

Industry Briefs

Shelli Briery was hired at Horseshoe Casino and Harrah's Louisiana Downs to handle public relations, community relations and internal communication for both properties. Before joining the Caesar's family, she worked at KTAL for more than eight years as the morning news anchor and reporter.

Would you like to learn about the latest tourism trends? If so, please contact Brandy Evans, vice president of communications, and arrange for her to come and share the latest news and trends in the industry. She can be reached at 429-0638 or bevans@sbctb.org.

Millennium Studio's will begin moving in to their offices in January and they will be off and running with a new film in pre-production.

A Film Alliance Group has been formed and is meeting on a monthly basis to support LIFE a group of film supporters who represent the group during the legislative session and promote filmmaking in the Shreveport-Bossier area.

The Louisiana Travel Promotion Association (LTPA) will hold their annual Louisiana Tourism Industry Summit January 25th-27th in Baton Rouge. This is LTPA's largest educational opportunity of the year. For more information or to register online go to www.ltpa.org

Log on to www.shreveport-bossier.org/partners for industry events and updates



Convention & Tourist Bureau
629 Spring Street
Shreveport, LA 71101

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news from shreveport-bossier convention and tourist bureau



Tourist bureau unveils new downtown center

The Shreveport-Bossier Convention and Tourist Bureau unveiled its new downtown visitor center, Tuesday, Nov. 30, at a ribbon-cutting ceremony followed by an open house for the public.

"When visitors and residents come into our downtown we want them to know right away what a progressive, happening place this is," said John Hubbard, bureau board chairman. "When they walk into our visitor center, we don't want to just tell them what a great place this is to live, work and play. We want to show them."

The center is a dramatic improvement from the previous one. "We tried to meld the old with the new, and we wanted to represent the historical buildings that once stood here," said Stacy Brown, bureau president.

Some of the amenities of the new 6,000-square-foot visitor center include: a freestanding computer kiosk; display cases that show off annual festivals and museums; exhibit panel displays; wireless Internet access, flat screen TVs with videos and scrolling events; and a Cypress tree in the corner with a peek-a-boo box. New are public restrooms, an amenity that did not exist in the previous visitor center. It also features a small downstairs meeting room, restrooms, and eight offices that will be leased out to other tourism industry partners and economic development organizations.

"The reviews from our visitors have been glowing," Brown said. "They love the new space and find it very informative and engaging."



photo courtesy of Tom Pace

Mardi Gras Bash approaching, volunteers needed

Mardi Gras in Shreveport-Bossier was once a best kept secret. But visitors and groups are having such fun that word is spreading that northwest Louisiana knows how to party.

For groups of 10 or more, the bureau hosts an annual Mardi Gras Bash on the banks of the Red River in downtown Shreveport for both major parade weekends. This year, the Krewe of Centaur's parade rolls on Saturday, Feb. 26, while the Krewe of Gemini parades on Saturday, March 5.

Participants of the Bash are treated to a visit from the royal courts of the Mardi Gras krewes, Cajun food like crawfish etouffee and gumbo, live music, a private tour of the floats before the parades start, and an up close spot on the parade route to catch hundreds of Mardi Gras beads and doubloons.

If you would like to volunteer and network with the out-of-town group tours either weekend for the Bash, please contact Erica Howard, leisure group sales manager, at 222-9391 ext. 104 or ehoward@sbctb.org.



Area Mardi Gras festivities pump more than \$17 million into the local economy from out-of-town visitors.

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Film Alliance on back

Dates to Remember:

Shreveport-Bossier Hotel and Lodging Association

Jan. 11, noon, Petroleum Club
Feb. 8, noon, Petroleum Club

Hospitality Breakfast

Jan. 5, Artspace
Feb. 2, DiamondJacks Casino & Hotel

Tourism on the Town:

Jan 13, 5-7 p.m., Sci-Port: Louisiana's Science Center
Feb. 10, 5-7 p.m., Hilton Garden Inn

Louisiana Restaurant Association

TBA, Information: Kelly McLemore, 377-0108.

Special thanks to the Shreveport Chamber of Commerce and Bossier Chamber of Commerce for the joint ribbon-cutting ceremony.

"On the fun side, the Shreveport-Bossier Convention and Tourist Bureau and its partners pulled out all the stops, starting with a Second Line Parade that sent everyone dancing through the convention center and into the ballroom..."

— Small Market Meetings publication, Nov. 2010




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FUNGUIDE!

Calendar of Events

- January/February**
- 1/1 CMT Crossroads at Horseshoe Casino. CMT Bar.
 - 1/1 The B-52s in Concert. Horseshoe Casino & Hotel.
 - through 1/27 *Visions and visionaries: paintings by David Holcombe.* Meadows Museum of Art.
 - through 1/29 *The Making of...The Fantastic Flying Books of Mr. Morris Lessmore.* Artspace.
 - 1/4 Beginner Waltz Lessons by USA Dance. Sandy's Dance Center.
 - 1/5 Holiday Day Camps. Sci-Port: Louisiana's Science Center.
 - 1/6-16 *The Odd Couple.* Shreveport Little Theatre.
 - 1/7 *Krewe of Centaur Mixer.* Centaur Event Center.
 - 1/8 Shreveport Symphony "Go For The Gold." First Baptist Church of Shreveport.
 - 1/8 *Twelfth Night Party Celebration.* Shreveport Convention Center.
 - 1/8 *Green Gifts.* Lila's Deli & Bakery.
 - 1/8-9 *Classic Arms Productions Gun & Knife Show.* Riverview Hall.
 - 1/8-29 *Hubble Space Telescope Traveling Exhibition.* Sci-Port: Louisiana's Science Center.
 - 1/14 *Krewe of Elders Grande Bal.* American Legion Hall Shreveport.
 - 1/15 *Beginner Bird Walk.* Wild Bird Center.
 - 1/22 *Krewe of Sobek Mardi Gras Parade.*
 - 1/22 *Terri Hendrix & Lloyd Maines in the House Concert Series.* Fairfield Studios.
 - 1/29 *Tony DeBlois in Concert.* Anderson Auditorium Centenary College.
 - 1/30 *Signature Bridal Show.* Bossier Civic Center.
 - 2/5 *Esprit de Louisiane Bal.* DiamondJacks Casino & Resort.
 - 2/5 *Shreveport Symphony "A Pair of Fives".* Riverview Theatre.
 - 2/5 *African American History Festival & Parade.* Municipal Auditorium.
 - 2/5-26 *Black History Month.* Sci-Port: Louisiana's Science Center.
 - 2/10 *Evening with the World Famous Glenn Miller Orchestra.* Horseshoe Casino Riverdome.
 - 2/18 *All Shook Up, The Music of Elvis Presley.* Strand Theatre.
 - 2/18 *Steve Harvey Morning Show.* Horseshoe Casino Riverdome.
 - 2/19 *Birds of Prey Demonstration.* Walter B. Jacobs Memorial Nature Park.
 - 2/25 *Music Man.* Strand Theatre.
 - 2/25 *Winter Jam 2011.* CenturyTel Center.
 - 2/26 *Krewe of Centaur Mardi Gras Parade.*
 - 2/27 *Kwewe of Barkus & Meoux Mardi Gras Pet Parade.* RiverView Park.
 - 3/5 *Krewe of Gemini Mardi Gras Parade.*
 - 3/6 *Krewe of Highland Mardi Gras Parade.*

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Submit your events on the Fun Guide for FREE

Your Bureau at Work

Stacy Brown, bureau president, attended the Southeast Tourism Society board meeting. She currently sits on the organization's board of directors. STS is a non-profit membership organization promoting tourism within the 12 southeastern member states by sharing resources, fostering cooperation, networking, providing continuing education, cooperative marketing, consumer outreach, advice and consultation.



Stacy Brown
Bureau President

Erica Howard, leisure sales manager, attended the United States Tour Operator Association in New Orleans. While there she had appointments with 10 tour operators for the purpose of bringing those tour companies to Shreveport-Bossier. She also attended the Globus annual meeting. Globus is a United Kingdom group tour company, which is bringing a series of tours to Shreveport-Bossier in Fall 2011.

In November 2010, **Kathy Melancon**, product development and research manager, traveled with the Shreveport-Bossier Film Office

to Los Angeles, CA. Meetings were held with several major film and television studios, as well as several independent filmmakers. Several announcements will be made about new companies and film projects coming to the area.

Also in November, **Suzanne Manfredi**, convention sales manager, traveled to Baton Rouge and New Orleans to meet with numerous clients including the Louisiana Retired Teachers Association, Louisiana Legislative Black Caucus and Louisiana Academy of Family Physicians. All are confirmed or looking to book future conventions in Shreveport-Bossier.

Chris Jay has joined the bureau as public relations/social media manager. Chris has nine years of experience in event and attraction-based marketing and public relations, as well as a background in professional writing and media production. He looks forward to helping area attractions build a buzz and grow their audiences through innovative new approaches to spreading the word.



Chris Jay
Public Relations/Social Media Manager

Zero to 40: Conventions Get a Head Start for 2011

The bureau is expecting a banner year for conventions slated to be held in Shreveport-Bossier. There are 40 confirmed conventions so far for 2011. This is up from zero definite bookings in Dec. 2009 compared to Dec. 2010. This is due in part to the recovering economy, according to Kim Brice, vice president of convention marketing.

Brice said, "This shows that even though business was down in 2009 and flat in 2010, the increase in 2011 business indicates there will be a resurgence in future meeting trends."

Other explanations for the rise in numbers are linked to efforts being made by bureau staff and industry partners. Sales missions are planned for Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston, Texas and Baton Rouge. The purpose is to sell Shreveport-Bossier as a premier meeting and convention destination.

Nationally, as well as locally, the average number of convention delegates is increasing. In the past, conventions held here had on average 250 room nights. Conventions in 2011 such as Louisiana Municipal Association have 3,100 room nights; Kappa Kappa Iota, 555; and Women of Faith, 650.

This is good news for the local economy. The estimated economic impact of 2011 booked conventions is nearly \$6 million.

Interested in partnering with the bureau on sales missions?

Contact:
Kim Brice, *vice president of convention marketing* at kbrice@sbctb.org
or
Kelly Wells, *vice president of tourism* at kwells@sbctb.org



Small Market Meetings Conference, held in 2010, is expected to generate future business.



Shreveport-Bossier experiencing largest increase in international visitors in nearly a decade

Louisiana saw an increase in international visitors in 2010. Locally, the trend was similar. According to *Visa Vue Travel Report* published by the research and development team at the Louisiana Office of Tourism, international tourists generated more than \$1.3 million in visa and cash expenditures while in Shreveport-Bossier for the first two quarters of 2010.

"These numbers are indicative of a growing interest in Shreveport-Bossier from those abroad," said Stacy Brown, bureau president. "We have seen an increase in international visitors, in particular in the group tour market."

The top three visiting countries to the sister cities were Canada, United Kingdom and Mexico, according to the report released in August 2010.

In 2010, the bureau announced it booked a major new group - Globus, a United Kingdom group tour company. Globus had not visited Louisiana since Hurricane Katrina, and it's first tour back to Louisiana was Sept.

21-23, 2010, and Globus stopped here. They have booked another nine international groups to visit Shreveport-Bossier in 2011.

In addition, the bureau has been working with another international group called Sweet Magnolia Tours. They will be bringing a group of 200-250 from Ireland on October 22-25, 2011 to spend three nights. The group is being led by Robert Mizell who is the "George Strait" of European Country music and a Shreveport native.

"I foresee more growth," said Jody Hanson, sales and marketing director for Travel and Tourism Marketing. "As we come out of the recession people want to go back to traveling."

She also explained that "Visitors from the U.K. typically come to Shreveport-Bossier for festivals, historical buildings, and casinos. They want to experience the music and history you all have to offer. Packaging all these things together is what draws attention."



Festivals, gaming, history and music attract international visitors to Shreveport-Bossier.

Groupon Launches "Daily Deals" in Shreveport -Bossier

Groupon, an international company that offers products and services from popular local businesses at a huge discount through daily e-mail coupons, has begun featuring offers from Shreveport-Bossier businesses. Local businesses such as Holiday Lanes in Bossier City and Athena's Greek & Lebanese Grill in Shreveport have been featured on Groupon.com's Shreveport site. Groupon currently offers its "daily deals" in 150 American cities, as well as 100 additional markets in Europe, Asia, and South America.

Groupon negotiates discounts ranging from 50 percent to 90 percent off services ranging from car washes to theatre tickets. The company then promotes these discounts through a "Daily Deal" e-mail newsletter, as well as social networks like Twitter and Facebook. The e-mail newsletter also features a write-up about the business being promoted that day.

"Our thought was that we may take a cut in our profits from the Groupon sales, but we'd get new customers through the door and make regulars of them," said Robin Williams, head of marketing for Holiday Lanes.

"We saw it as an opportunity to build buzz about our business."
- Robin Williams, head of marketing Holiday Lanes

To learn more about Groupon Shreveport visit : www.groupon.com/shreveport

CONVENTION CALENDAR

DATE	EVENT
Jan. 8 - 12	Louisiana Legislative Black Caucus
Jan. 12 - 14	Louisiana Department of Agriculture & Forestry
Jan. 14 - 16	Hotels for Hope
Jan. 21 - 22	Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation
Jan. 23 - 25	Red River Street Rod Association
Feb. 8-9	Fire Team USA
Feb. 17 - 19	Police Jury Association of Louisiana, Inc.
Feb. 17 - 19	Inspired Word of God Church

For a complete list of upcoming conventions visit www.shreveport-bossier.org/meetings/calendar