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St. Tammany Parish Tourist & Convention Commission

# ANNUAL REPORT

\*Data and activities from the 2019 calendar year.





THE ST. TAMMANY PARISH  
TOURIST & CONVENTION  
COMMISSION STAFF

Donna O'Daniels  
President & CEO

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Assistant to President & CEO

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VP Communications, Marketing & PR

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VP of Administration and CFO

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Senior Sales Manager

Anna Strider  
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& Film Specialist

Roberta Carrow-Jackson  
Digital Media Specialist

Louise Lovich  
Visitor Services Specialist

Sarah Hill  
Communications Assistant

VISITOR SERVICES

Annette Shurtz  
Christy Paulsell

TOURIST COMMISSIONERS:

Mark Myers, Commission Chair  
Marlaine Peachey, Vice Chair  
Bonnie Eades, Secretary/Treasurer  
Alex Carollo  
Katherine Diemont  
Patti Elish  
Thomas J. (T.J) Smith, Jr.

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## Tourism builds **COMMUNITY**

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 Marketing Organization (DMO) or Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB).

### OUR MISSION

The mission of the St. Tammany Parish Tourist and Convention Commission 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.





#### WHAT WE DO

We work with local hotels, restaurants, attractions, and other businesses frequented by tourists to promote our community as a dynamic and attractive travel destination. **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 occupancy tax funds the St. Tammany Parish Tourist Commission. We also receive 25% of the four percent state sales tax levied on lodging. **Our organization does not receive any funding from St. Tammany Parish resident taxes.**



#### HOW WE BENEFIT THE COMMUNITY

The St. Tammany Parish Tourist Commission works to promote the Northshore's festivals, culture, cuisine, and quality of life to encourage people to visit our destination. These visitors generate tax revenue that saves residents more than \$1,100 in annual state and local taxes. **When more visitors stay in our hotels, more money is distributed to St. Tammany Corporation (45%), the Harbor Center (9%), Recreation District One (9%), and St. Tammany Parish Government (12%) through the state sales tax levied on lodging.**



#### WE WON

**2019 Best Marketing Award for the Tammany Taste Campaign: Southeast Tourism Society:** Tourism offices and Destination Marketing Organization (DMOs) across a 12-state region compete for this prestigious "Shining Example" award. Campaigns are judged on research, creativity, demographic targets and strategy, and measurements of success.

**2019 Outstanding Tourism Commission of the Year: Louisiana Travel Association:** Destinations representing parishes from around the State of Louisiana compete for consideration by an out-of-state panel of judges. Louisiana Northshore was recognized for outstanding efforts in promoting tourism in St. Tammany through marketing and promotions, as evidenced by a ROI with an increase in visitation, as well as efforts to partner with other organizations.



THERE ARE **10,030** MEMBERS OF THE ST. TAMMANY COMMUNITY WHOSE JOBS WERE SUPPORTED BY VISITOR REVENUE IN 2019.





# 2019: Tourism's Economic Impact for **LOUISIANA & ST. TAMMANY PARISH**



## WHY TOURISM MATTERS:

Under the direction of Lt. Governor Billy Nungesser, visitation to the state of Louisiana increased by 3.8% in 2019, and the travel and tourism industry welcomed **53.2 million** domestic & international visitors to the state of Louisiana.



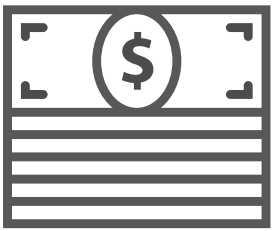
**Visitors to Louisiana spent \$18.9 billion in 2019.** The travel and tourism industry generated \$1.92 billion in state and local tax revenue, **representing a 2.1% increase year over year.**



The travel and tourism industry is the **4th highest employer in the state of Louisiana**, providing work for **242,200 people employed by the leisure & hospitality industry.**



**If it were not for the state and local taxes paid by tourists** visiting St. Tammany, **each St. Tammany family would pay an additional \$1,100 per year in taxes** to maintain current services.



In 2019, tourists spent **\$771,420,000** in St. Tammany Parish which directly resulted in **\$276,750,000 earned by residents in our community.**

# 43:1

According to the state statistics, **tourism advertising returns add up to \$43 earned for every \$1 invested.**



The St. Tammany Parish Tourist and Convention Commission's strategic marketing plans are data driven and optimized for the best results. **The Tourist Commission engages experts in the field of tourism research to study our destination and incorporates key findings into a plan of action to reach potential visitors.**

**Longwoods International** began tracking American travelers in 1985, and **has conducted large-scale syndicated visitor research quarterly since 1990.**

**UberMedia** is a mobile tech company that gets geolocation data from 2 sources: 150k apps that require location permission, and ads served on mobile devices from their real time bidding exchange. **They are currently collecting location data from over 300 million mobile devices in North America monthly.** The data is 100% GPS based and never uses cellphone towers. This means locations are accurate within 3 meters.



## Knowing Our Visitors Through **VISITATION STUDIES**





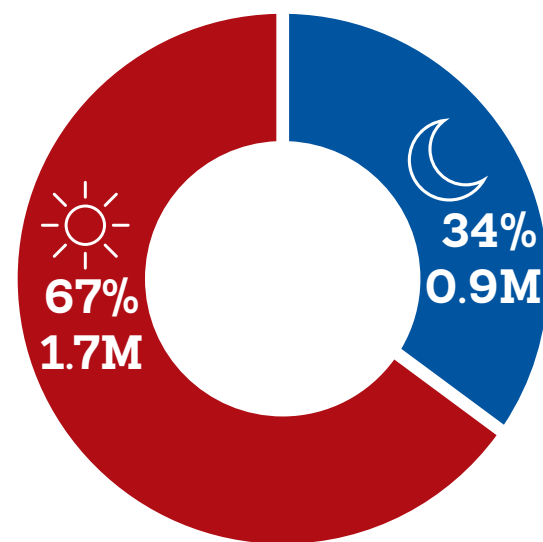
## TRAVEL USA VISITOR VOLUME STUDY FOR 2019 BY COMPASS LONGWOODS INTERNATIONAL

This is currently the largest ongoing study conducted of American travelers, providing key insight for destinations.

WE HAD  
**2.63 MILLION VISITORS**  
IN 2019

IT'S AS IF **EVERY**  
**MAN, WOMAN**  
AND **CHILD** IN THE  
CITY OF **CHICAGO**  
CAME TO ST.  
TAMMANY PARISH  
IN 2019 AND **SPENT**  
**\$293.15 EACH.**

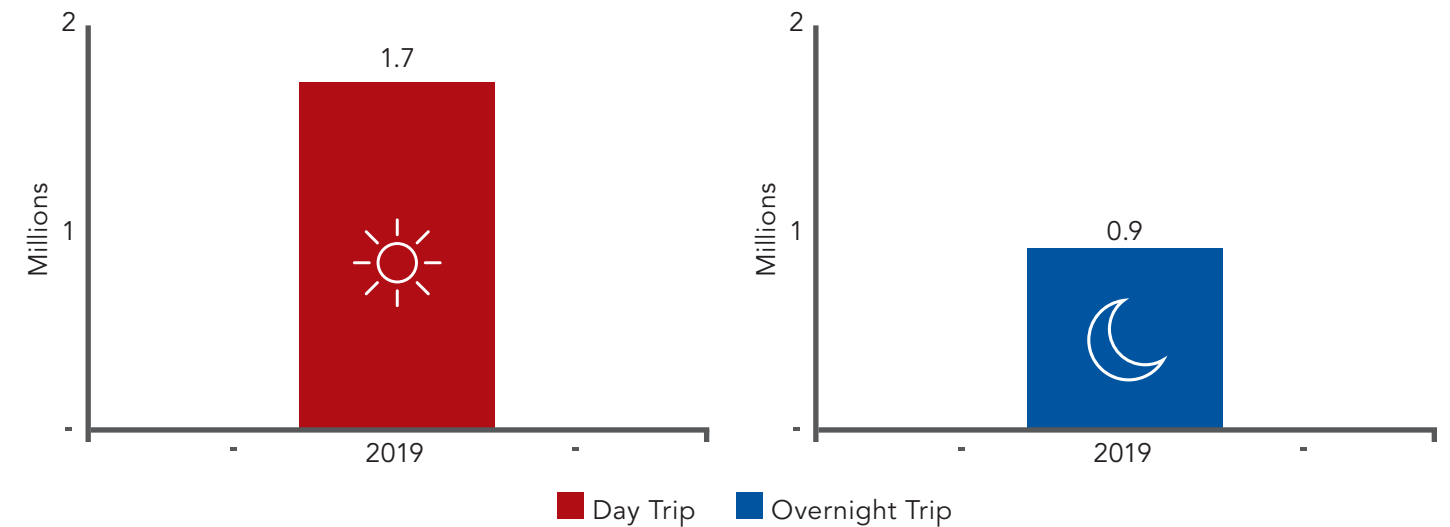
TOTAL SIZE OF ST. TAMMANY PARISH  
2019 DOMESTIC TRAVEL MARKET



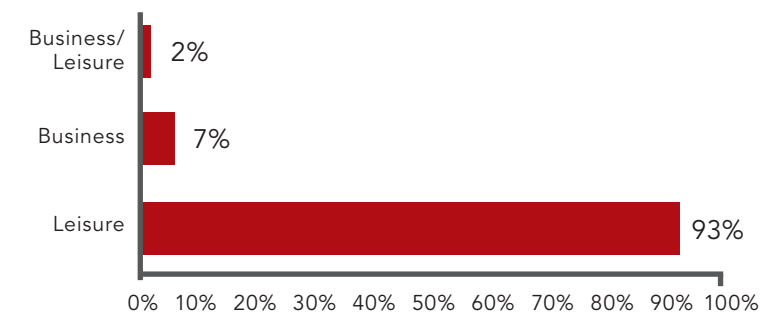
Day Trip Overnight Trip

2.63 MILLION VISITORS CAME TO  
ST. TAMMANY PARISH IN 2019  
Or, roughly the population of the city of Chicago.

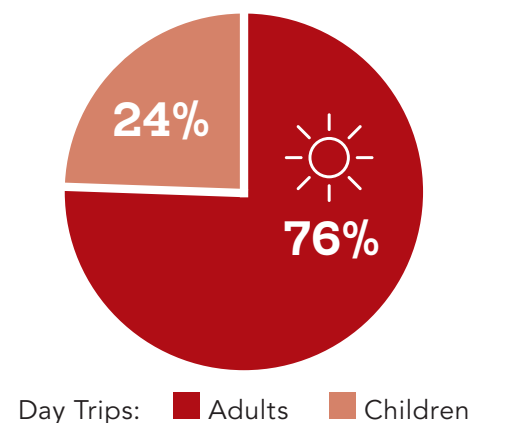
TOTAL NUMBER OF DAY VS. NIGHT TRIPS TO ST. TAMMANY PARISH IN 2019



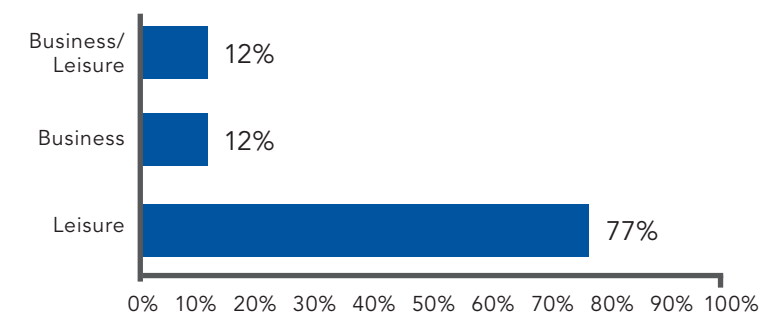
SIZE OF ST. TAMMANY PARISH  
TRAVEL MARKET  
BY TYPE OF TRIP



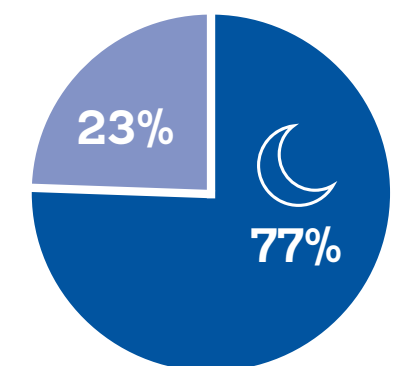
SIZE OF ST. TAMMANY PARISH  
TRAVEL MARKET  
ADULTS VS. CHILDREN



Day Trips: Adults Children



Day Trip Overnight Trip



Overnight Trips: Adults Children

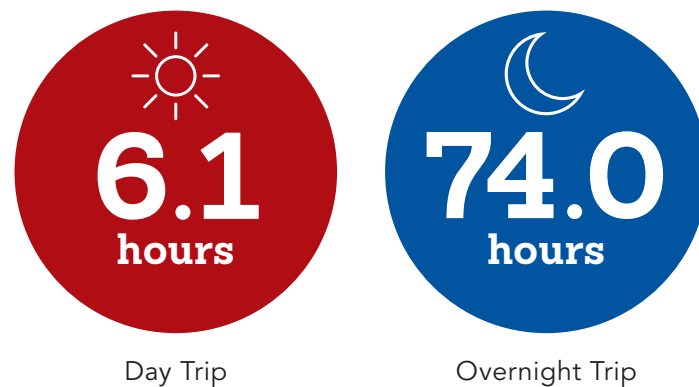


## ST. TAMMANY PARISH VISITATION STUDY BY UBERMEDIA

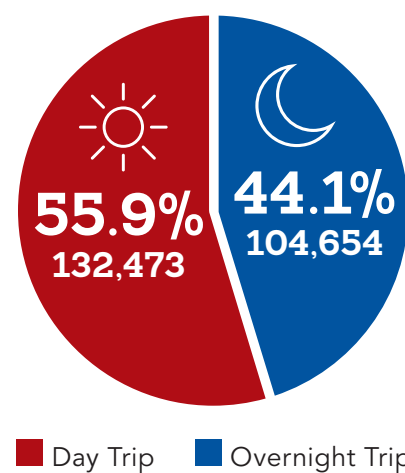
To qualify as a visitor for this study, anyone living or working within 50 miles of St. Tammany Parish was excluded. Also, the mobile device had to be confirmed in St. Tammany for at least six hours for an overnight trip and two hours for day trips.

UBERMEDIA  
TRACKED **346,779**  
MOBILE DEVICE  
TRIPS AND **237,127**  
UNIQUE MOBILE  
DEVICES IN ST.  
TAMMANY PARISH.

### AVERAGE LENGTH OF TRIP TO ST. TAMMANY PARISH



### TOTAL UNIQUE VISITOR SPLIT: DAY TRIPS VS. OVERNIGHT TRIPS

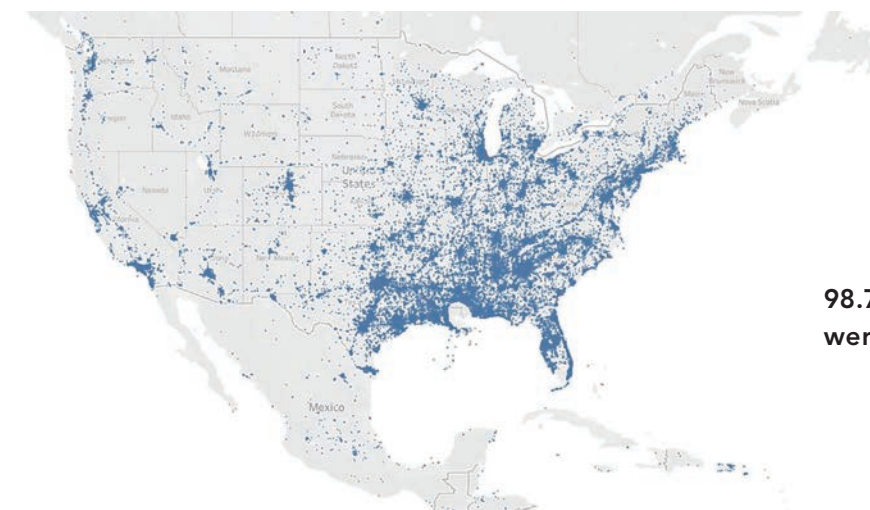
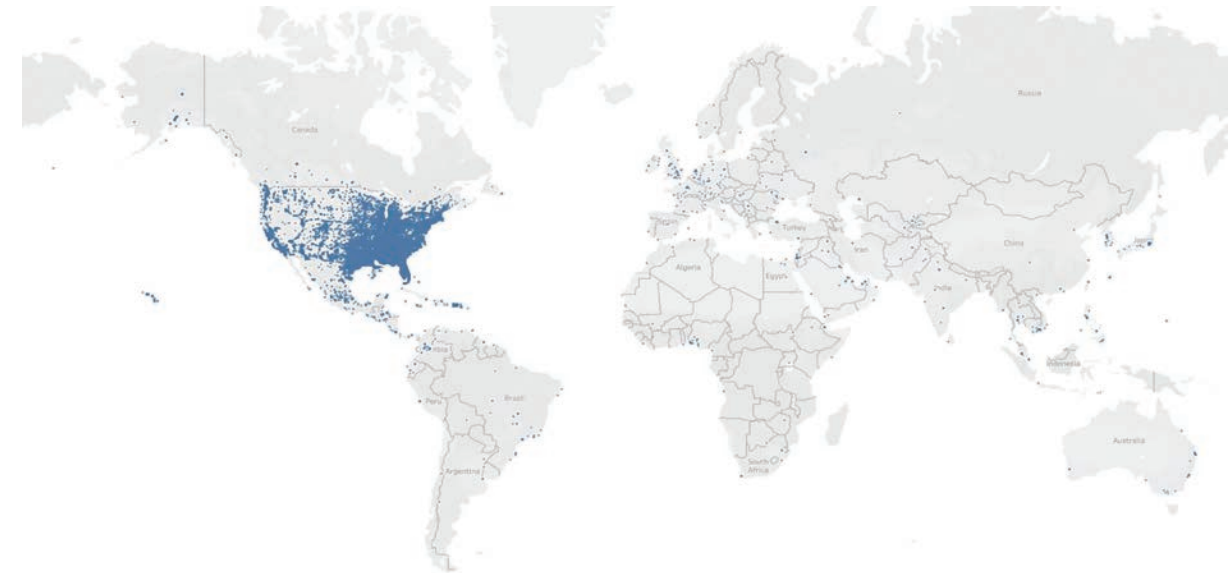


In 2019, UberMedia tracked **237,127 unique mobile devices** in St. Tammany Parish.

**44.1%** of those trips were overnight visitors, while **55.9%** were day visitors.

### ST. TAMMANY PARISH OVERNIGHT UNIQUE VISITATION ORIGIN MARKETS

**104,654 unique overnight visitor mobile devices** were tracked to St. Tammany Parish.



**98.7%** of those devices  
were from the **U.S.**



Of the 98.7% domestic devices, the **top 6 states with the highest overnight visitor mobile devices tracked** were:

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



# A Partnership with **OUR COMMUNITY**



## STAFF BOARD & COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Leadership Louisiana  
Leadership St. Tammany  
Leadership Northshore  
Southeast Tourism Society  
Society of American  
Travel Writers  
Louisiana Travel Association  
Louisiana Association of  
Convention and Visitor Bureaus  
Louisiana Tourism Coastal  
Coalition  
Northshore Harbor Center  
Louisiana Tourism Leadership  
Academy Alumni Taskforce  
Mid-South Women in Tourism  
Carnival in Covington  
Committee  
Society of Governmental  
Meeting Planners –  
Louisiana Chapter  
Southeastern Alumni  
Association, GOLD Council  
Greater Madisonville Area  
Chamber of Commerce  
Madisonville Old Fashioned  
4th of July  
Team Louisiana

The St. Tammany Parish Tourist Commission is an active community partner promoting travel and tourism and small businesses in St. Tammany. We offer marketing services, including media outreach, 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

Throughout the year, the St. Tammany Parish Tourist

Commission sponsors free training sessions for industry partners. Included in 2019 was a Google My Business free partner training session co-sponsored with the Louisiana Office of Tourism and Miles Media.

### SIMPLEVIEW PARTNER TRAINING

Our Sales staff sends out leads to our hotels and industry partners through Simpleview, our Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software, considered the gold standard in the industry for tourism marketing organizations. Hotel partners

are able to upload information directly to the LouisianaNorthshore.com website through our extranet. The sales team conducts one-on-one Simpleview training with new hotelier staff throughout the year.

### 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, front desk agents,

concierges, and other hospitality partners so that they can familiarize themselves with area attractions and upsell room nights.

### FIT PARTNER EDUCATION FOR INTERNATIONAL VISITORS

The St. Tammany Parish Tourist Commission met individually with many partners to educate and assist them in negotiating FIT (Family and Independent Travel) contracts with receptive operators to increase international visitation.



A photograph of a man and a woman with a dog in a canoe on a river. The man is in the foreground, wearing a cap and sunglasses, smiling. The woman is in the background, also smiling. A black and white dog is sitting in the canoe between them. The river is calm, and there are trees on the banks.

# Media Relations: **COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT**

**ADVERTISING BUDGET 2019:**  
\$588,194

**ADVERTISING REACH/CIRCULATION:**  
32,759,074

**ADVERTISING LEADS:** 20,268

**WEBSITE VISITS:** 710,876

The Communications Department uses a multi-pronged approach to promote and market our St. Tammany Parish community to **leisure travelers, business visitors, and the film/TV industry** to promote economic development. The department produces all collateral materials to promote the parish, drafts and administers the commission’s marketing plan and ad placement, fosters media relations, oversees the LouisianaNorthshore.com website and social media, as well as 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)



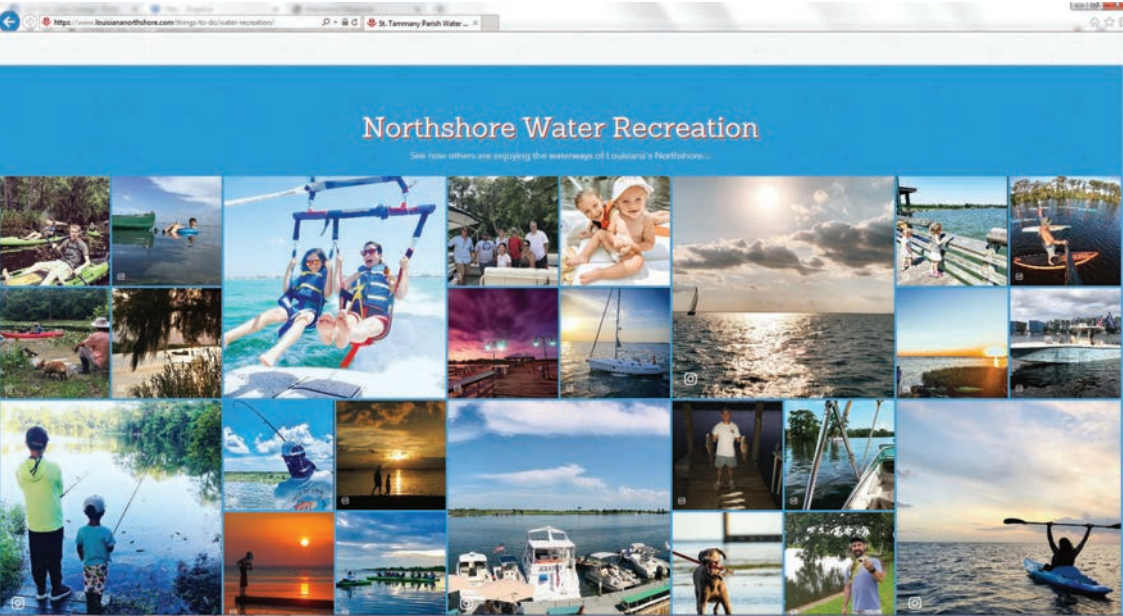
2019 INITIATIVES :



Increased the visibility and distribution of the new magazine-format, inspirational **Explore the Northshore Visitor Guide**. Distributed **100,000 copies** of the new guide to visitors in the drive market requesting information on St. Tammany Parish as well as to St. Tammany Parish hotels, attractions and Welcome Centers throughout the state through the Louisiana Travel Association.

**Expanded our photo library** with fresh and updated photography highlighting the destination’s vibrancy to appeal to a younger demographic. Used throughout collateral materials including the Explore the Northshore Visitor Guide, ads, on social media. Produced numerous professional photo shoots with multiple photojournalists, arranged for models and partner participation, handled logistics.

Promoted our **newly rebranded Tammany Taste Culinary Trail** and culinary scene. Attended a press trip to Atlanta with Louisiana Culinary Trails, the Louisiana Travel Association and the Louisiana Office of Tourism. Promoted area chefs, brewers and makers with Poppy Tooker through a series of podcasts with Louisiana Eats! called Tammany Taste Quick Bites. Our **Tammany Taste of Summer culinary campaign**, aimed at increasing room nights and economic impact for restaurant partners, **earning a Shining Example Award from Southeast Tourism Society for Campaign of the Year**.



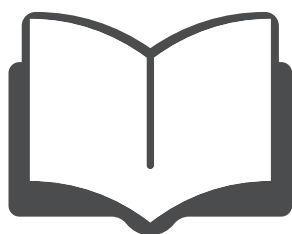
**Partnered with CrowdRiff** to advance the ability to obtain and display User Generated Content in galleries on the LouisianaNorthshore.com website, social media, and other advertising avenues **to promote authentic travel experiences on the Louisiana Northshore**.

**Increased 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. Co-op partners who benefited from the St. Tammany Parish Tourist Commission’s subsidizing almost half the costs of the ad placement and/or listing include: Bayou Adventure, City of Covington, Culinary Kids & Adults, Dr. Wagner’s Honey Island Swamp Tours, Lake Pontchartrain Basin Maritime Museum, Little River Bluffs Nature Preserve & Retreat and Palmettos on the Bayou.





2019 ACHIEVEMENTS:



**PRINT WITH EARNED MEDIA**  
Media contacts and FAM tours in 2019 resulted in these stories, and more.  
  
See [LouisianaNorthshore.com/articles](https://LouisianaNorthshore.com/articles) for more.

**FOOD&WINE**

**FOOD & WINE MAGAZINE**  
*"This New Orleans Suburb is Making Us Seriously Hungry"*  
**Featuring:** Covington



**TRAVEL CHANNEL**  
*"10 Small American Towns with Surprisingly Big Food Scenes"*  
**Featuring:** Covington



**COOKING WITH PAULA DEEN**  
*"Touring St. Tammany"*  
**Featuring:** Mandeville, Covington, Abita Springs and 11 tourism partners



**360 WEST MAGAZINE**  
*"The Wander List Appetite for Adventure: Louisiana pit stop"*  
**Featuring:** The Garden House at the Southern Hotel, Oxlott 9, Covington



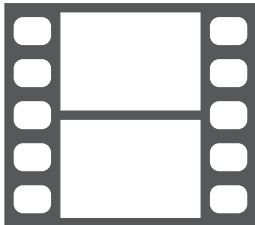
**ATLANTA JOURNAL CONSTITUTION**  
*Spring Travel: The Big Outdoors*  
**Featuring:** Pearl River Eco Tours, Slidell



**USA TODAY'S 10 BEST**  
*"Small Towns For Adventure"*  
**Featuring:** Abita Springs



**COURIER MAGAZINE**  
*"The Louisiana Lowdown"*  
**Featuring:** Abita Brewery, Cajun Encounters and Dr. Wagners Honey Island Swamp Tours



**FILM**  
St. Tammany's **varied locations, historic downtown and diverse architecture** 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**. And, Louisiana's **beneficial tax incentives** just help sweeten the deal.

**Production Projects Assisted on in 2019 include:**  
"Troop Zero"  
"The Dirt"  
"The Highwaymen"  
"Green Book"  
CBS' NCIS: New Orleans Season 5



PUBLIC RELATIONS:

The Communications Department handles media relations including outreach and pitching of story ideas, press releases, and hosting media familiarization (FAM) tours. On these 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. These FAM tours foster a personal connection with the media and can result in earned media exposure for years to come and a tremendous ROI.



**DIGITAL & SOCIAL MEDIA**  
Sessions: 710,876 **↑ 19.6% over 2018**  
Users: 496,917 **↑ 18% over 2018**  
Pageviews: 1,224,137 **↑ 12.9% over 2018**

**Top 5 visiting states to LouisianaNorthshore.com**

- 1. Louisiana
- 2. Texas
- 3. Florida
- 4. Mississippi
- 5. Illinois



Facebook followers: 36,855  
**↑ 3.6% YOY**



Instagram followers: 5,848  
**↑ 134% YOY**



Twitter followers: 5,175  
**↑ 5% YOY**



YouTube subscribers: 332  
**↑ 56% YOY**  
All videos viewed:  
**406.5K times**  
**↑ 301% YOY**





Group Tourism Impact:  
**OUR SALES  
DEPARTMENT**



“WE LOOK FORWARD TO  
HOSTING MEETINGS IN  
LOUISIANA’S NORTHSORE.  
THE TEAM AT ST.  
TAMMANY PARISH TOURIST  
COMMISSION IS ALWAYS  
SO NICE TO WORK WITH TO  
HELP US HAVE SUCCESSFUL  
MEETINGS. THEY MAKE US  
LOOK GOOD!”

**CRYSTAL CARTER,**  
MPA | Vice-President  
Association Management Strategies





## 2019 ACHIEVEMENTS:

### IN 2019, THE STPTCC WELCOMED SEVERAL MEETINGS AND SPORTING EVENTS INCLUDING:

- Louisiana Pharmacists Association
- Louisiana Plumbing-Heating & Cooling Contractors Association
- Elite Redfish Team Open Tour Series
- USTA Divisions 18+, 40+ & 55+ Mixed State Championships
- 25th Annual Midnight Madness Soccer Tournament

### THE SALES DEPARTMENT ATTENDED NUMEROUS TRADE SHOWS AND WORKED TO DEVELOP NEW BUSINESS FOR THE PARISH IN THE DOMESTIC MARKET INCLUDING:

- Rendezvous South
- Travel South
- Sports ETA
- SGMP National Educational Conference
- LSAE Annual Conference
- SGMP State Conference
- Small Market Meetings
- Military Reunion Network
- SCMA/AMA/GMOA Joint Conference

## 2019 INITIATIVES:

- Contracted with Tourism Tactics by Tico to help increase international travel to St. Tammany by facilitating receptive contracts with hotel partners, hosting receptive operators on familiarization tours, sales calls, socials and training. Also maintained inventory with current on-line travel agencies and hosted individual education sessions with interested Northshore hotels and restaurants.
- Grew the SMERF market with an emphasis on Family & Military Reunions and Tour & Travel through sales calls, site visits, sponsorship endeavors, advertising and attending national conferences.
- Strategically partnered with our destinations in Baton Rouge and New Orleans by creating a joint itinerary named "Not your typical 10" to promote the I-12 corridor to our International visitors.
- Partnered with state organizations such as the Louisiana Office of Tourism, Louisiana Travel Association and Team Louisiana through buy-ins when feasible and in direct correlation with our mission.
- Sought opportunities to continue hospitality and sales education.



## 2019 BY THE NUMBERS

# \$2.9 million

in Estimated Economic Impact from Group Business

**236** Total Direct Sales Appointments

**123** International Inquiries fulfilled

**125** Leads Sent to Industry Partners for Potential Business

**18** Industry Partners Hosted on our Hospitality Fam Tour

**100+** Groups Assisted

**30** Familiarization Tours, Sales Calls & Site Inspections

**17** Facilitated Reunions

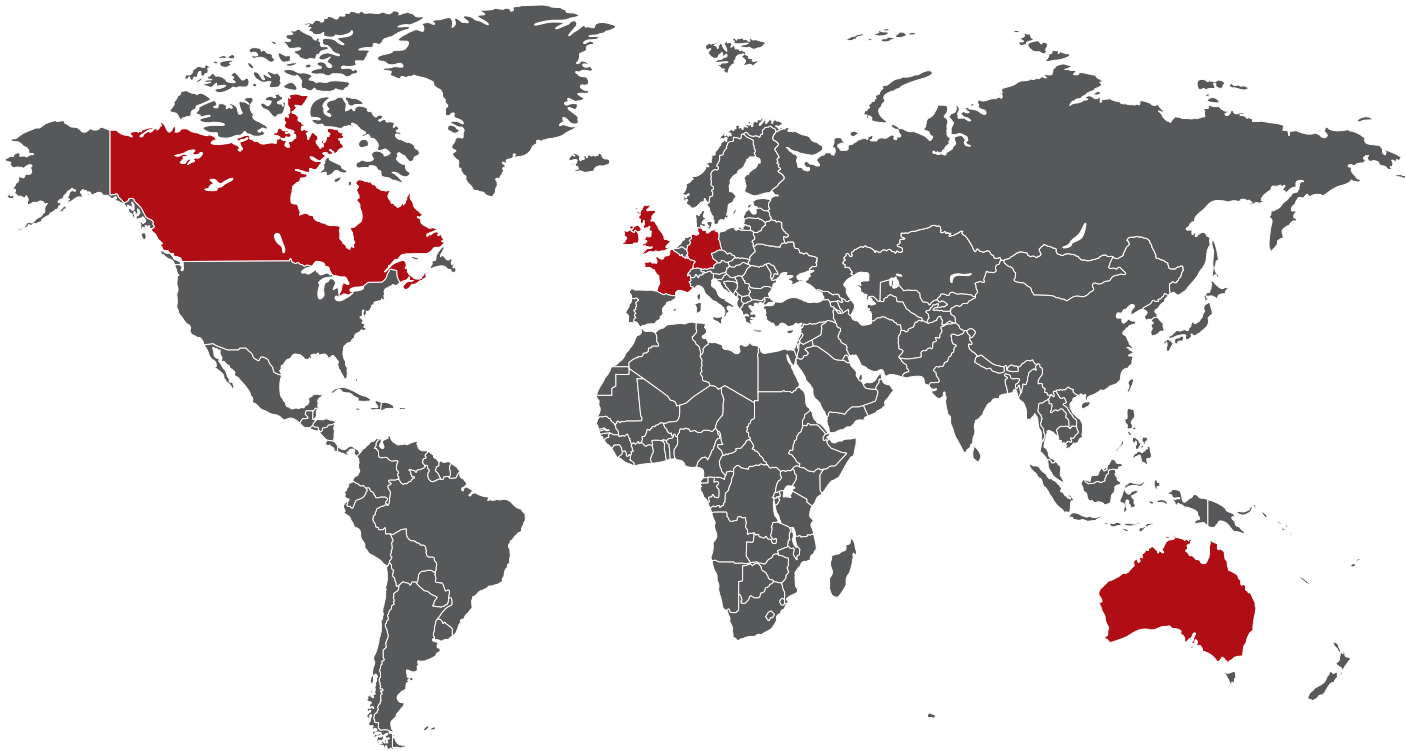


**INTERNATIONAL MARKET:**

The St. Tammany Parish Tourist Commission continued efforts started in 2016 to make pursuing the international market a priority. **Nearly 1 million international visitors came to Louisiana in 2019.** International visitors stay an average of 9 nights while traveling in Louisiana.

Our Sales Department **hosted sales calls and training** in New York, Boston and Florida with top European receptive companies resulting in direct contract interest for several of our hotel, restaurant and attraction partners. They also **attended many international tradeshow**s and **co-sponsored hospitality events** to increase visibility of the Northshore with receptive tour operators including:

- Co-hosted United Kingdom/German Reception with Visit Baton Rouge for the 3rd year at IPW
- Represented St. Tammany Parish Tourist Commission in the Louisiana Office of Tourism State Booth at IPW
- Attended North American Journeys RTO East Summit
- Participated in the Canadian Sales Mission through the Louisiana Office of Tourism to promote the launch of Air Transat direct flights to New Orleans



**TOP 5 COUNTRIES VISITING THE LOUISIANA NORTHSORE WEBSITE**

- 1. US
- 2. Germany
- 3. Canada
- 4. U.K.
- 5. Australia

**TOP 5 INTERNATIONAL COUNTRIES THAT VISITED LOUISIANA IN 2019**

- 1. Canada
- 2. U.K.
- 3. Germany
- 4. Australia
- 5. France

(Source: Tourism Economics, 2020)



LOUISIANA TAX FREE SHOPPING:  
IN 2019, ST. TAMMANY INTERNATIONAL  
SHOPPERS SPENT A TOTAL OF **\$47,512**  
WITH **276** TAX FREE PURCHASES.





Our Visitor Center at Hwy. 59 welcomed **3,409 people** to St. Tammany Parish in 2019. We distributed visitor guides, brochures, map pads and information to visitors seeking information on area lodging and attractions. The state welcome center in Slidell received **169,873 visitors** in 2019. Pearl River welcome center received nearly **68,085 visitors** in 2019.

**PROMOTIONAL MERCHANDISE:**  
The Tourist Commission offered **over 59,000 complimentary promotional items and visitor guides** to incoming conferences, meetings, reunions, weddings and sporting event participants, **totaling over \$27,000** in merchandise promoting the Northshore.



# Promoting Our Destination Through **VISITOR SERVICES**





**St. Tammany Parish Tourist & Convention Commission**  
68099 Highway 59, Mandeville, Louisiana 70471  
800.634.9443 | [LouisianaNorthshore.com](http://LouisianaNorthshore.com)