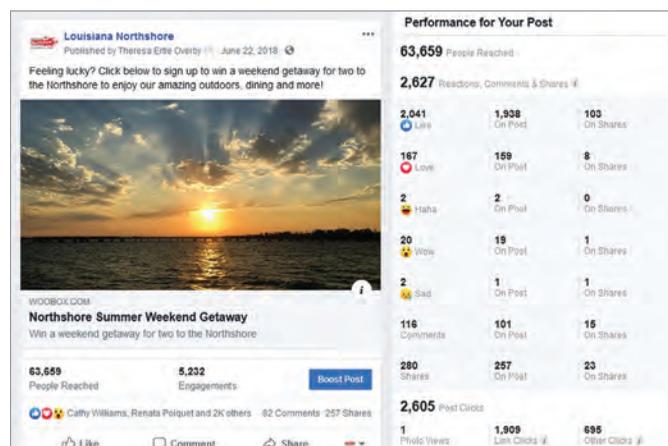
Visit our website at [LouisianaNorthshore.com/articles](http://LouisianaNorthshore.com/articles) for more media coverage.

### FILM

St. Tammany's varied locations, historic downtown and diverse architectural styles are among the reasons Louisiana's Northshore is the perfect locale for film. The Tourist Commission offers **full-service assistance** including **location scouting, permitting, accommodations, industry contacts** and **workforce development**.

Production Projects assisted in 2018 include:

- CBS NCIS: New Orleans Season 4
- TNT/TBS "Claws" Season 2
- TNT/TBS "Tell Me Your Secrets" Season 1
- Bravo "Southern Charm"



**NORTHSHORE SUMMER WEEKEND GETAWAY CONTEST**  
One of our most popular posts in 2018 which resulted in 2,627 reactions, comments and shares, and 2,605 post clicks.

**PALMETTOS ON THE BAYOU**



Nestled in the heart of Olde Towne Slidell, Palmettos on the Bayou offers a true Louisiana experience with Lunch, Dinner, Cajun Zydeco Brunch on Saturday, Jazz Brunch Buffet on Sunday, and private parties for up to 500 people. Please call for reservations. 1901 Bayou Ln., Slidell, LA 70458 985.643.0050 • PALMETTOSRESTAURANT.COM

**LITTLE RIVER BLUFFS NATURE PRESERVE & RETREAT**



Escape to a private nature retreat on 30 acres. Enjoy fishing, paddle boating, hiking, or kayaking. Four custom cabins are secluded, fully equipped and packed with amenities. Conference center coming soon. 11030 Garden Ln., Folsom, LA 70437 985.796.5257 • WWW.LITTLERIVERBLUFFS.COM

**SOUTHERN HOTEL AND GARDEN HOUSE**



The mission-style Southern Hotel opened in 1907 and has been elegantly restored as a boutique, historic 42-room hotel in the heart of Covington. The Garden House annex's five suites opened in 2018. Oxlot 9 restaurant, the Cypress Bar, and spa available on-site. 428 E. Boston St., Covington, LA 70433 844.866.1907 • SOUTHERNHOTEL.COM

**BAYOU ADVENTURE**



The most authentic and intimate way to experience the real Louisiana! Join us for our award-winning kayak swamp tours or guided sunset paddles on the bayou. Bayou Adventure also offers crabbing, fishing, bait and tackle, local craft beers, food and more! 28178 U.S. 190, Lacombe, LA 70445 985.882.9208 • WWW.BAYOUIDADVENTURE.COM

**CITY OF COVINGTON**



Established in 1813, Covington's thriving community is home to art walks, fun festivals, and evening concerts at the Trailhead. Stroll the sidewalks of Covington's historic district and enjoy great dining, art galleries, antique shops, and distinctive boutiques. 317 N. Jefferson Ave., Covington, LA 70433 985.892.1873 • WWW.COVLA.COM

**DR. WAGNER'S HONEY ISLAND SWAMP TOURS**



**\$3 OFF WITH THIS AD!** Venture into one of the wildest swamps in America on a narrated nature tour. Our tours are known internationally and our small boats will get you up close with the wildlife. 41490 Crawford Landing Rd., Slidell, LA 70461 985.641.1769 • WWW.HONEYISLANDSWAMP.COM

**LAKE PONTCHARTRAIN BASIN MARITIME MUSEUM**



The Lake Pontchartrain Basin Maritime Museum brings Louisiana's unique maritime heritage to life with hands-on exhibits, interpretive programs, fieldtrips and a unique events rental space. 133 Mabel Dr., Madisonville, LA 70447 985.845.9200 • WWW.LPBMM.ORG



**COME FEST WITH US**



**COME DINE WITH US**

Since the 19th century, St. Tammany Parish (aka Louisiana's Northshore) has been where New Orleans comes to play and get away. Come to l'autre côté du lac, the "other side of the lake," and revel in the romance and history of resort towns like Abita Springs, Mandeville, and Covington, only forty minutes from the French Quarter.



**COME PLAY WITH US**

Play & Get Away On The Northshore

800-634-9443 · LouisianaNorthshore.com



Delicious deals, prix fixe menus, and culinary events!



**Tammany Taste**  
August 1-31, 2018 OF SUMMER  
www.TammanyTaste.com

**STATE OF LOUISIANA'S INSPIRATION GUIDE CO-OP**

The STPTCC subsidized nearly half the cost of an ad and listings in the Louisiana Inspiration Guide.

- |  |                                      |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| Dr. Wagner's Honey Island Swamp Tours    | Abita Brewery                        |
| Bayou Adventure                          | Abita Springs Art and Farmers Market |
| Palmettos on the Bayou                   | 30xNinety Theatre                    |
| Lake Pontchartrain Basin Maritime Museum | The Lang House                       |
| Little River Bluffs                      | Canoe and Trail Adventures           |
| Southern Hotel                           | Meribo Pizza                         |
| City of Covington                        | Beignet Au Lait                      |
| City of Mandeville                       | La Caretta                           |

**TAMMANY TASTE OF SUMMER CAMPAIGN**

Recipient of a Louey Award from LTPA for Tourism Marketing Campaign of the Year.





## Group Tourism Impact: **Our Sales Department**

Our Sales Department works to attract **sporting groups** and **tournaments, meetings and conventions**, and **group travel** companies to visit St. Tammany Parish. The department works closely with area **hoteliers, tourism partners, meetings and sports venues** to increase the number of hotel room nights sold and produce a positive economic impact on the parish.

**Our full-service sales team** offers complimentary planning services, site visits, assistance securing room blocks from our hotel partners, meeting room suggestions and off-site activities with customized itineraries.

### **2018 INITIATIVES INCLUDED:**

- Expand utilization of Simpleview software by hosting partner training seminars and continuing education through CRM training sessions.
- Increase international travel to St. Tammany by facilitating contracts through partners and hosting receptive operators on familiarization tours, socials, and dinners.
- Grow SMERF market through sales calls, community presentations, sponsorship endeavors, advertising and attending conferences.
- Strengthen relationships with key industry partners through site visits, sales calls and increased familiarization tours to seek potential business.
- Strategically partner with Baton Rouge and New Orleans by creating a joint itinerary called "Not your typical 10" to promote the I-12 corridor in 2018.



**ACCOMPLISHMENTS BY OUR SALES DEPARTMENT IN 2018:**

**\$2.97 million** in economic impact

**100+** Groups assisted

**258** Total Direct Sales Appointments

**20** Personal Sales Calls

Familiarization tours hosted for **52** prospective meeting and event planners

**295** International Inquiries fulfilled

**121** leads sent to industry partners for potential business

In 2018, the STPTCC welcomed numerous St. Tammany meetings and sporting events including:

The **Decaman Ultra Marathon** had the distinction of being the first event of its kind to take place in the continental United States and spanned thirteen days in and around St. Tammany Parish.

The multi-day triathlon attracted an international field of **ultra-triathletes (46 representing 16 countries)** to compete in four separate ultra-distance triathlons, and was hosted by the STPTCC in conjunction with St. Tammany Parish Government, and the Louisiana Office of Tourism.

Fontainebleau State Park was the home of the Athlete’s Village; the Tammany Trace the site of the running and cycling portions of the races; and Lake Pontchartrain was one of the sites of the swimming portion of the race.

**The Decaman Ultra is returning in 2020.**

- LA Cattlemen Association Annual Conference – 200 participants/  
Economic Impact - **\$68,289**
- National Federation of Urban & Suburban School Districts Conference 100 participants/  
Economic Impact - **\$48,778**
- America’s Redfish Cup brought in 68 teams from LA, TX, FL, MS, AL, NC, and SC/  
Economic Impact - **\$44,718**
- AAU Bayou Challenge Super Regional brought in 96 teams from LA, FL, TX, and MS/  
Economic Impact - **\$79,855**

The Sales Department attended numerous **trade shows** and worked to **develop new business** for the parish in the domestic market, including:

- LHSAA Annual Convention
- Military Travel Extravaganza
- Rendezvous South



Meeting Quest  
Travel South  
NASC  
African American Travel  
SGMP  
SCMA/AMA/GMOA  
SYTA  
LSAE State Convention  
SGMP State Conference

#### PROMOTIONAL MERCHANDISE:

The tourist commission offered over **70,000 Visitor Guides and complimentary promotional items** to incoming conferences, meetings, and sporting event participants, totaling over **\$26,000** in merchandise promoting the Northshore.

#### VISITOR SERVICES

Our Visitor Center on Hwy. 59 at I-12 welcomed over **4,414 people** to St. Tammany Parish in 2018. We distribute visitor guides, brochures, map pads and information to visitors on area lodging and things to do.

In addition, **110,000 Visitor Guides** were distributed through welcome centers, hotels, and attractions to attract potential visitors to St. Tammany Parish.

## REACHING THE INTERNATIONAL MARKETS

The St. Tammany Parish Tourist Commission continues to make pursuing the international market a priority.

Nearly **1 million international visitors** came to Louisiana in 2018. International visitors stay an average of 9 nights while traveling in Louisiana.

Our Sales Department hosted sales calls and FAM tours with top European receptive companies resulting in direct contract interest for several of our hotel partners.

They also attended many international tradeshows and sponsored hospitality events to increase visibility of the Northshore with receptive tour operators including:

**IPW- Co-hosted IPW Reception with Visit Baton Rouge for the 2nd year**

**International Inbound  
Travel Association**

**North American Journeys**

**Travel South International**

**Hosted two international FAMs for receptive operators with the Louisiana Office of Tourism representing the Australian and Chinese markets**

**Top 5 international countries  
visiting our website:**

- 1. Germany**
- 2. Canada**
- 3. UK**
- 4. Australia**
- 5. India**



**St. Tammany Parish Tourist & Convention Commission**  
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800.634.9443 | LouisianaNorthshore.com