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St. Tammany Parish Tourist & Convention Commission

# ANNUAL REPORT

*\*Data and activities from the 2020 calendar year*







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“Most importantly, we heard from our community, from our partners and our friends, that we helped them. **We made a difference when they needed us most.**”

## From the President and CEO **DONNA O'DANIELS**

There is nothing like a crisis to bring a community together, and in 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic brought us together like never before. Prior to the pandemic, some St. Tammany Parish residents may not have known we had a St. Tammany Parish Tourist Commission...or even that we needed one.

That's because, typically, we aren't communicating to those who live here. Instead, we are marketing to our potential visitors throughout the Gulf Coast region and beyond. **But as the COVID-19 crisis approached, we pivoted and began speaking directly to our local residents.**

In the first two months of 2020, we were on track for a banner year for visitation to St. Tammany Parish. But when Governor Edwards announced the Stay at Home order on March 22, plans for the St. Tammany Parish Tourist Commission's development of a new strategic

plan were paused, staff worked remotely for three months, and we cut marketing expenses as revenue dropped 27%.

**In the midst of the crisis, I believe our team did some of its best work, when the residents and small businesses of St. Tammany Parish needed our support more than they ever had.**

Even before the Stay at Home order was issued, our team launched [www.sttammanytourism.com](http://www.sttammanytourism.com), a resource for St. Tammany residents to access the latest information about which restaurants were open to serve or offering curbside, which outdoor recreational opportunities were available for families to get out and get some fresh air, and which tourism-related attractions were temporarily closed. **We provided the power of our marketing organization and used our knowledge to promote our tourism-related**

**small businesses to our community:** sharing daily lunch specials for restaurants, recognizing COVID-19 safe practices and meaningful ways to support small businesses safely.

Because we felt it was more important than ever to celebrate our St. Tammany Parish community and culture, **we launched the We ♥ Louisiana Northshore community pride campaign**, posting daily inspirational content to our ExploreLouisianaNorthshore Facebook page and @LANorthshore instagram account.

In a difficult year, there were many wins to celebrate. We retained all St. Tammany Parish Tourist Commission staff members, and our #bestteamintourism was recognized for award-winning work. With our increased local outreach, we established ourselves as a trusted source for partner education and information. The St. Tammany Parish Tourist Commission remained on track for reaccreditation by Destinations International for our excellence in destination management practices. Finally, we advocated for and successfully passed legislation so that the St. Tammany Parish Tourist Commission can collect occupancy tax on short-term rentals, leveling the playing field for our hotel stakeholders.

Most importantly, we heard from our community, from our partners and our friends, that we helped them. We made a difference when they needed us the most.

While I am tremendously proud of everything we accomplished in 2020, there is no denying that it was a tough year for the Tourist Commission and for our

partners, and you'll see that reflected in the economic impact numbers in this report, with significant declines in visitor spending from 2019. **However, I'm pleased to report that as we near the end of 2021 and look forward to 2022, it's apparent that our industry will make a full recovery and reach pre-pandemic numbers years earlier than expected.**

This is important, because while visitors are spending that money, they're also paying sales taxes which provide important community services for our residents. The amount of state and local sales tax collected from visitors, close to \$79 million in 2019, offsets the amount our residents pay in taxes. **Bottom line: the money visitors spend in St. Tammany Parish saves St. Tammany residents close to \$1,000 in taxes annually** (UNO Hospitality Research).

As we move forward, the St. Tammany Parish Tourist Commission will continue to be a valuable resource to our partners, and continue to advocate on behalf of our industry. **We will make decisions based on research and data, and we will do what we do best and bring our industry back as a thriving contributor to the economy in St. Tammany Parish.** We're all in this together, and we love our Louisiana Northshore.

**President and CEO  
St. Tammany Parish Tourist and  
Convention Commission**



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

## **YOUR ST. TAMMANY PARISH TOURIST & CONVENTION COMMISSION TEAM:**

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 & CFO

Zondra White Jones  
Senior Sales Manager

Anna Strider  
Manager of Marketing & PR  
& 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.

## **STAFF BOARD & COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

St. Tammany Parish Revenue  
Review Committee

St. Tammany Economic Recovery  
& Resiliency Advisory Council

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

Louisiana Tourism Leadership  
Academy Alumni Taskforce

Mid-South Women in Tourism

Carnival in Covington

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

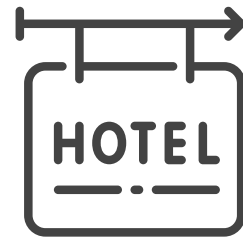






### WHAT WE DO & HOW WE DO IT

The St. Tammany Parish Tourist Commission is an active community partner promoting the Northshore's events, festivals, culture, cuisine and quality of life. The STPTCC encourages people to visit our destination and support local businesses. We offer marketing services, including media outreach, website and visitor guide features, group tour planning and assistance, social media promotion and more and we do all of this **free of charge** to tourism-related businesses and events in St. Tammany Parish.



### 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 destination and increase the economic impact of tourism. If it were not for the state and local taxes paid by tourists visiting St. Tammany Parish in 2020, each household would have had to pay \$602 MORE in taxes to maintain services (Tourism Spending in Louisiana Parishes Report). **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

February 28, 2020, the North American Travel Journalists Association (NATJA) announced that **Explore the Northshore Visitor Guide: Issue 4 won BRONZE in the 28th Annual North American Travel Journalists Awards Competition in the BEST VISITORS' GUIDE category.** This awards competition honors the best of the best in travel journalism, photography and destination marketing that cover all aspects of the travel industry.



The mission of The St. Tammany Parish Tourist and Convention Commission is to **market & promote St. Tammany Parish** as a highly desirable destination for visitors, thereby **increasing the economic impact of tourism on the area.**





# COVID-19: The STPTCC Supports **SMALL BUSINESS**

In Q1 of 2020, St. Tammany Parish and Louisiana were on track to have another banner year for tourism and its economic impact on the community. The culmination of a high-performing Mardi Gras campaign led to a very well-attended Mardi Gras season, and hotel occupancy in St. Tammany Parish greatly outperformed 2019's numbers in both January and February. The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the global health emergency it created were first felt in St. Tammany Parish and in Louisiana when Gov. John Bel Edwards declared a public health emergency on March 11, 2020.

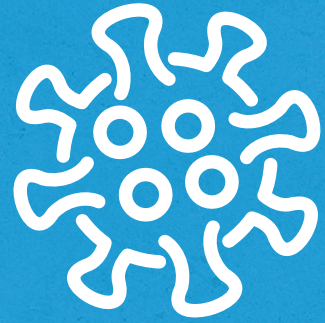
The St. Tammany Parish Tourist and Convention Commission mobilized into action, and efforts were immediately undertaken to support our tourism-related partners: the hoteliers, attractions, restaurateurs, shopkeepers, event organizers and other tourism-supported small businesses on the Northshore.

## THE ST. TAMMANY PARISH TOURIST COMMISSION'S COVID-19 RESPONSE





# The St. Tammany Parish Tourist Commission Covid-19 Response



## The First 3 Months of a Pandemic

### LAUNCHED COVID-19 Resources Page [LouisianaNorthshore.com/Covid-19](http://LouisianaNorthshore.com/Covid-19)

The St. Tammany Parish Tourist Commission was one of the first Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) in the State of Louisiana to publish a partner COVID-19 Resources page on our website. The page offered links to St. Tammany Parish and Louisiana governments, St. Tammany Parish legislators, Louisiana legislators, St. Tammany Corporation, the CDC, LDH, educational webinars on relief efforts, SBA and EIDL loans, industry resources from US Travel and other federal resources.

Also included were helpful business tips like "How to Update your Google Listing," and "How to Contact your POS System to add Online Ordering," and other marketing recommendations.

### LAUNCHED [StTammanyTourism.com](http://StTammanyTourism.com)

Created [StTammanyTourism.com](http://StTammanyTourism.com) to be a resident resource for our "Open For Business" Tourism Community. The St. Tammany Parish Tourist Commission team created the website and researched and updated it daily. The site included clickable phone numbers and links to open restaurants offering delivery and curbside services. There was also information about hiking trails, parks and outdoor recreational opportunities open for families, as well as virtual tours and experiences. Facebook & Instagram Smart Ads Targeting + Retargeting campaigns began in April to direct St. Tammany residents to this website.

### CREATED Support@ [LouisianaNorthshore.com](mailto:Support@LouisianaNorthshore.com)

Created a Support email address to disseminate important info regarding COVID-19 to industry partners. Reported on relevant information to industry partners on how to share their voice with legislators, relief efforts, grant opportunities, state of the industry, EIDL and SBA, and more. **Increased partner communication in the form of eblasts by 640%.**

## Stay At Home Order In Effect

### Partner Feedback

"...honestly your emails have been THE BEST with RAPID useful info! I was on the phone with Billy Nungesser last night and gave you specific kudos for your work...I can't tell you how critical your assistance has been. YOU guys are the BEST at communicating important info! ...THANK YOU for all that you do!"

*Sherri Hansen, CULINARY KIDS*

"Just wanted to tell you what an amazing job you are doing with the La Northshore tourism social media. I own the Creole Bagelry in Slidell and your posts and email have been invaluable to me during this. You are doing an amazing job. The dissemination of info has become disjointed and overwhelming. You guys are a really good one stop shop for valuable info. THANKS!!!!!"

*Darren Darby, Creole Bagelry*

"50+ inquiries, 50+ messages this morning in less than an hour. Thank you sooo much for sharing. #grateful"

*The English Tea Room*

"Love it! Thank you for your continued support."

*Nealy Frentz, LOLA Restaurant*

"You are doing an outstanding job of highlighting our area and have been especially good to all of the restaurants who have managed to stay open with online/phone orders and curbside pick up!"

*Patricia Maguire-Parrie, Parrie*

"There is NO ONE who works harder for small businesses than Louisiana Northshore Tourist Commission! Also, a very special shout out to Anna Rockhold who works actual miracles with her camera!"

♥♥♥ Thank y'all so much!!"

*Sarah Rieger, Rieger's On The Trace*

"Thanks, you're a dream to work with and EVERY ONE of these restaurants loves you!"

*Anna Rockhold, The Weekly Yum*

MARCH 11, 2020  
PUBLIC HEALTH  
EMERGENCY  
DECLARED

MARCH 14, 2020

MARCH 16 & 18, 2020

MARCH 22, 2020  
STAY AT HOME  
ORDER ISSUED

MARCH 22 - APRIL 18, 2020

MAY 15, 2020  
STAY AT HOME  
ORDER LIFTED



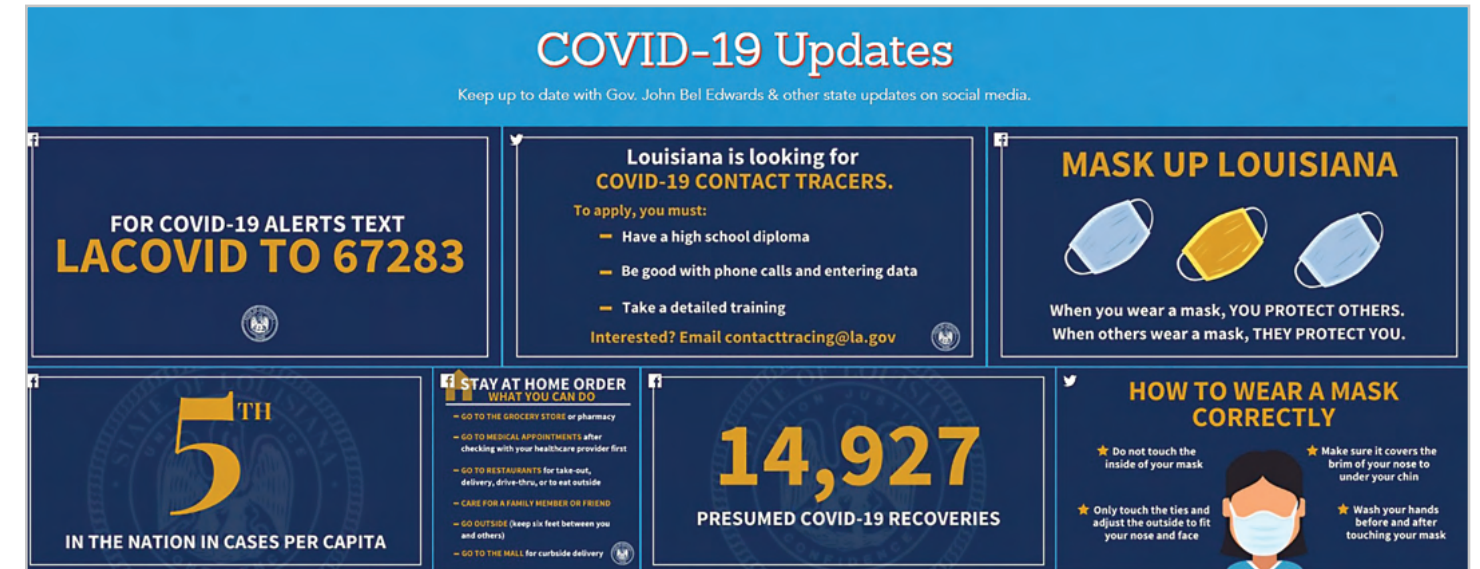
**COVID-19 EFFECTS ON TOURISM'S ECONOMIC IMPACT IN ST. TAMMANY PARISH AND LOUISIANA**

According to the Tourism Economics Report On The Economic Impact Of Visitors In Louisiana 2020 prepared for the Louisiana Office Of Tourism, state visitation declined 30.2% and visitor spending dropped 35.0% as the pandemic severely affected travel. **But even in a severely depressed travel climate, tourism stats were impressive.**

	<b>2019</b> A record-breaking year for tourism in Louisiana & St. Tammany Parish	<b>2020</b> Louisiana & the St. Tammany Parish community grapples with COVID-19	<b>% Change in Stats</b>
<b>VISITOR SPENDING SUPPORTED JOBS in St. Tammany Parish</b>	<b>11,800 Jobs</b>	<b>7,370 Jobs</b>	<b>↓ 38%</b>
<b>EARNINGS for St. Tammany Parish Residents</b>	<b>\$306 Million</b>	<b>\$219.28 Million</b>	<b>↓ 28%</b>
<b>VISITOR SPENDING in St. Tammany Parish</b>	<b>\$835 Million</b>	<b>\$572 Million</b>	<b>↓ 32%</b>
<b>VISITOR SPENDING SUPPORTED JOBS in Louisiana</b>	<b>179,880</b>	<b>104,457</b>	<b>↓ 42%</b>
<b>EARNINGS for Louisiana Residents</b>	<b>\$4,666 Million</b>	<b>\$3,108 Million</b>	<b>↓ 33%</b>
<b>TAXES SAVED BY RESIDENTS (Offset)</b>	<b>\$1,100</b>	<b>\$602</b>	<b>↓ 45%</b>
<b>VISITOR TAX REVENUE in St. Tammany Parish</b>	<b>\$39.16 Million</b>	<b>\$26.40 Million</b>	<b>↓ 33%</b>

\*Figures from Tourism Spending in Louisiana Parishes 2020 Report, UNO Hospitality Research Center

**LAUNCHED A COVID-19 RESOURCES PAGE LOUISIANANORTHSHORE.COM/COVID-19**



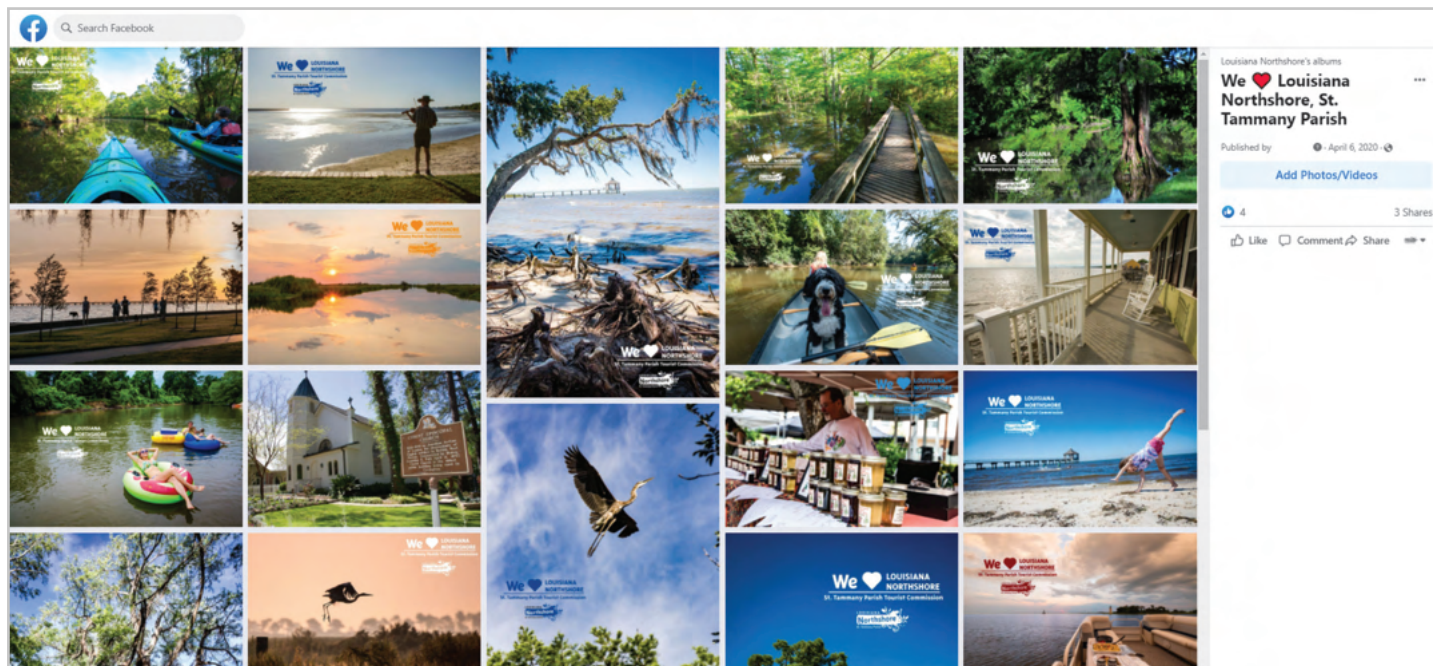
**“...The way that you’ve used Galleries on your COVID-19 pages was very unique, and I shared it internally with my team. We’re pooling a lot of examples to share with the DMO community, and yours is definitely one that I will be sharing with my customers. While I wish it was under better circumstances, your team has been doing really great work!”**

*Emily Sutherland, Crowdriff*



# THE STPTCC RESPONSE TO COVID-19

The traditional audience for a Destination Marketing Organization or Tourist Commission is potential visitors, so marketing messages are frequently directed to potential visitors residing outside of the destination. **During the Stay at Home order, and in the months that followed, resident patronage of tourism-supported small businesses became vital to survival.** The St. Tammany Parish Tourist and Convention Commission directed and promoted its marketing messages to the Northshore community to encourage supporting local businesses and our local people.



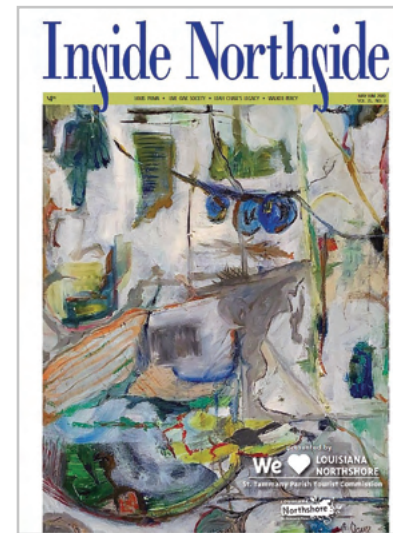
## LAUNCHED WE LOVE OUR #LANORTHSHORE COMMUNITY PRIDE CAMPAIGN

We launched the We Love our #LANorthshore campaign on our Explore Louisiana Northshore Facebook Page, posting inspirational photos and asking residents to comment on their favorite places with two goals: to serve as a beacon of hope for our community and to share what locals love with future potential visitors. **In the first 28 days of the campaign, new Facebook Likes to the page were up 112% and post engagement increased by 59%.** The communications team worked with a local designer to increase brand awareness of the STPTCC with the creation of a new logo as a part of the We Love #LANorthshore campaign.



## SHIFTED THE EXPLORELOUISIANANORTHSHORE FACEBOOK AND @LANORTHSHORE INSTAGRAM MARKETING MESSAGES TO ADDRESS RESIDENTS AND SHARE PARTNER UPDATES.

- The Communications team began socially sharing restaurant specials and changes in operation, safe operating procedures, virtual tours, updates on local recreational opportunities and attractions, farmers markets and other information to our local resident audience to help our tourism partners in need.
- A partnership with Anna Rockhold of The Weekly Yum facilitated free video shoots of Tammany Taste partners. This helped our restaurant partners communicate to patrons how they had modified their operations to offer carry-out, takeout or delivery services during the Stay at Home Order and into Q2. The thirteen Weekly Yum videos were shared by STPTCC and promoted to residents via the ExploreLouisianaNorthshore FB page. **The combined total local reach of the videos was 150,356 St. Tammany Parish residents.**



## PRESENTED 2 DIGITAL EDITIONS OF INSIDE NORTHSHORE, LOCALLY-FOCUSED COMMUNITY MAGAZINE AND PROMOTED PARTNERS TO RESIDENTS

- Curated previously produced videos with virtual experiences of the Dew Drop Jazz and Social Hall, Insta-Gator Ranch and Hatchery and the Tammany Trace.
- Shared Poppy Tooker's Tammany Taste podcasts featuring various chefs and partners in our culinary community.
- Promoted the STPTCC's Business Operations Updates Page at StTammanyTourism.com.
- Promoted The Weekly Yum video how to's on restaurant procedures for their curbside services.



## ENGAGED WLAE-TV TO BEGIN RE-RUNNING THE THREE TAMMANY TASTE EPISODES OF GO COAST: LOUISIANA IN THE LOCAL MARKET

- The three 30-min episodes celebrate the Northshore's chefs, farmers, and brewers that make up the Tammany Taste culinary scene with Emmy Award-winning host Tom Gregory.



# THE STPTCC RESPONSE TO COVID-19



## SALES TEAM INITIATIVES TO FOSTER FUTURE MEETINGS, INTERNATIONAL AND GROUP TRAVEL

- The Sales team created the “We’ve Got you Covered, Plan with Confidence” video to showcase Northshore venue safety practices put in place during the onset of the pandemic, showing that you can meet safely on the Louisiana Northshore.
- Added a new “personal protection” tab for planners on our website so that meeting planners could see at a glance added safety measures undertaken by event venues, including Mask Requirements, Social Distance Markings/Signage, Sanitizer Stations and Reduced Occupancy Limits, among others.
- Co-hosted several Quaran-Teas with Shreveport-Bossier TCB and Visit Baton Rouge to engage with domestic tour & travel operators during the pandemic.

## A TRUSTED RESOURCE FOR OUR PEOPLE AND OUR PARTNERS

- The St. Tammany Parish Tourist Commission team communicated closely with our state officials, legislators, local elected officials and parish government to become a **resource of information** for our tourism partners.
- The STPTCC Visitor Services team began personally calling our tourism partners to question how we could **provide support, care and service** to our community in need.
- The STPTCC Communications team **increased partner communication in the form of eblasts by 640%**, to disseminate important information from our government officials.
- The STPTCC Sales team called our hoteliers and attended the Northshore Lodging Association meetings to share opportunities and information with partners, learn about individual brand standards with regards to sanitation and cleanliness and to **strengthen relationships**.
- The St. Tammany Parish Tourist Commission worked with community partners such as St. Tammany Corporation and the St. Tammany Chamber to co-host and **facilitate industry roundtable discussions** and educational webinars to provide knowledge of available funding and programs available to help our tourism partners.
- The STPTCC President and CEO, Donna O’Daniels, was asked to serve on the **St. Tammany Economic Recovery & Resiliency Advisory Council**, a volunteer council assembled by St. Tammany Parish President Mike Cooper to create the Live Safe. Work Safe. Shop Safe Action Plan for reopening St. Tammany Parish following the expiration of the Stay at Home order.



*Lauren Holmes, International Services Louisiana Office of Tourism*

**“I love this! It’s covid-friendly and just what our international operators are telling us their clients want – reassurance that health and safety protocols are being taken! Keep up the good work!”**





## Making Informed Decisions Using **TOURISM RESEARCH**

The St. Tammany Parish Tourist and Convention Commission's strategic marketing plans are data driven and optimized for the best results. **STPTCC 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.**

### **YOUNG STRATEGIES AND DESTINATIONNEXT**

In Q4 of 2020, the STPTCC enlisted Young Strategies, Inc. to begin a strategic planning process through DestinationNEXT to be completed in 2021. Young Strategies is a research and planning firm which focuses on destination marketing organizations and has worked with 150+ travel destinations in 34 states.

As a part of the DestinationNEXT process, **St. Tammany Parish's strength as a tourist destination will undergo a SWOT analysis**, taking into consideration different variables such as attractions and entertainment, accommodations, conventions and meeting facilities, sports and recreation facilities and communication infrastructure.

**Community alignment variables will be analyzed and reported on** via surveying government officials, stakeholders and residents within St. Tammany Parish **to ensure that tourism is seen as a vital economy.**

Ascertaining St. Tammany Parish's community support of tourism will be analyzed by considering local community support, hospitality culture, partnership and funding support and certainty.

Finally, **a strategic plan for the future will be presented to the STPTCC board by Young Strategies, Inc. in 2021**, identifying strategic initiatives that the commission can pursue over the coming years in partnership with local tourism, business and government leaders.



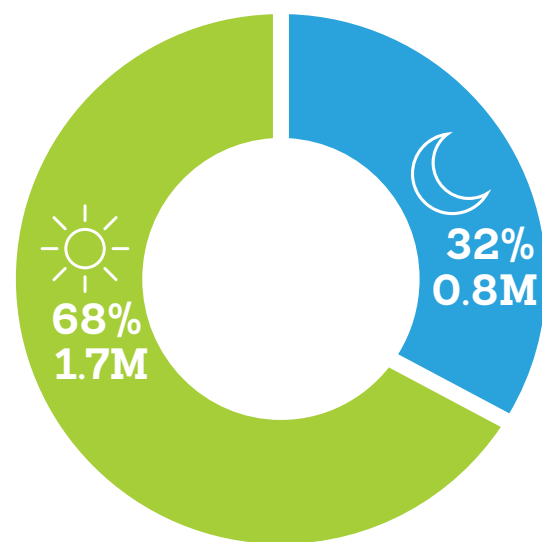
## TRAVEL USA VISITOR VOLUME STUDY FOR 2020 BY COMPASS LONGWOODS INTERNATIONAL

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

St. Tammany Parish  
has the  
**4th largest**  
**tourist economy**  
in Louisiana.

\*Figures from Tourism Spending in Louisiana  
Parishes 2020 Report, UNO Hospitality Re-  
search Center

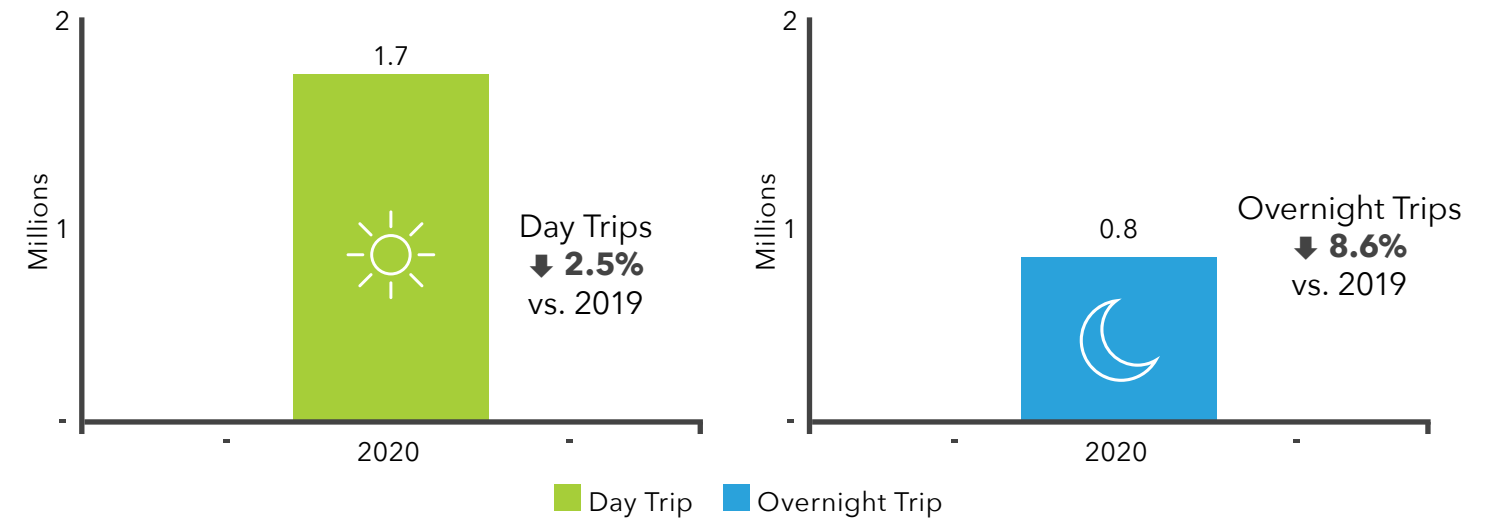
### TOTAL SIZE OF ST. TAMMANY PARISH 2020 DOMESTIC TRAVEL MARKET



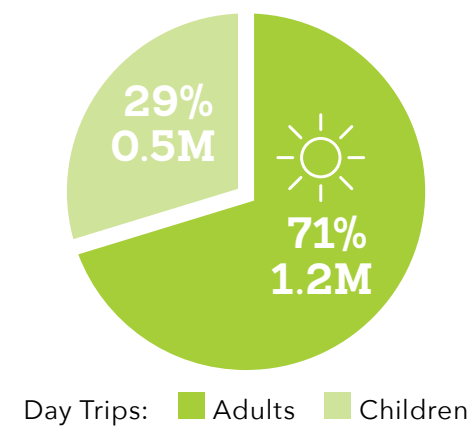
Day Trip Overnight Trip

**2.5 million visitors came to  
St. Tammany Parish in 2020**  
↓ 4.6% vs. 2019

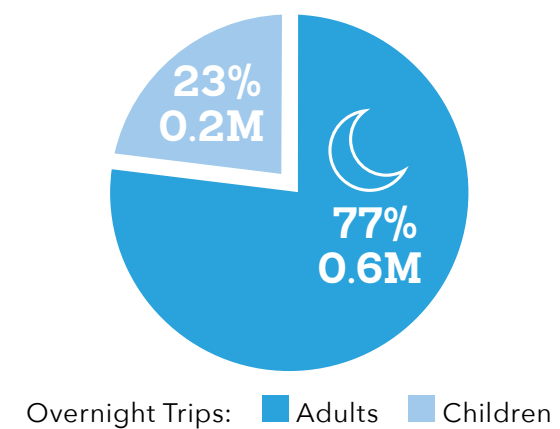
### TOTAL NUMBER OF DAY VS. NIGHT TRIPS TO ST. TAMMANY PARISH IN 2020



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



Day Trips: Adults Children



Overnight Trips: Adults Children







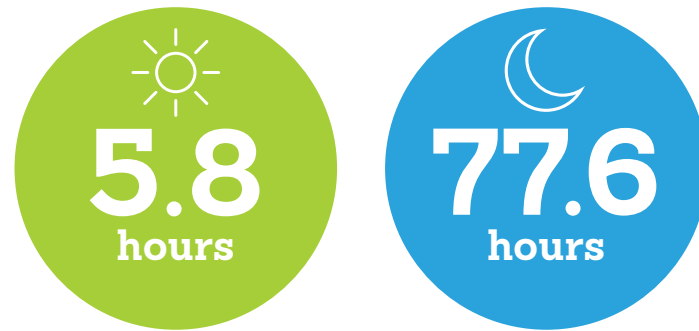
## ST. TAMMANY PARISH VISITATION STUDY BY NEAR (FORMERLY UBERMEDIA)

Near is a mobile tech company that collects geolocation data from 150k apps that require location permission, and ads served on mobile devices from their real time bidding exchange 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.

Louisiana's generated visitor spending in 2020 would buy 111 lbs. of crawfish tails for each Louisiana visitor.

*\*Figures from The Louisiana Office of Tourism.*

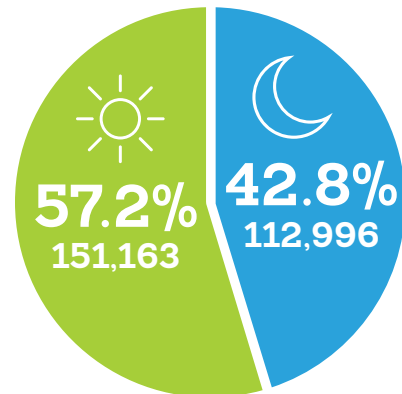
### AVERAGE LENGTH OF TRIP TO ST. TAMMANY PARISH



Day Trip

Overnight Trip

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



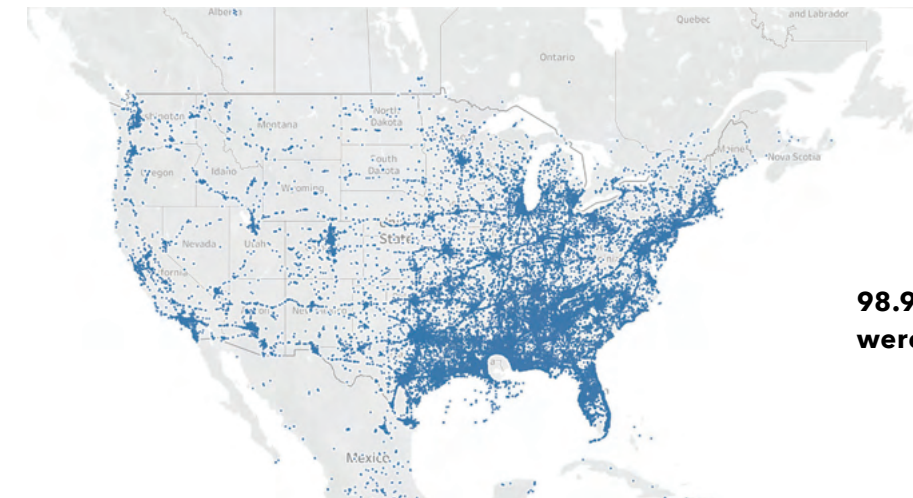
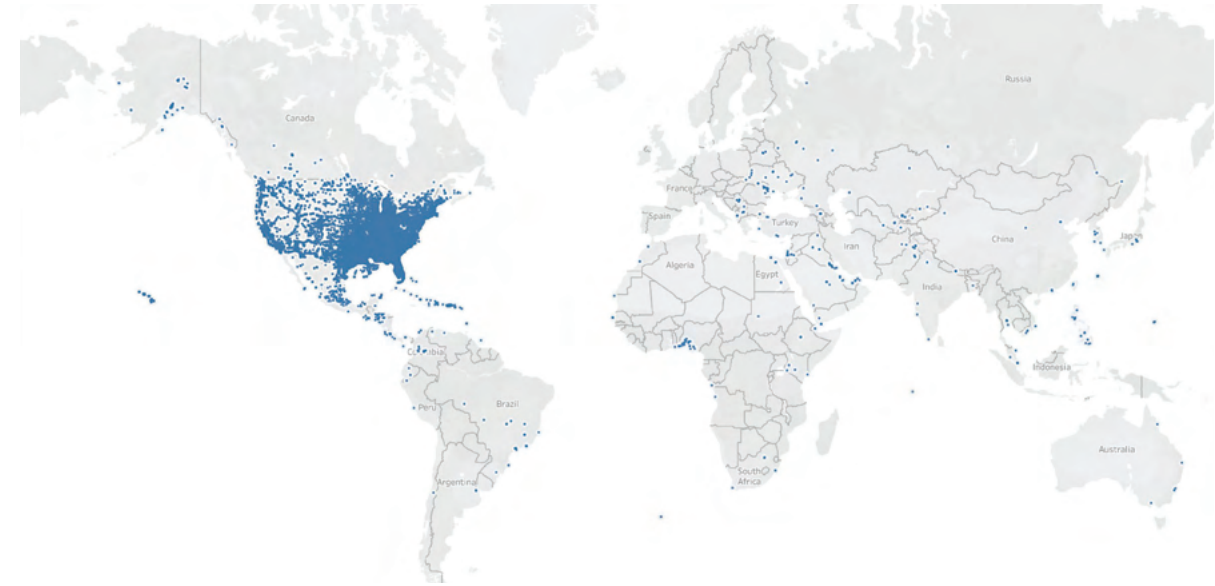
■ Day Trip ■ Overnight Trip

In 2020, Near tracked **264,159 unique mobile devices** in St. Tammany Parish.

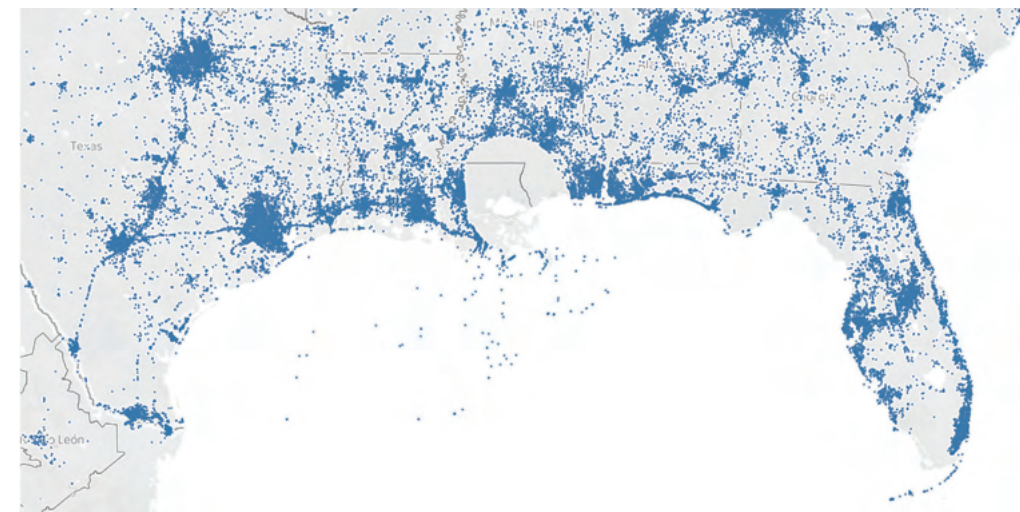
**42.8%** of those trips were overnight visitors, while **57.2%** were day visitors.

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

**112,996 unique overnight visitor mobile devices** were tracked to St. Tammany Parish.



**98.9%** of those devices were from the U.S.



Of the 98.9% 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





## Organization Development: **ADMINISTRATION**

**The St. Tammany Parish Tourist Commission's Administration team ensures that the organization's standards of destination marketing and management are maintained with best practices in mind.**

Administration ensures that the organization is transparent, fiscally sound, manages policies and procedures and establishes organizational goals and a strategic plan.

### **2020 ACHIEVEMENTS:**

The organization successfully **transitioned from a Fiscal Year to a Calendar Year** in order to align with industry partners, key performance indicators and research and also to facilitate an easier budget planning process for marketing and advertising opportunities.

**A Safe at Work policy for the STPTCC was developed** to manage appropriate preventative measures necessary

to help create a safe workplace and aid in stopping the spread of COVID-19. These guidelines were based on suggestions from the CDC, the White House Coronavirus Task Force, GOHSEP, and St. Tammany Parish Government Employee Return-to-Work Policy and Procedures.

The St. Tammany Parish Tourist Commission **initiated the Destinations International reaccreditation process for the Destination Marketing Accreditation Program**

**(DMAP)**, a globally-recognized industry distinction that defines quality and performance standards in destination marketing and management.

**Diversity, equality and inclusion efforts** in all aspects of the organization and marketing initiatives **were re-examined and identified as a priority.**



# Media Relations: **COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT**



**Advertising Budget 2020:**  
\$543,767

**Advertising Reach/Circulation:**  
24,475,575

**Advertising Leads:** 17,032

**Website Visits:** 715,505

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 its media plan and all collateral materials in-house** and is responsible for ad buys, photography, copy, art direction, and editing, **saving agency costs of up to 25%.**

(Randall Travel Marketing, 2017 Tourism Research Study)



## 2020 INITIATIVES:



**PRODUCED NEW VIDEO FOR RECOVERY: "HERE TO LOVE AGAIN"** featuring the video editing of Emmy Award-winning Tom Gregory from WLAE and the voice talents of Poppy Tooker.

**The messaging was simple, restorative, and hopeful.**

The "Here to Love Again" video was the cornerstone of the campaign the STPTCC developed to capture the drive market and potential visitors within a 4-hour drive radius, as they were shown to be the most likely to travel again as confidence in travel rose. **Mediums included Over The Top Television video (Roku, Amazon Fire), YouTube video, and website retargeting campaigns.** Messaging changed slightly through various stages of reopening and recovery.

**SPOTLIGHTED THE 2020 KING OF LOUISIANA SEAFOOD, CHEF ROBERT VASQUEZ OF PEPE'S SONORAN CUISINE.**

The Louisiana Seafood Promotion and Marketing Board crowned Covington's own **Chef Robert Vasquez** as **King of Louisiana Seafood**, an accolade he won by successfully competing against 9 other chefs from around the state **in the 2020 Louisiana Seafood Cook-Off.** The STPTCC honored Chef Robert Vasquez and shared his accomplishments when promoting the Tammany Taste culinary scene.



**DISTRIBUTED 25,673 ISSUES OF EXPLORE THE NORTHSHORE DIRECT TO MAILBOXES VIA THE COST-EFFECTIVE EDDM PROGRAM.**

As hotels were empty of travelers, visitor centers were closed and **normal distribution outlets for the Explore the Northshore Visitor Guide were temporarily obsolete,** the STPTCC enlisted the United States Postal Service and their EDDM program to distribute the inspirational guide. **An impressive 25,673 issues of the Spring/Summer 2020 Explore the Northshore Visitor Guide were directly placed via postal carrier in the mailboxes of local families in the St. Tammany, Lafayette, and Baton Rouge area with a HHI of \$85,000,** in an effort to spur day trips and patronage of tourism-related businesses by Louisiana locals.

**PROMOTED 10 WAYS TO CELEBRATE THE HOLIDAYS IN ST. TAMMANY PARISH WITH LOUISIANA OFFICE OF TOURISM'S HOLIDAY GRANT.**

A digital campaign with Compass Media promoted shopping and dining in St. Tammany Parish and holiday lights as the emphasis of the campaign. **The campaign resulted in a 62% increase in website page views + 52.5% increase in average time onsite to the Holiday page YOY.** The STPTCC also expanded our holiday image photo library with a professional photo shoot.



**SUPPORTED OUR PARTNERS WITH A CO-OP OPPORTUNITY IN THE LOUISIANA SUNSHINE MAGAZINE (VISITOR GUIDE).**

The Louisiana Office of Tourism (LOT) **rebranded the annually-produced Louisiana Inspiration Guide as the Louisiana Sunshine Magazine** to align with the State's tourism recovery plan, the Louisiana Sunshine Plan. LOT generously offered ad rates at 50% off 2020 rates, and **the St. Tammany Parish Tourist Commission passed on the savings to partners, in turn, offering another 50% off the 1/8 page ad** to St. Tammany Parish tourism-related businesses on a first-come first-serve basis.





**STPTCC developed a plan for St. Tammany Parish's tourism recovery, leveraging the power of the Louisiana Sunshine Plan developed by the Louisiana Office of Tourism under the direction of Lt. Governor Billy Nungesser.**



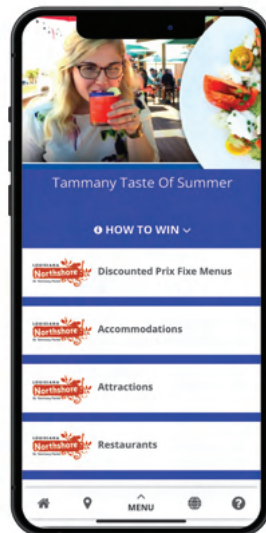


**RESTRUCTURED THE THIRD ANNUAL TAMMANY TASTE OF SUMMER PROGRAM TO MAXIMIZE POTENTIAL ECONOMIC IMPACT IN A COVID-19 RECOVERY CLIMATE.**

The St. Tammany Parish Tourist Commission **encourages locals and visitors to discover and support local places to eat, stay, and play through the annual Tammany Taste of Summer program.** This is accomplished through complimentary advertising to promote participating businesses' discounted prix fixe menus, overnight rates, and deals only offered during Tammany Taste of Summer. **The goal: to help our tourism partners and community increase revenue during a traditionally slow month in hospitality.**

In 2020, **the STPTCC increased the advertising budget** dedicated to the promotion, **enlisted the technology of Bandwango** and **produced the Tammany Taste of Summer Savings Pass, extended the time frame of the program** another month to be August 1 - September 30, 2020 and **restructured the program to include attractions** and allow for greater partner participation.

The Tammany Taste of Summer Savings Pass **offered users the capability to view participating partner deals organized by towns, type of business and type of offer.** Users could redeem the offer, similar to "checking in" to show that they patronized the Tammany Taste of Summer partner, **increasing the STPTCC's ability to track the program's success and use.**



**TAMMANYTASTE.COM Visits To The Website:**

Pageviews:  
**25,284 ↑ 208% YOY**

Average Time on Page:  
**00:01:35 ↑ 27% YOY**

Book Direct Hotel Searches in Aug.:  
**2,804 ↑ 322% YOY**

Book Direct Hotel Searches in Sept.:  
**2,173 ↑ 251% YOY**

**2020 Tammany Taste Of Summer Program Stats:**

**75**

Participating Partners

**3,053**

Savings Pass Sign-ups

**786**

Offer Redemptions



**Locals and Visitors Who Participated in Tammany Taste of Summer Said:**

**84%**

First Tammany Taste of Summer Experience

**75%**

Tried a New Business

**2.5+**

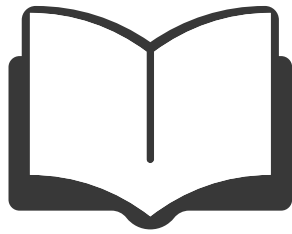
Businesses Visited Per Participant

**97%**

Plan to Participate in 2021



## 2020 ACHIEVEMENTS:



### EARNED MEDIA

Media pitches and FAM tours resulted in these stories featuring St. Tammany Parish, and more.

See [LouisianaNorthshore.com/articles](https://LouisianaNorthshore.com/articles) for more.



### AAA SOUTHERN TRAVELER

*"Street performers enliven Busker Fest"*

**Featuring:** Abita Springs and Busker Fest



### OUTSIDE

*"The Best Road Trips in the U.S./ Escape Bourbon Street: Fontainebleau State Park to New Orleans, LA"*

**Featuring:** Fontainebleau State Park, Tammany Trace



### WHERE TO RETIRE MAGAZINE

*"Profile: St. Tammany Parish"*

**Featuring:** Slidell, Mandeville and Covington and 14 tourism partners



### GARDEN AND GUN

*"How one Louisiana chef is feeding evacuees even after he had to clear out"*

**Featuring:** The Lakehouse, Inn at La Provence



### THRILLIST

*"This Underrated Coast Is a Parade of Hissing Gators and White-Sand Beaches"*

**Featuring:** Cajun Encounters, Covington, Southern Hotel, Liz's Where Y'at Diner, Bayou Adventure



### ATLANTA JOURNAL-CONSTITUTION

*"Gotta Get Away: Outdoor Adventure"*

**Featuring:** Bayou Adventure, Fontainebleau State Park



### LOUISIANA KITCHEN AND CULTURE

*"Destination: Old St. Tammany"*

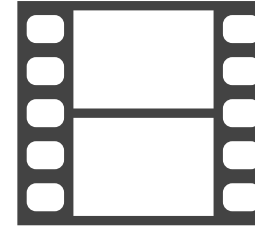
**Featuring:** The English Tea Room, Fontainebleau State Park, Mandeville, Madisonville, Abita Springs, Covington



### COUNTRY ROADS MAGAZINE

*"Happy Glampers: Tentrr elevates the camping experience in Louisiana"*

**Featuring:** Fontainebleau State Park, Bayou Adventure, Hambone



### FILM

St. Tammany's varied locations, historic downtowns, and diverse architecture are among the many reasons the Louisiana Northshore is the ideal locale for film and entertainment. **The COVID-19 pandemic gravely impacted the industry, halting all large productions.**

**The Tourist Commission team leveraged this time** to coordinate with the St. Tammany government and regional film offices **to review and implement best-recommended permit application processes.**

In addition, the STPTCC maintained consistent communication with industry leaders and the Louisiana Film and Entertainment Association.

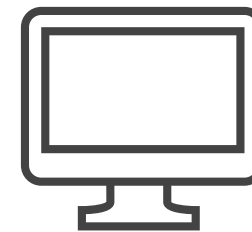
**During 2020, the STPTCC assisted these productions in St. Tammany.**

- HGTV: *Selling the Big Easy* Season 2
- Netflix: *Queen of the South* Season 5
- Showtime: *Your Honor*



## 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.



### WEBSITE STATS

Sessions:

**715,505** ↑ 0.65% over 2019

Users:

**511,141** ↑ 2.86% over 2019

Pageviews:

**1,185,028** ↓ 3.19% over 2019

### Top 5 visiting states to LouisianaNorthshore.com

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

### SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS



**44,455**  
↑ 20.6% YOY



**5,848**  
↑ 42.9% YOY



**5,175**  
↑ 5% YOY



**436**  
↑ 31.3% YOY



# 2020 ACHIEVEMENTS:



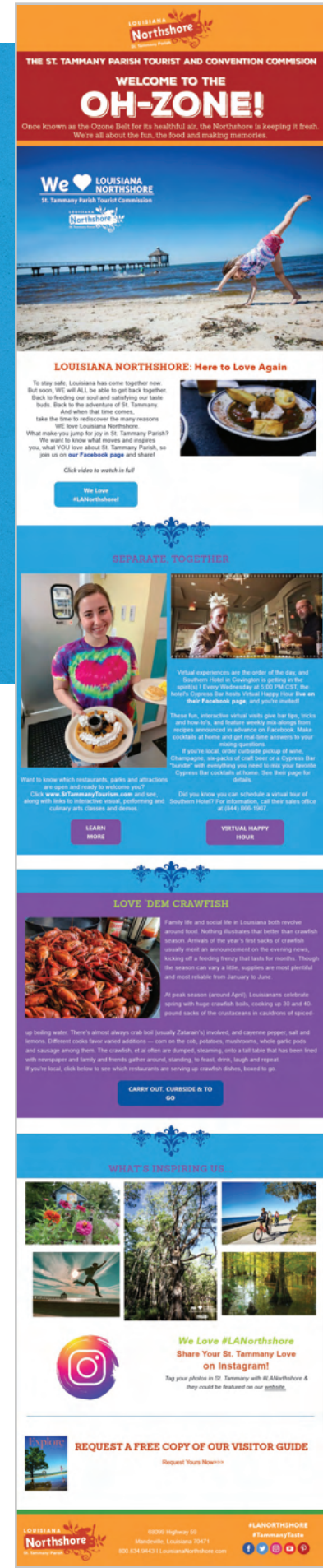
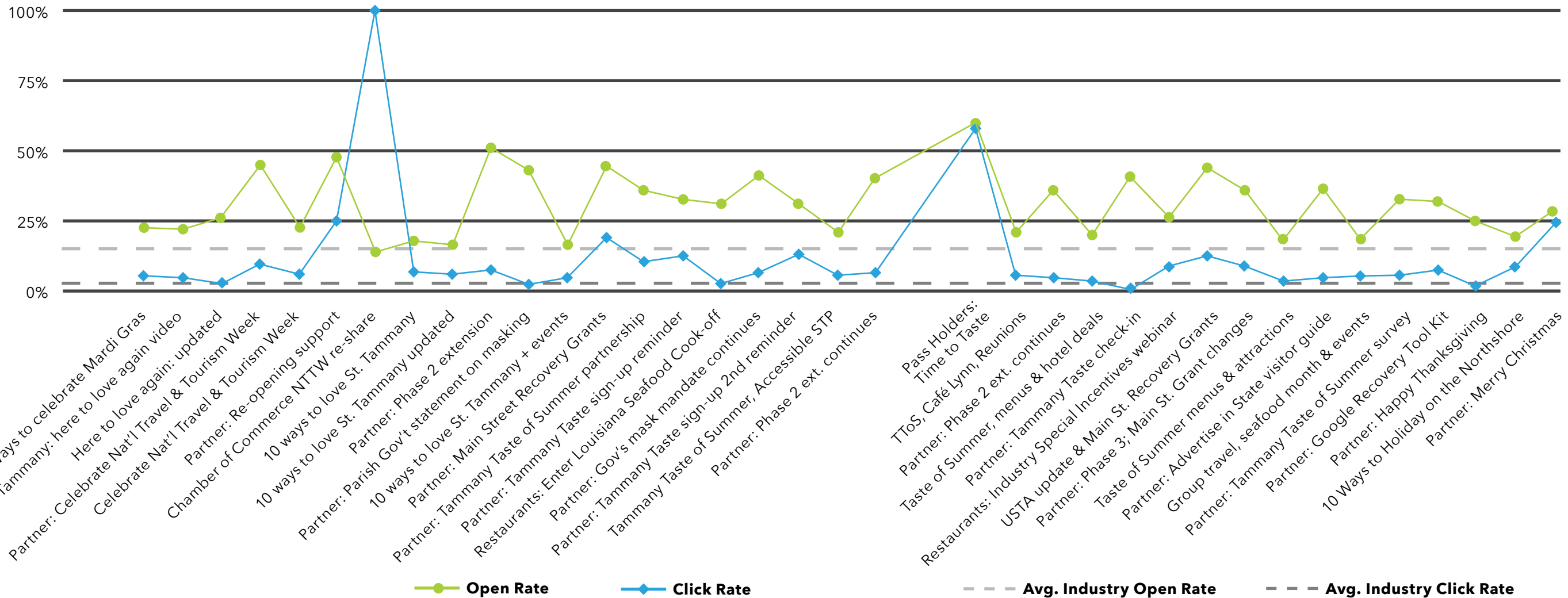
## Getting the Word Out Through E-blasts:

**51,034**

New Opt-ins  
+26.3%

**26**  
Partner Communications  
+640%

**10**  
Promotional Communications  
+100%





## Groups, Meetings & International Tourism: **SALES DEPARTMENT**

The St. Tammany Parish Tourist Commission's Sales Department works to attract **sporting tournaments, meetings, conventions, corporate, family reunions, weddings and group travel companies** to host their events in St. Tammany Parish. The department **works closely with area hoteliers, tourism partners, and meeting and sporting venues** to help increase the number of hotel room nights spent and provide a positive economic impact to St. Tammany Parish.

**Our full-service sales team** offers complimentary planning services, site visits and room block assistance from our hotel partners, meeting room suggestions and customized itineraries for off-site attractions.





## 2020 INITIATIVES:

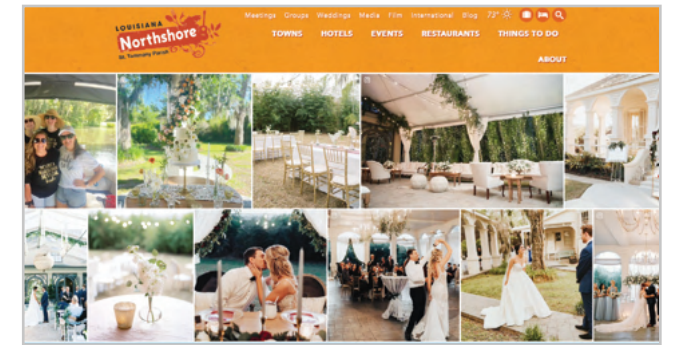
- **Contracted with Tourism Tactics by Tico to foster relationships and update data with international receptive operators.** Initiated introductions with key associations to gain interest in Louisiana Northshore and help expand the association and corporate markets.
- **Strategically partnered with other Louisiana destinations** to create joint itineraries to promote the I-12 corridor to 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.
- **Nurtured the SMERF (Social, Military, Educational, Religious, Fraternal) Tour & Travel and Sports and Corporate markets** through virtual meetings, new itineraries, sponsorships and national memberships. Identified the weddings market and reunions market as areas of focus.
- **Strengthened local tourism partnerships** by sharing marketing opportunities to expand buyer outreach and state & national tourism information.
- Sought opportunities to continue **hospitality and sales education.**



## 2020 ACHIEVEMENTS:

### NOTABLE 2020 ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Created a new landing page for the weddings market on LouisianaNorthshore.com with a fillable response form, and advertised in regional bridal magazines
- Sales Department completed certifications in CVENT, SafeSport and Energy Industry Support International (formerly Oil & Gas Admins International)
- Hosted Military Reunion educational webinar for industry partners
- Sponsored the Energy Industry Support International Holiday Meeting
- Organized a State of the Industry luncheon for Northshore hotels
- Hosted Quarant-Teas with Shreveport-Bossier TCB and Visit Baton Rouge to engage with domestic tour & travel operators during the pandemic



### STRATEGIES & GROUP MARKETING MATERIALS:

- Launched new itineraries and strategic partnerships with other Louisiana destinations
  - Road Tripping- Shreveport-Bossier, Baton Rouge & Louisiana Northshore
  - Bayou to Blastoff- Shreveport-Bossier, Baton Rouge, Louisiana Northshore & Huntsville, AL
  - Causeway Connection- Jefferson Parish to Louisiana Northshore
- Created a new "Not your Typical 10" itinerary to be unveiled at IPW & Travel South International in 2021 for the international market
- Created the "We've Got You Covered" video to showcase meeting venue practices during and post pandemic
- Developed a new Military Reunion itinerary
- Updated Association, Family Reunion & Student itineraries

**Reconnect on Louisiana Northshore**

**Complimentary Services:**  
The St. Tammany Parish Tourist Commission offers complimentary pre-planning services to save you countless steps:  
 ★ Complimentary FAM for the reunion planner  
 ★ Assistance with group rates for accommodations, attractions and meals  
 ★ Hotel site inspections  
 ★ Sample itineraries  
 ★ Color Guard memorials  
 ★ Transportation info  
 ★ Planning checklist  
 ★ Lagniappe

**FREE T-Shirts:**  
Reunions booked directly with our sales team may qualify for FREE T-Shirts. Contact us to learn more.

It would be an honor to host your Military Reunion in St. Tammany Parish/Louisiana Northshore, a destination in its own right.

Louisiana Northshore is home to two waterfront state parks with open-air pavilions, hands-on attractions, and group-friendly restaurants. With so many things to see and do, St. Tammany Parish offers veterans the perfect setting for making memories and reconnecting with friends and family.

**When to visit:**  
With our year-round mild climate, any time is a good time. Visit during local festivals such as The Fourth of July, the St. Tammany Crab Festival, Sidel's Antique Street Fair, the Wooden Boat Festival, or the annual Louisiana Veterans Festival. Or, enjoy many free outdoor concerts and Christmas events.

**So close to everything...**  
St. Tammany Parish's central location makes it easy to arrive by highway or air. Flying in? Choose from three area airports and arrive in St. Tammany within an hour or less. Driving in? The Northshore is conveniently located at the intersections on I-10, I-59 and I-12, only one hour from Baton Rouge, New Orleans and the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

Contact Zondra Jones, Sr. Sales Manager & Reunion Specialist today to plan your next reunion!  
 985-892-0520 • Zondra@LouisianaNorthshore.com  
 800-634-9443 • LouisianaNorthshore.com/MilitaryReunions

### IN 2020, THE STPTCC WELCOMED:

- 26th Annual Midnight Madness Soccer Tournament
- MS. B.A.S.S. Nation Fall Qualifier
- Tumbleweed Tours
- Louisiana Senior Olympic Games in Pickleball
- Louisiana Automobile Dealers Association





## 2020 BY THE NUMBERS:

**37** Total Direct Sales Appointments

**6** Bridal shows attended to highlight our diverse venue selection

**12** International Inquiries fulfilled

**21** Potential clients hosted through Familiarization Tours & Site Inspections

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

**2** Military Weekend Packages co-sponsored with local tourism partners

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

## 2020 ACHIEVEMENTS:

### 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.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our Sales Department attended several virtual meetings with receptive operators coordinated through Tourism Tactics by Tico in 2020.

- Sent a "Thinking of You" video through the Louisiana Office of Tourism UK office
- Sent a "Welcome to Northshore" video through the Louisiana Office of Tourism for the Travel South USA French/ Belgium content program
- Attended the Canadian Travel & Leisure Virtual Tradeshow through the Louisiana Office of Tourism
- Met with state partners quarterly to collaborate on joint opportunities to strengthen international outreach and client engagement
- Continued to network with receptive tour operators based in the United States through zooms, emails & promotional marketing materials

### THE SALES DEPARTMENT ATTENDED TRADE SHOWS AND CONFERENCES AND SERVED ON PANELS AS EXPERTS IN THEIR FIELD, WHILE WORKING TO DEVELOP NEW BUSINESS FOR THE PARISH IN THE DOMESTIC MARKET.

#### Trade Shows

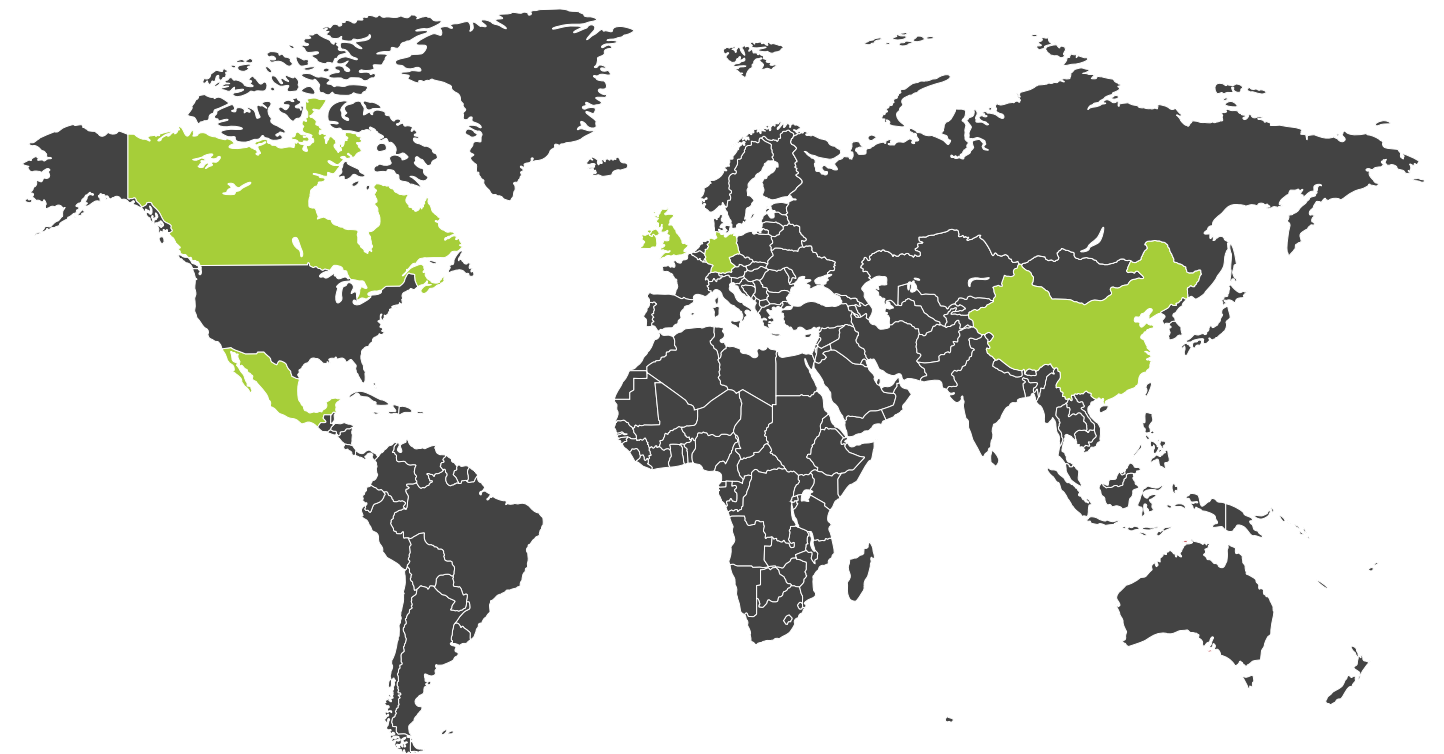
- Society of Governmental Meeting Planners National Board Leadership Meeting
- Energy Industry Support International Holiday Networking Event
- Rendezvous South
- Travel South Domestic

#### Panel Speakers

- Society of Governmental Meeting Planners of LA- CVB Panel
- Military Reunion Network- CVB Panel
- Louisiana Sports Tourism Webinar-Team Louisiana Panel

#### Virtual Meetings & Conferences

- Meeting Professional International networking event
- Military Reunion Network - State of the Union
- Energy Industry Support International
- Society of Governmental Meeting Planners National Educational Conference
- Society of Governmental Meeting Planners State Conference
- Spotlight Travel Network
- Travel & Leisure - Canadian Market (Buy-in through LOT)



### TOP 5 INTERNATIONAL COUNTRIES VISITING THE LOUISIANA NORTHSHORE WEBSITE

1. Canada
2. United Kingdom
3. Germany
4. China
5. Mexico

(Source: Tourism Economics, 2020)





## Welcoming with Hospitality: **VISITOR SERVICES**

**Our Visitor Center at Hwy. 59 welcomed 1,491 travelers** to St. Tammany Parish in 2020, a 56% decrease over 2019. We distributed visitor guides, brochures, map pads and information to visitors regarding area lodging and attractions. **The State Welcome Center in Slidell received 55,361 visitors** in 2020, a 67% decrease over 2019. **Pearl River Welcome Center received nearly 33,204 visitors** in 2020, a 51% decrease over 2019. Due to COVID-19, welcome center lobbies closed in mid-March 2020 and reopened in June, but closed again in Dec of 2020.

### **PROMOTIONAL MERCHANDISE**

The St. Tammany Parish Tourist Commission offered over **23,000 complimentary promotional items and Visitor Guides** to incoming conferences, meetings, reunions, weddings and sporting event participants, **totaling over \$13,000** in merchandise promoting the Louisiana Northshore.



**We**



**LOUISIANA  
NORTHSHORE**

---

**St. Tammany Parish  
Tourist Commission**



**#LANorthshore #TammanyTaste**



**St. Tammany Parish Tourist & Convention Commission**  
68099 Highway 59, Mandeville, Louisiana 70471  
800.634.9443 | LouisianaNorthshore.com