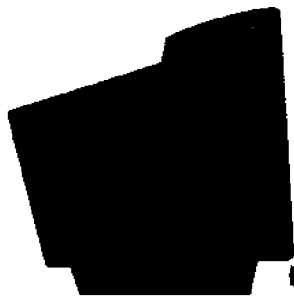


LOAN COPY ONLY

# *Success Stories*

## *2000*



### **Exploring Electronic Technologies in Tourism Marketing**

<http://www.louisiana/tours&attractions>

[www.louisianacitiesonline](http://www.louisianacitiesonline)

<http://www.plantations>

<http://www.bedandbreakfast>

<http://www.travelonline>

Tenth Louisiana Rural Tourism Development Conference

Covington, Louisiana

October 17-18, 2000

# *Success Stories*

## TENTH LOUISIANA RURAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE

October 17-18, 2000

Covington, Louisiana

### SPONSORS

Louisiana Sea Grant College Program  
Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism  
Louisiana Travel Promotion Association  
St. Tammany Parish Tourist Commission



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Baton Rouge, LA 70803-7507  
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# Main Street Programs/Travel Counselors Forum

October 17, 2000

Twenty-three of the 28 managers of the Louisiana Main Street Program (MSP) met with 10 Louisiana Office of Tourism (LOT) Travel Counselors (TCs) on October 17, 2000 to explore ways of improving lines of communication and to discuss several topics of mutual interest. The Forum, which was open to the tourism community as a whole, was attended by over 60 persons, and involved a facilitated discussion where responses were given to questions that had been drafted in advance by both groups. It took place in conjunction with the Tenth Annual Louisiana Rural Tourism Conference. The MSP is housed within the Office of Cultural Development, Division of Historic Preservation. The 10 TCs included representatives from the 10 Welcome Centers (WCs), as well as the state and regional offices.

## Travel Counselors' questions:

*What is Main Street (M-S)? How does it fit with our role as state travel counselors? What are the roles of the M-S managers?*

## Main Street Managers' responses:

- Main Street is a downtown revitalization program established in 1984 by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. It is a state, federal, and local partnership for communities of less than 50,000 inhabitants. It uses the Four-Points approach (See *Attachment 1*). For more information consult, <http://www.crt.state.la.us/crt/ocd/hp> Ms. Patty Pitzer is the MSP's director. She can be reached at [ppitzer@crt.state.la.us](mailto:ppitzer@crt.state.la.us) (See *Attachment 2, Louisiana Main Street*).
- One of M-S's objectives is to attract heritage tourism visitors to its communities.
- M-S daily operations are handled by managers who make extensive use of community volunteers.
- It is estimated that for every dollar invested, there is a \$75 return.

- There are three employees at the state office in Baton Rouge.
- Louisiana has 28 MSPs, and two are awaiting managers.

## Main Street Managers' questions:

*How do we go about working with our Welcome Centers? What do the Welcome Centers need from us?*

## Travel Counselors' responses:

- It is the role of the State's Welcome Centers to promote all of Louisiana.
- They also encourage Louisianians to do more in-state travel.
- The WCs need information to promote the communities. "...we cannot promote, if we don't know...".
- Visitors are asked to sign a guest register. Perhaps this information can be shared with area M-S. Although visitors are sometimes reluctant to respond, any information with profiles would be helpful to M-S.
- "We need brochures". 27,000 M-S directories are being printed.

## Main Street Managers questions:

*What do the Travel Counselors think is an attractive and effective brochure? What really works? Are there any guidelines? If so, how do we go about getting them? How many brochures do we need to get to the Welcome Centers? How do we get them there and how about the need to replenish? How do we know when you need more? Can I just drop in and leave the information? Will you place brochures provided by all M-S in your racks or will you limit the information furnished to tourists to that from nearby communities?*

## Travel Counselors' responses:

- Good brochures should address: Who? What? Where? When? How?

- Price information is desirable. "How much does it cost to do something (s)?"
- A map is a must. Clear and concise directions need to be given.
- Quality of paper is important. Use 60-70 lb. paper for tri-folds and 100 lb. for anything smaller.
- The LOT has brochure distribution guidelines (*See Attachment 3, Louisiana Welcome Centers*).
- Biggest brochure shortcomings are size, incomplete information and quality of paper. Don't forget the name of the attraction/event! Need telephone number and e-mail address. Don't be wordy or clutter the map. Be factual.
- Brochures in French? For internationals, yes. Also, German.
- The name of the attraction should be displayed prominently on the first page of the brochure. At or near the top of the page, so that it can be read while in the brochure rack.
- Directions to M-S attractions; name at the top; also on the back; name of town/city.
- Times/dates that events take place or attractions are open. Advise WCs if this changes.
- LTPA can help. Also LOT. Make sure the name of city/town appears. Remember ... the brochure is for tourists, too, who don't know where you're located.
- MSPs need more than one brochure.
- Judy Randall provides instruction through LTPA's new School of Travel and Tourism. Contact LTPA at 225.346.1857 for more details.
- WCs have brochures from all over state. Postcard or contact WCs to check on supplies. Consider LTPA's distribution program (*See Attachment 4, LTPA Brochure Distribution Program*).
- 25,000 brochures is a minimum. Laura Plantation orders 150,000, as does Shadows on the Teche. Covington does 40,000.
- WCs also place non-LTPA distributed brochures.
- Travelers ask what there is to see & do en route.

- In putting together a brochure, use the expertise gathered by others. The Ferriday Chamber of Commerce, for example, sought help from the Columbia Main Street Program.

#### **Travel Counselors questions:**

*When are Main Street attractions open? How can we find out? Weekends? Hours? Are reservations ever needed? Do the Welcome Centers (WCs) have information about all M-S? Does each M-S have a brochure that includes contact name and phone numbers? Do the days/times appear in your brochures?*

#### **Main Street Managers responses:**

- MSP is trying to put together a generic brochure that would answer many of these questions. WCs input is needed.
- Atchafalaya Heritage Trace to identify seven communities that are "pearls in the necklace". New WC in Butte LaRose.

#### **Main Street Managers' questions:**

*How do we go about getting group tour buses to detour to our M-S? Whom do we ask?*

#### **Travel Counselors responses:**

- The group tour business often requires three years of advanced planning. M-S and attractions must work with their local CVB/TC, LTPA, LOT.
- Hours of operation are an extremely important aspect, as is availability of public restrooms, and persons to meet and greet.
- Need to have attractions that will draw buses to the area. Also, M-S must be able to handle group tours (46 persons per bus). Bus must be staged in town and shops and restaurants need to accommodate such numbers, often at odd hours.
- West Baton Rouge Tourist Commission, for instance, participated in the Texas Caravan organized last year by LTPA; "Stay with us" is the sales point made to group tour buses. As a result of this, WBR is packaging four buses per month starting in January 2001.

**Main Street Managers' question:**

*"How can I get the Travel Counselors to conduct a familiarization trip of my Main Street and its attractions?"*

**Travel Counselors' responses:**

- The Travel Counselors schedule two fam trips per year. The first step would be to work with your CVB or tourist commission to insure that proper accommodations (motels, cabins, etc.) are available to handle the 40 or so counselors that make the trip. Trips begin on Sundays. The CVB or tourist commission would then need to issue a formal letter of invitation to Ms. Flo Hatcher, the Tourism Programs Director with the LOT. Four to five months advance notice is needed.
- The Travel Counselors are working on three-day exchange programs to learn about each others operations and differences. TCs from larger centers will go to smaller ones, north to south, etc.

**M-S Managers questions:**

*"What is the best way Main Streets can inform the travel counselors to get coverage for special events taking place in our community's M-S? What's the best format—fax, e-mail, press release, etc.? How far in advance do we need to notify you of the special event? Is it ever too late?"*

**Travel Counselors' responses:**

- Fax the information concerning the changes directly to each of the WCs. Monday before the weekend, at the very latest. Two weeks earlier is preferred. Send all information concerning special events taking place at the attractions.
- Encourage local attractions to appear in LOT's quarterly listing of events. Travel counselors also monitor newspapers, particularly weekend sections such as "Lagniappe" in the Times-Picayune and "Fun" in the Advocate.

**Main Street Managers' questions:**

*Would it be advisable to have the Parish tourism director as an ex-officio member of the local Main Street Board? If so, how would that be beneficial? Would it be advisable that Parish tourist commissions have a local Main Street representative serve as an ex-officio member of the Commission?*

**Travel Counselors' responses:**

- Invite the Tourist Commission—staff and commissioners—to organizational meetings. Tourist commissions want more involvement in their communities and should be eager to support M-S efforts.
- Tourist commissions and M-S can tie-in at local festivals and special events.
- Main Street managers ought to exchange with tourist commissions. Perhaps work the information counter on special days.
- Cycle Main Street is an upcoming tourism activity where M-S managers should strive to get information to each welcome center.

**Main Street Managers' question:**

*How can I become involved in Tourism Awareness Day functions that take place each May?*

**Travel Counselors' response:**

Tourism Awareness Day should involve Main Street programs. "They need to let us know they want to participate". Get in touch with local CVBs and TCs, as well as LTPA. The event will take place on **May 10, 2001** in Baton Rouge. An example of possible involvement is a booth at a regional center that showcases the M-S community.



## ATTACHMENT 1

---

### *Louisiana*

### MAIN STREET

### Four-Point Approach

#### **Organization**

Building consensus and cooperation among the groups that play roles in the downtown. Many individuals and organizations in the community have a stake in the economic viability of the downtown, including bankers, property owners, city and parish officials, merchants downtown residents, professionals, chamber of commerce members, local industries, civic groups, historical societies schools, consumers, real estate agents and local media.

#### **Business Development**

Strengthening the existing economic base of the downtown while diversifying it. Economic restructuring activities include helping existing downtown businesses expand, recruiting new businesses to provide a balanced mix, converting unused space into productive property and sharpening the competitiveness of downtown merchants.

#### **Promotion**

Marketing the downtown's unique characteristics to shoppers, investors, new businesses, tourists and others. Effective promotion creates a positive image of the downtown through retail promotional activity, special events and ongoing programs to build positive perceptions of the district.

#### **Design**

Improving the downtown's image by enhancing its physical appearance—not just that of buildings but also of street lights, window displays, parking areas, signs, sidewalks, promotional materials and all other elements that convey a visual message about what the downtown is and what it has to offer.

## ATTACHMENT 2

*Louisiana*



### Main Street Programs

#### **Abbeville Main Street**

P. O. Box 1170  
Abbeville, LA 70511-1170  
Bus: (337) 898-4110  
Bus Fax: (337) 898-4298

#### **Amite Main Street**

Tom Callari  
212 East Oak Street  
Amite, LA 70422  
Bus: (504) 748-9850  
Home: (504) 748-3729  
Bus Fax: (504) 748-3729

#### **Bastrop Main Street**

Marc Vereen  
P. O. Box 785  
Bastrop, LA 71221-0785  
Bus: (318) 283-3308  
Bus Fax: (318) 283-7009  
E-mail: vereen@bayou.com

#### **Columbia Main Street**

Kay LaFrance  
P.O. Box 10  
Columbia, LA 71418-0010  
Bus: (318) 649-2138  
Bus Fax: (318) 649-0509

#### **Covington DDD Main Street**

Candace Watkins  
P.O. Box 778  
Covington, LA 70434-0778  
Bus: (504) 892-1873  
Bus Fax: (504) 867-1205

#### **Crowley Main Street**

Rita Johnson  
P. O. Box 901  
Crowley, LA 70527  
Bus: (337) 788-4123  
Bus Fax: (337) 788-4129  
E-mail: ritaj@akool.com

#### **Denham Springs Main Street**

Park Haussler  
P. O. Box 1629  
Denham Springs, LA 70727  
Bus: (225) 667-8355  
Bus Fax: (225) 665-6891

#### **Eunice Main Street**

Don Sattler  
P.O. Box 1106  
Eunice, LA 70535  
Bus: (337) 457-7389  
Bus Fax: (337) 457-6506

#### **Franklin Main Street**

Michael W. Domingue  
310 East Charles Street  
Franklin, LA 70401-2788  
Bus: (504) 542-3471  
Bus Fax: (504) 543-3219  
E-mail: community@franklinla.com

#### **Hammond Downtown Development**

Marco Monoc  
P.O. Box 2788  
Hammond, LA 70403  
Bus: (504) 542-3471  
Bus Fax: (504) 543-3219

**Houma Cultural Development****Houma Main Street**

Mart Black  
P.O. Box 6097  
Houma, LA 70360-6097  
Bus: (504) 873-6890  
Bus Fax: (504) 873-6439

**Jennings Main Street**

Polly Henry Kayla Gary  
P.O. Box 1249  
Jennings, LA 70546-1249  
Bus: (337) 821-5500  
Bus Fax: (337) 821-5527

**Minden Main Street**

Judy Talley  
520 Broadway  
Minden, LA 71055  
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Bus Fax: (318) 371-4200  
E-mail: jtalley@iamerica.net

**Morgan City Main Street**

Steve Morrell  
P.O. Box 1218  
Morgan City, LA 70381-1218  
Bus: (504) 380-4643  
Bus Fax: (504) 384-7519  
E-mail: mcmainst@yahoo.com

**Natchitoches Main Street**

Courtney Hornsby  
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Natchitoches LA 71457  
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Home: Fax: (318) 357-3828  
E-mail: chomsby@ci.natchitoches.la.us

**New Iberia Main Street**

Jane Braud  
457 East Main Street, Rm. 412  
New Iberia, LA 70560-3700  
Bus: (337) 369-2390  
Bus Fax: (337) 369-2390

**New Roads Main Street**

Sharon Morgan  
P.O. Box 280  
New Roads, LA 70760  
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Bus Fax: (225) 638-5368  
E-mail: sharon.morgan@newroads.net

**Old Algiers Main Street**

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**Opelousas Main Street**

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E-mail 2: perduel@bellsouth.net

**Plaquemine Main Street**

Kristine Morales  
P.O. Box 675  
Plaquemine, LA 70765-0675  
Bus: (225) 687-3116  
Home: (225) 687-6410  
Bus Fax: (225) 685-1194  
E-mail: khmorales@aol.com

**Ponchatoula Main Street**

Charlene Daniels  
176 South Fifth Street  
Ponchatoula, LA 70454-0217  
Bus: (504) 386-4323  
Bus Fax: (504) 386-0029  
E-mail: aacity@i-55.com

**Springhill Main Street**

Jan Willis

400 North Giles Street

Springhill, LA 71075

Bus: (318) 539-5699

Bus Fax: (318) 539-2500

E-mail: jwillis@cbt.net

**St. Francisville Main Street**

Eleanor Beattie

P.O. Drawer 400

St. Francisville, LA 70775-0400

Bus: (225) 635-3873

Home: (225) 635-3873

E-mail: sfmainst@demco.net

**St. Martinville Main Street**

Danielle Fontenette

P. O. Box 626

St. Martinville, LA 70582-0379

Bus: (337) 394-2250

Bus Fax: (337) 394-2244

**Vivian Main Street**

Lyman McKellar

1014 Carson Street

Vivian, LA 71082

Home: (318) 375-4659

Mobile: (318) 218-6386

Bus Fax: (318) 375-5612

**Winnfield Main Street**

Carolyn Philips

499 East Main Street

Winnfield, LA 71483

Bus: (318) 628-5928

Bus Fax: (318) 628-2551

**Winnsboro Main Street**

Betty McLemore

P.O. Box 187

Winnsboro, LA 701295

Bus: (318) 435-7607

Bus Fax: (318) 435-2308

## ATTACHMENT 3

### LOUISIANA WELCOME CENTERS

Flora N. Hatcher — Tourism Programs Director  
Louisiana Office of Tourism  
P.O. Box 94291, Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9291  
225/342-8122 fax 225/342-1051 e-mail: fhatcher@crt.state.la.us

#### SOUTHERN REGION

##### SLIDELL, I-10 WESTBOUND

**Pat Archer**, Reg. Coordinator  
985/646-6426 FAX 985/646-6427  
E-MAIL: slidell2@crt.state.la.us  
Supervisor  
41300 Crawford Landing Rd.  
Slidell, LA 70461  
985/646-6451  
E-MAIL: slidell1@crt.state.la.us

##### NEW ORLEANS

**Vickie Brock**, Supervisor  
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##### STATE CAPITOL

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225/342-7317 FAX 225/342-8390

##### PEARL RIVER

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##### ST. FRANCISVILLE, U.S. 61

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##### KENTWOOD, I-55

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#### NORTHERN REGION

##### GREENWOOD, I-20 EASTBOUND

**Jan Braswell**, Reg. Coordinator  
318/938-5613 FAX 318/938-7964  
Margaret Hostetler, Sup. & Asst. Reg. Coord.  
P.O. Box 207  
Greenwood, LA 71033-0207  
318/938-5613

##### VINTON, I-20 EASTBOUND

**Peggy Patin**, Supervisor  
P.O. Box 278  
Vinton, LA 70668-0278  
331/589-7774 FAX 337/589-7474  
337/589-6213

##### MOUND, I-20 WESTBOUND

**Vera Erwin**, Supervisor  
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Tallulah, LA 71282-1312  
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E-MAIL: mound@louisiana-internet.net

##### VIDALIA

**Pat Guercio**  
1401 Carter St. (Hwy. 84)  
318/336-7008 FAX 318/336-7232  
Vidalia, LA 71373  
E-MAIL: vidalia@crt.state.la.us

##### CONSUMER INQUIRY

**Patsy David**, Supervisor  
1051 North Third St.  
Baton Rouge, LA 70802  
504/342-8214 FAX 225/342-8390  
E-MAIL: pdavid@crt.state.la.us

## WELCOME CENTER BROCHURE ACCESS POLICY

Louisiana Welcome Centers function as an extension of the warmth and hospitality of Louisianans to visitors by providing them with information and services designed to promote travel spending in the State.

According to Louisiana Revised Statutes 51:1255, it is the duty of this department to construct, operate and maintain the Welcome Centers and keep them supplied with information, brochures and other materials that will advertise and publicize the tourist attractions in this State.

Because the Welcome Centers play a prominent role in providing travelers with a favorable impression of Louisiana, all promotional material scheduled for display and distribution must be approved before being placed in the centers.

Solicitation of any kind for any purpose is strictly prohibited, including distribution of literature and materials, except as provided for in these guidelines as set forth in the Revised Statutes 51:1262.

### PROCEDURE:

To have a travel-related publication distributed in the Louisiana Welcome Centers, submit a written request to:

Tourism Programs Director  
Louisiana Office of Tourism P.O. Box  
94291 Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9291

Send fourteen (14) copies of the publication along with the request.

When approved for placement applicants must send to each center an initial shipment of 300 brochures. The supplier assumes all shipping costs and is responsible for checking when additional shipments are needed.

### BROCHURE CRITERIA AND DISTRIBUTION POLICY:

Brochures accepted by the Louisiana Office of Tourism for distribution at the Welcome Centers must be tourist-oriented, promoting the State's history, culture, recreational and leisure opportunities, natural and scenic resources, cuisine, attractions, accommodations and events.

1. Brochures must be professionally typeset, error free, with proper English usage.
2. Only standard size brochures or coupons will be accepted (approximately 4"x9") and must be on paper stock of sufficient weight to avoid folding over the rack rail.
3. All entities, attractions, etc. must be open to the public on a regularly scheduled basis.
4. Content and/or name change in an approved brochure requires new approval.
5. Only one brochure display space per property shall be allowed.
6. Due to space restrictions, the Welcome Center Supervisor will allocate rack space on a rotating basis.
7. A publication of a Louisiana property should not bear an out-of-state heading.
8. A brochure can contain no more than 5% out-of-state information. Depending on demand for information, the 5% limitation may be waived by the Office of Tourism, however, a brochure with 15% or more out-of-state information will not be considered for display or distribution.
9. Brochures containing more than 5% ad space will be accepted.

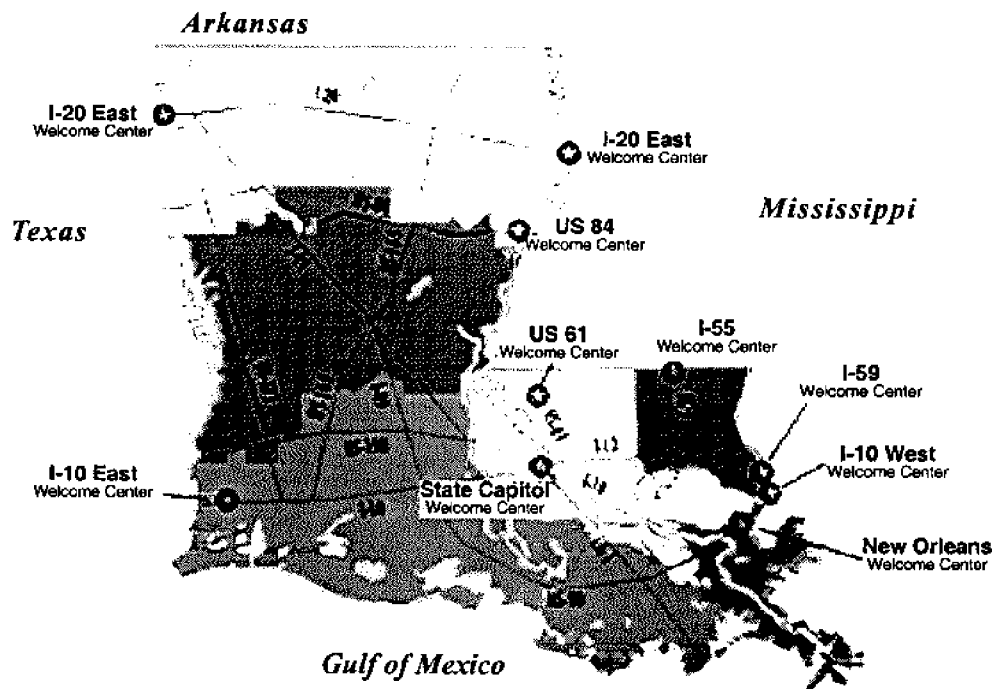
10. Coupons:

- a. Coupons or brochures which quote special lodging rates must have a professionally printed or stamped rate. If the discount is a percentage or dollar amount off, the regular rate that this discount applies to must be printed on the coupon.
- b. Coupons must state all restrictions that apply such as room type, number of people per room, etc. If the coupon is not good for advance reservations, it must so state.
- c. Any property not honoring their advertised discount rate will have all brochures removed from the Welcome Centers.
- d. Once a coupon is approved, that coupon will be available to the public until the date of expiration. This coupon may be rotated off the rack because of space limitations but will not be removed from the racks because of increased occupancy rates.

11. Promotional or informational materials requested for placement in the Welcome Centers by State Agencies will be reviewed by the administrators of the Office of Tourism. Approval/disapproval will be made on merits of each request.

**UNACCEPTABLE BROCHURES:**

- 1. Brochures which are political or religious in nature or content.
- 2. Brochures in which advertisement has been sold on the basis that it would be distributed through the State Welcome Centers without prior approval from the Louisiana Office of Tourism.
- 3. Real estate or rental listings.
- 4. Catalogs or order blanks for merchandise or items for sale, entry forms, registration or membership forms, etc.
- 5. Literature which promotes tours by wholesale or retail operators.
- 6. Brochures of individual retail establishments, unless included in a multiple listing by group merchant associations, malls or organizations.
- 8. Brochures with handwritten changes.
- 9. Newspaper tabloids, flyers, supplements or inserts.
- 10. Any literature deemed inappropriate by the Louisiana Office of Tourism.



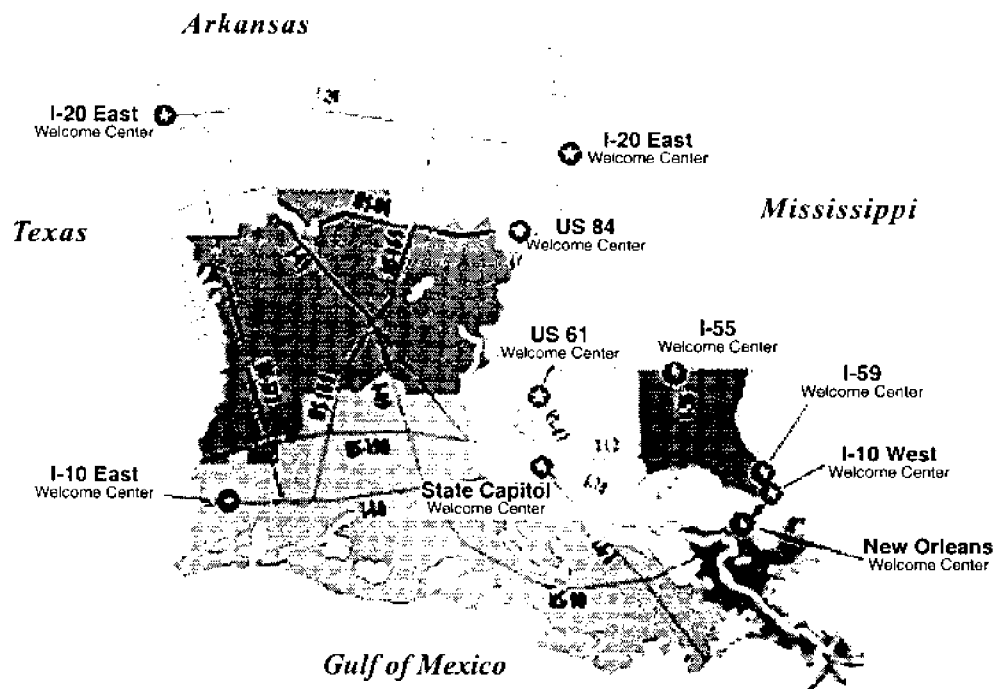
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9. Newspaper tabloids, flyers, supplements or inserts.
10. Any literature deemed inappropriate by the Louisiana Office of Tourism.





## ATTACHMENT 4

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### Louisiana Travel Promotion Association Brochure Distribution Program

The Louisiana Travel Promotion Association maintains a brochure distribution program for members to distribute their promotional literature to the State's network of welcome centers as well as certified local and regional centers. The program affords participants a low cost opportunity to maintain their brochures in more than forty (40) certified visitors' centers throughout the State where millions of travelers stop to find out information about what there is to see and do in Louisiana.

The program provides the welcome centers with an order form and a master catalog of brochures available and they can order free of charge from LTPA on a monthly basis. Participants pay according to volume of distribution and incur no shipping or management responsibilities. Participants also receive a quarterly report of brochures distributed to the network of visitors' centers.

## IMPROVING MAIN STREET FOR TOURISM

**Wilbert (Bill) Elsenrath, Jr.**  
Volunteer, Denham Springs

I am Park Haussler and I am pleased to accept this award on behalf of Bill Elsenrath. Bill created the web site, [livingstonparish.com](http://livingstonparish.com), and devoted a section to the Denham Springs Main Street program. He then proceeded to enter information and pictures from all of the antique stores in the Denham Springs Antique Village and all at no charge. His web site was given an award by Louisiana Main Street, and he was also honored by Main Street as a Volunteer of the Year.

When Bill becomes involved, he gives his all. As the owner of a Historic District building housing an antique business, he became involved with the Downtown Antique and Merchants Association. He served as Chairman of the 1999 Old Downtown Antique Festival, which was the most successful. He was also Chairman of SpringFest and is now working on this year's Antique Festival.

Bill also created the web site, [I-12.com](http://I-12.com), to serve as an Antique Trail to travel Interstate 12 from Slidell to Baton Rouge. This includes attractions, lodging and antique shops. Again, he did this without charge.

All of these activities serve to further tourism for our area. But, not to stop there, Bill became a member of the Livingston Parish Tourist Commission and Chairman of the Business Improvement Committee of the Main Street Program. He is active in both of these roles.

Bill Elsenrath is a leader in the promotion of tourism in Livingston Parish. He continues to generate enthusiasm in all programs to promote tourism and local participation in the wealth of attractions, food, lodging and shopping that is offered by Livingston Parish.

# WEAVING ECOLOGY INTO NATURE-BASED TOURISM

**Bill Quenan**

Cypress Swamp Tours, Westwego

On behalf of my good friend, and the owner of Cypress Swamp Tours, Bill Quenan, on behalf of Dr. Bob Thomas and the folks at our non-profit educational affiliate, Cypress Academy, and on behalf of the egrets, the Cypress trees and the alligators of the Barataria-Terrebonne Estuary, I gratefully accept this award.

We at Cypress would like to acknowledge the importance of what such an award means to those of us who work, literally, against time and tide to raise awareness of the greatest ecological disaster facing North America—the erosion of Louisiana’s coastal wetlands.

To that end, we entertain and EDUCATE three hundred visitors a day from all across the globe. The entire world is pockmarked by environmental issues. As such, many of our guests come prepared with great questions and concerns. We believe this is a hopeful sign. It gives us great optimism to see how the planet’s citizens are beginning to put ecology first in their professional endeavors.

Likewise in the local community, Cypress Academy has a presence in the public and private schools with plans underway to use internet technology for access to universities across the country. Our estuary drains more than 35 states. It is critical that the people in those communities know what is going on here where so much of the national interest is at stake.

So we are pleased and grateful. But our efforts are more urgent than ever. Five weeks ago one of the world’s greatest environmental authors and lecturers, Thomas Berry, paid a visit to Cypress to encourage and applaud our focus and philosophy. So thank you for this recognition. And be assured that Cypress is eager and willing to do more.

## EXPANDING TRADITIONAL EVENT FOR COMMUNITY AND ECONOMY

Charles (Bill) Williams

International Rice Festival, Crowley

Thank you for this plaque and the award it signifies. I must admit I was somewhat baffled when I received word of this award. It seems that Mayor dela Houssaye and my fellow council members pulled a fast one on me and didn't tell me that I was being nominated. Actually my emotions were mixed: surprise... pride...humility ... and gratitude.

As you can see from the balding, gray hair, I have been around for quite awhile and have seen many Rice Festival celebrations come and go. I am extremely proud of the accomplishments of the Rice Festival Board, and the City of Crowley. Without the help and encouragement of these people the Rice Festival would still be the "great festival that was to be, instead of the great festival that it is today."

I am also proud of the contributions I have been given the opportunity to make to the Rice Festival. When I was first offered the position as General Chairman of the Rice Festival, I had big dreams about what this festival could accomplish. One of my main objectives in 1971 is still my main objective today: to promote our staple crop in Acadia Parish: rice and to draw tourist, families, and friends to the oldest and largest agricultural festival in Louisiana.

Planning for the Rice Festival begins the Monday after the festival ends on Saturday night. I know we do take a day off, but my wife insist she needs the rest. Contacting and scheduling bands, acts, carnival rides, promoters, police protection, and supporters and sponsors is what I call in the trenches work. This is the work that gets the festival off to a good start. Without the trench work out of the way, nothing else seems to fall into place properly. I use to work around with a list of things to do; now I carry a book. This preparation phase is of course the most critical. Visiting queens and dignitaries are sent

invitations, contests are scheduled, and themes are selected. But once the trench work is out of the way and the main platform goes up. I know it is show time and the only thing I don't have at least a small measure of control over is the weather.

The month leading to the festival is our busy set up month. Merchants are encouraged to enter the window-decorating contest; the main items in the entry must be rice. I must say that many of the showcases are very artistically done and the merchants are pretty competitive in this contest. The grand ballroom is decorated and programs, t-shirts, and souvenirs pens are printed. The grand ball for visiting queen and dignitaries is held on Friday night at appropriately the Rice Festival Building.

The Rice Festival offers something for everyone. We had 25 entertainers scheduled last year to perform. Each year the numbers grow as we try to add variety to our bandstand entertainment. Musicians who can give lively good old Louisiana flavor music are sought by most festival, so we start early to ink them for the festival.

It gives me a wonderful feeling to look out into the crowd and see smiling festivalgoers, tapping their feet and clapping their hands to the music. Now come sundown we roll up the sidewalks and that toe tapping, hand clapping becomes good old fashion "dancing in the streets".

The demand for good music was so great that in 1990 we added a second bandstand area. This year with the cooperation and financial support of the City of Crowley, a new main platform has been purchased. This platform can be built in a couple of days instead of the traditional month.

We present two parades at the Rice Festival, one for children only on Friday and on Saturday we feature the grand parade. Both parades are well attended with approximately 100,000 to 150,000 people. This year, as a matter of fact this weekend, we will have over 200 units in our two parades.

My favorite part of the Rice Festival has always been the children's parade, so much so that I insist on emceeing with my good friend, Ester Trahan

Carnival rides galore are available for the young and young at heart. They are also available for the brave and not too brave at heart. I still prefer the merry go round and Ferris wheel to the tilt-a-whirl and cyclone.

What would a festival be without food? And what would a rice festival be without rice. Many of our food booths sell food items that feature rice. Of course there are still hamburgers and hot dogs and cotton candy available. But rice dishes are abundant.

I could talk about the Rice Festival for days and my fellow council members could probably attest to that, but I did say I was humble so I will try to wrap this up in a few more words. I love the City of Crowley. It has been my home for a lot of years. The people are wonderful, the city administration is visionary and is assertively promoting Crowley as a great place to live, work and play. I am lucky to be part of that administration, and I am also lucky to be part of the citizenry who helps to contribute to the task of promoting tourism. The Rice Festival promotion is my way of contributing to the objectives of the city leaders. And I would like to thank them for their support of the Rice Festival. I would also like to thank the members of the Rice Festival Board and my lovely wife Jolene for their untiring work. And to the members of the selection committee who granted me this award, thank you, I proudly accept this award on behalf of the Rice Festival and the City of Crowley.

# BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS WITH MISSISSIPPI NEIGHBORS

Linda Gardner

Vidalia Economic Development Association, Vidalia

Vidalia, Louisiana has a long relationship with the city of Natchez, Mississippi. Before the bridge was built, and the town moved back from the river, a ferry transported people to and fro. Then, after the first bridge was built in 1940, Vidalia became essentially a suburb to historic Natchez, Mississippi. Remember, this is a rural delta area.

The Mississippi River may be between us, but the bridge and our colorful pasts connect us. Vidalia and Natchez share a history of delta living, music, riverboats, and endearing characters and political figures — Don Jose Vidal, John R. Lynch, Jim Bowie, and Jerry Lee Lewis. Our people live and work on both sides of the river.

We have a lot in common. Over time and through different government administrations, Vidalia and Natchez have grown in their relationships. In the past when a business or industrial prospect could not locate in Vidalia or Concordia Parish, it was just as acceptable to locate in Natchez or Adams County.

I first realized the strength that this relationship could afford while serving on the United Way Allocations Committee in 1994. As I have involved myself in different activities, the opportunity to build these relationships has grown. But building these relationships started in my home parish of Concordia.

The Ferriday and Vidalia Chambers of Commerce regularly participate in joint events such as *After Hours*, grand openings, ribbon cuttings, and political forums. The Natchez and Vidalia Chambers participate in each other events as well (such as First Fridays, grand openings, business seminars, and *After Hours*). I saw these organizations as another tool to strengthen the relationships and partnership in the Miss-Lou area. The Vidalia Chamber office serves as a secondary welcome center and a resource center to businesses.

How did this all begin for me? In June 1998 I began as a chamber volunteer. Much discussion centered around the need for a chamber director and the city's need for a professional to address economic development and community affairs. This is when a public and private partnership began with the City of Vidalia and the Vidalia Chamber of Commerce.

A building was moved from the river front area to its present location. At that time the Vidalia Mayor and then Chamber President received much criticism about this building. In fact, some folks would like to have sent them down the river with the building— but eventually the building received a paint job and all the criti-cisms ceased.

My first influence with the chamber was to incorporate a Sandbar Duel Re-enactment as part of the 1998 Jim Bowie Festival. This festival had struggled to show a profit for many years. In 1999, a grant was received from the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities, and corporate sponsorships were obtained as well. In that year we had a major improvement in profits. Jack Edmondson, a historian and Bowie scholar, was part of the festival's improvement. In this past year's festival, we obtained more sponsorships and participation (i.e., Natchez Convention and Visitor's Bureau). We also added a new event with a "Bowie" custom knife raffle. This has been the most visible success story with the Chamber— the strengthening of the Jim Bowie Festival.

As a means of promoting the festival throughout the year, a replica "Bowie" knife is used to cut the grand opening ribbons instead of traditional scissors. The area chambers are beginning to hold joint grand openings.

Vidalia's status as sister city to Natchez creates a perfect opportunity to develop the riverfront— the Vidalia Landing. The Vidalia Landing is a 58-acre complex, which will eventually include a river walk,

RV Park, hotel, restaurants, specialty shops, amphitheater, medical complex, and much more.

So all of these activities bring visitors, which means tourism. And tourism for Vidalia means representation at the Louisiana Travel and Tourism Summit, recognition of byways (the Louisiana Colonial Trails which crosses central Louisiana), the Atchafalaya Trace to the south, and the El Camino Real, which is U.S. Hwy. 84. The Atchafalaya Trace will connect visitors to the Natchez Trace Parkway.

The Great Mississippi River Balloon Race, held in October of every year, is one of the most popular

events among locals and tourists. In fact, it is this weekend, October 20-22. The balloon race pilots, crewmembers, as well as fans may stay in a hotel in Natchez. But when they venture across the river, they usually come to our great restaurants or purchase items in our local convenience stores. And we all benefit from the balloon race. This has become one event that benefits both Natchez and Vidalia. The Natchez Convention & Visitor's Bureau has a calendar of events on their website, and we have a hyperlink to their calendar on our website ([www.vidalia.com](http://www.vidalia.com)). Please visit our website or better yet, visit Vidalia!

# HIGHLIGHTING HERITAGE FOR COMMUNITY AND TOURISTS

**Ray Pellerin**

Volunteer, Breaux Bridge

Twenty-four years ago the Crawfish Festival Association honored the bicentennial of our nation with a lighted float parade on Bayou Teche at night. All floats were on inner tubes. The parade was such a huge success we repeated the parade in 1978. This time we used barrels for flotation. My dream for the next twenty years was to have a night parade geared towards children. Hence, the Cajun Christmas Bayou Parade was organized.

The first order of business was the construction of barges. Aluminum sheets were cut and rolled at the Milnor plant in New Orleans. The sections were brought to the St. Martin Parish Sheriff's Office in Breaux Bridge where trustees' were trained in aluminum welding. Sixteen barges, ranging in size from 8' wide by 22'- 43' in length were assembled by the trustees'.

Our theme each year is "Toys, Toys, Toys". We invite pre-K through 4<sup>th</sup> graders in St. Martin Parish schools to draw their favorite toy to enter into our drawing contest. Fifteen (15) winners, at least one from each school, are selected. The drawings are used to design props for the barges. Our team of artists draw story boards based on the drawings. These drawings are then transferred to full size patterns. Area high school welding shops, career center shops, and our own welding shop fabricate the props out of aluminum.

A group of dedicated grandmothers tie lights on the welded frames. To date, we have used over 350,000 3" tie wraps and thousands of 12" tie wraps. We now have in excess of 300,000 lights spaced 1" apart. That's about 5 miles of lights.

Each barge has electric generators. Some have air blowers, water pumps, and other electronic devices to create the desired effects. This year we have our own electronic design team building control devices. Some floats require as many as 24 different electrical sequences. Each float has a driver, communications person, and mechanical operator. About 75 volunteers are needed in the bayou behind the scenes. In all, approximately 400 volunteers help with the parade.

All food booths are for the benefit of area schools and youth groups. During the two-day event, school and church groups perform. The highlight is the 60-piece Acadiana Symphony Youth Orchestra. The parade ends with a fireworks display ushering in Santa Claus.

The entire event is geared to bring to the community culture and entertainment in an alcohol free environment. Admission is \$5.00 per person and \$1.00 for children 10 and under. Our parade has grown from 8,000 spectators in our first year to 16,000 the second year.



# PLANTING COMMUNITY WITH PRIDE WHILE HOUSING VISITORS

Vivian S. Olivier

Alderwoman and Mayor Pro Tem, Town of Sunset

I was born and raised in Sunset and take great pride in our town. In 1993, I decided I wanted to make a difference and ran for the office of Alderwoman-at-Large. Being the first woman elected to office in Sunset, I knew there would be obstacles to overcome. With the help of the Mayor, many great, hardworking friends, and my husband, we set out to improve and beautify Sunset. (Give it a facelift, as one might say.)

One of the first projects was "Christmas in Sunset". We were looking for the perfect thing to bring Christ back into Christmas. This project consisted of a great deal of hard work and dedication from a group of local citizens. We wanted to make our own Christmas decorations for the town. Men and women from Sunset and the surrounding communities worked on the project. An artist drew life size figures, others cut them out of plywood, some primed the wood, artists painted them, carpenters set them up, some put in the lights (thousands of them on the figures and stars), and electricians did the electrical work. A welder made wrought iron stars, and others outlined them with Christmas lights. Over 60 volunteers, men, women, and children, spent an unbelievable amount of hours working on the project. Some of the materials were donated, and others were purchased by the many donations from townspeople and others who were interested in helping to keep Christ in Christmas. Each year there is a community sing-a-long on the evening the lights are turned on and even more people are involved, including the school band and church choirs. The end product is a huge nativity scene on a special lot as you enter town. Eight-foot angels line the street leading in from I-49, and lighted stars line the main street. People come from miles around to see our nativity scene at Christmas.

My second major project, which I must admit is my pride and joy, is the Sunset Garden Club, which sponsors an annual Herb Festival. Over 3000 people attended the Festival this year. It is unique in its atmosphere in that the only sounds to be heard above the murmur of the crowd are those of the violin and flute. People enjoy the free drinks and no loud music atmosphere. In addition to the booths, nationally recognized herbalists throughout the day present seminars. Over 40 volunteers representing many school and civic organizations worked on this project that had over 50 vendors. It is now an annual event held the first Saturday in May. Herb Park is a lovely park used as a resting point for tourists and cyclists throughout the year.

Pots filled with herbs have been placed along Main Street, and flowers planted near buildings and along old fences. We have painted scenes on old and new buildings on Main Street, making Sunset a very warm and pleasant town to drive through.

As a member of St. Landry Parish Ambassadors Tourism Committee, I enjoy the opportunity of meeting wonderful people from all over. I have been host to several individuals from France and Belgium over the past years. I feel not only have I gained a new friendship, but also I would like to believe that they also gained something of importance that will have an effect on their lives. I will continue my efforts by creating a clean and beautiful environment to enhance tourism in Sunset and St. Landry Parish.

## LINKING LOCAL WITH INTERNATIONAL

Warren A. Perrin

Acadian Heritage and Culture Foundation Inc.  
and Franco Fête '99, Erath

Erath was chartered as a town in 1899. Mayor Pro-Tem, Robert Vincent, the museum's most loyal volunteer, who recently received the National History Student award, as well as Relie LeBlanc, Stacy Bodin and other locals, decided that 1999 was a terrific opportunity to celebrate Erath's centennial. As plans developed for a public monument honoring the centennial, planners initially focused on the culture of the Acadian settlers. However, it became apparent that Erath had a much richer and more diverse cultural heritage— Irish, German, Italian, African-American, Swiss, Spanish, Native-American, Jewish, Lebanese, Syrian and Anglo-American. The museum was dedicated to showing the way in which these settlers came and shaped our area.

On May 16, 1999, when Erath celebrated the 100th anniversary of its founding with a ceremony in front of City Hall, the display of community spirit surprised even the organizers and city officials. Centennial Committee chairwoman, Jackie Vincent, and Erath teacher, Stacy Bodin, led the celebration which included the reading of a proclamation from Governor Mike Foster by Mayor Pro Tem Robert Vincent declaring May 16<sup>th</sup> Erath Day in Louisiana.

### Promotion of Cultural and Ethnic Pride

The town has developed into an unpretentious, agrarian society that is quick to accept outsiders. Never a people to deny their heritage, many citizens of Erath identified themselves during the mid-20th century as "proud coonasses." Today, the term "coonass" has a pejorative connotation, and its use is thoroughly discouraged. Following the beginning of the French Renaissance movement in the 1960s, Cajun identity became "respectable", and the present-day pride was enhanced. Other examples of this public display of pride

included the Town of Erath officially declaring itself to be bilingual on September 11, 1995, the erection of bilingual stop signs and street signs, and, under the leadership of Fr. Wayne Duet, the Catholic church's name, Our Lady of Lourdes, being displayed in French in front of the church and in its weekly bulletin. The Acadian Museum has become a community-inspired, demonstrative monument to the restoration of the pride of our Francophone patrimony.

### The Future

In the eyes of the people who put Franco Fête together, the event was a success. Franco Fête drew visitors from local, domestic, and international markets, including French-speaking visitors, for the purpose of celebrating the state's French heritage and influence. In undertaking the planning of the Bicentennial of the Louisiana Purchase in 2003, these same groups, working with the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism and the Louisiana Office of Tourism, will insure a similar success. The state should be able to capitalize on the tourism momentum generated by Franco Fête and continue to bring international visitors to Louisiana.

Beyond the increased levels of tourism and the economic impact generated by Franco Fête, there was a sincere need for a prolonged celebration of Louisiana's French heritage and influence. Our history, society, and culture have all been shaped, in large part, by our French heritage. It is what defines us and sets us apart. The state has laid a foundation for the continued growth of domestic and international tourism and should be able to build on the success of Franco Fête, which was the first cultural tourism effort in the U. S. undertaken by a state to welcome an even larger celebration

in 2003. The Acadian Museum is ready to work to continue linking our local attractions with the international community.

### **The Acadian Museum of Erath: Linking Local with International**

Warren A. Perrin was from the generation raised to speak English. Later in life he realized the importance of his French heritage, and was thereafter guided by his attachment to his French cultural roots. The Acadian Museum of Erath, which he founded, is a living testament to his successful efforts at the preservation and revitalization of the French culture and heritage of this state.

#### **Background**

In 1973, Perrin made what he considered to be one the best decisions of his life—he opened a branch law office in Erath. In 1989, thanks to the kind offer of his friend Weldon Granger, he moved his Erath law office from the Texaco gas station on Hwy 14 owned by Iry Melancon to the building recently purchased by Granger, which had previously housed the Bank of Erath. After Granger and Perrin restored the historic building, the townspeople of Erath began bringing artifacts and photographs for display there. Thus was born the beginning of the Acadian Museum. Today, the museum is filled with over 6,000 donated artifacts from people throughout the world.

#### **International Publicity**

In 1988, Perrin began an intense study of his ancestors' plight after his youngest son, Bruce, asked him what the Acadians had done wrong to be expelled from their home in Nova Scotia. He told Bruce that they had done nothing wrong, but then began researching. The more Perrin read, the more he became incensed. With the support and urging of Granger, in January 1990, Perrin presented a petition in behalf of the Acadian people to the British government and Crown seeking an acknowledgment, apology, and reconciliation for the deportation of the Acadians from Nova Scotia in 1755. Numerous

supportive developments for the museum occurred as a result of the petition and included public debates, lectures, resolutions, interviews, awards, documentaries, editorials and legal publications, and articles in Louisiana, the U.S., France, Belgium, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec, England, Vietnam, Luxembourg, Switzerland and Germany. The petition created a tremendous amount of international interest in Louisiana's Acadians. Furthermore, Perrin was invited to attend the last two World Francophone Summits in Hanoi, Vietnam, and Moncton, Canada, where he had the opportunity to promote Louisiana.

#### **Historical Monument**

After learning that in the 1700s two Acadians had ventured into the extreme southern prairie and settled Grosse Isle near Erath, the Acadian Museum launched a successful effort to situate a historical marker along Highway 14 within Erath's city limits. The financing was underwritten by the town of Erath, the Erath 4th of July Association, and the law firms of Jones and Granger as well as Perrin, Landry, Delaunay, Dartez and Ouellet. It was dedicated on July 4, 1991.

#### **French And Canadian Support**

In 1991, Perrin joined CODOFIL, the Council for the Development of French in Louisiana, and in 1994, Governor Edwin W. Edwards appointed him President. In 1991, Wilfred Doucette, an Acadian from Toronto, came to Erath to help develop the museum. On May 30, 1996 in recognition of his unique work, he was honored posthumously by Lt. Governor Kathleen Babineaux Blanco with the "Heart and Soul Volunteer Service Award" by the Louisiana Association of Museums. Another Acadian from New Brunswick, Rene Babineau, helped to build the museum's book and artifact collection. Babineau introduced to the Acadian Museum his friend from Halifax, Nova Scotia, Gerard Johnson, who donated many of the rare artifacts, photographs, and maps that are

located in the Acadian Room. Other important museum events included the twinning of Erath with Bertrandville, New Brunswick, in Grand Pre on August 6, 1992, the dedication of the Flag of Erath on June 10, 1996, the twinning with the Musée Falaise-Acadie-Quebec on November 9, 1997 in Les Ormes, France, the dedication of the Museum Annex at Lake Peigneur on February 1, 1998, and the opening of the Cafe Musée on July 4, 1998.

#### The Genesis of Franco Fete '99 and CMA Louisiane '99

In 1996, Perrin was re-appointed President of CODOFIL by Governor Mike Foster. On April 16, 1996, Governor Foster signed a proclamation presented to him by CODOFIL that created Franco Fête '99. In 1996, planning began for Franco Fête '99, the celebration of the founding of Louisiana's French colony and also our state's tricentennial, and the "Congres Mondial Acadien Louisiane 1999", the Second World Acadian Reunion. Under the leadership of museum volunteer, Relie LeBlanc, Erath (population 2,000) hosted the LeBlanc family reunion from August 13 -15, 1999, where the Governor-General of Canada Romeo LeBlanc and over 2,800 LeBlancs attended the successful festivities. For the first time, many Erathians became actively involved in promoting their culture. The museum diligently worked to welcome people from all over the world, particularly the French-speaking visitors. A bilingual museum brochure was produced, and all exhibitions were in French and English. Many French-speaking locals were organized into "Culture Representatives", who volunteered to host visiting tourists and media. Their presence promoted a French friendly environment at the museum, which rapidly became a center for cultural activism and unity in the community. Further, the museum's efforts were successful in increasing international awareness of Louisiana's cultural uniqueness.

#### Grants to Support Local Presentations

In 1996, Dr. Patricia Sawin, then University of Louisiana, Lafayette, folklorist, with help from Kathy Roberts and Connie DePriest, obtained the first of three grants from the Louisiana Division of the Arts to organize the very popular museum program, *The Living Traditions of Vermilion Parish*. These weekly live presentations still draw people from the entire area and help residents to appreciate the diversity of their culture and folk life.

#### Arts and Crafts

In 1998, Mary Broussard Perrin and University of Louisiana, Lafayette folklorist, Kathy Roberts obtained a grant from the Division of Arts to commission Rita Fontenot to build a model Acadian Cottage which included an interpretation of the exhibit by Roberts. Also, area artist, Chestee Harrington developed a Franco Fête '99 art exhibit based upon the culture of the prairie-bayou Acadians. Harrington, along with other artists, Suzanne Juneau, Mary Broussard Perrin, Andy Perrin, Rebecca Perrin Ouellet, and Justyna Frederick painted a mural in the Cafe Musée depicting local musician, D. L. Menard and his wife, Lou Ella Menard.

#### Fundraising: Grant and Book Publication

Although the museum had acquired a fairly extensive collection by 1998, another fortuitous event occurred which substantially enhanced the impact of the museum. Under the leadership and energy of Dr. Robert Carriker, Director of Public History, University of Louisiana, Lafayette, the museum received a major grant from the Louisiana Endowment for Humanities entitled, *Our Town: Erath, 100 Years of Community*. The exhibit opened on February 28, 1999. Dr. Carriker, and members of his support staff, utilized a regional approach to make a public call for additional photographs and artifacts from the region concerning the development of Erath. The wonderful response from the people of the region reinforced the desire to publish a book concerning the history

of the lower Vermilion River Valley area using Erath as a model which resulted in: *A Century of Acadian Culture: The Development of a Cajun Community: Erath (1899-1999)* by Curney J. Dornet. The book was financed by donations from fifteen local families. All proceeds from the sales of the 2,000 books will be used to support the museum which is non-profit and open free to the public.

Exhibits: Local, State  
and International Subjects

On June 26, 1999, the Acadian Museum, in conjunction with the Abbeville Cultural and Historical Alliance Center, opened a new major exhibit on the life of Erathians Roy R. Theriot, Sr., a renowned public official, public speaker, humorist, and civic activist. One year before his death in 1973, the French government had awarded him the Legion of Honor medal for his involvement in the movement to preserve the French Acadian culture of Louisiana. The museum regularly presented exhibits that were promoted statewide and internationally with bilingual news releases, such as:

"A Community Reunion to Celebrate Contributions of Cajun and Creole Culture to the American Society."

"The Prairie Bayou Acadians' French Contribution to the Cattle and Horse Industries of Louisiana (1765-1999)."

"The Acadian Diaspora: 18th Century Ethnic Cleansing in Nova Scotia - A Retrospective of Art and History (1754-1999)."

"Rockin' to Cajun and Creole Music: Sounds that Go 'Chank-A-Chank' in the Night (1928-1999)."

"The Life of Our Acadian Ancestors: Clothing, Customs, and Culture (1604-1904). "The Life and Times of an Acadian Activist: Dudley J. LeBlanc (1894-1994).

"Cajunization of the Prairie Bayou Acadians; (1756-1956)."

"The Role of Women in the Acadian Culture."

"A Celebration of 300 Years of the Louisiana Wetlands Heritage (1699-1999)."

In 1998, the museum began a very unique international relationship with "Cajun Du Nord," a band composed of musicians from Denmark, Finland, and Sweden that plays Cajun music. The group annually performs in Erath. Their performance never fails to draw a large crowd to the museum.

### 2000 Louisiana Rural Tourism Success Story Award Recipients



Terry Stingley, Warren Perrin, Bill Williams, Vivien Olivier, Linda Gardner, Bill Pellerin, and Mike Liffmann. Not pictured: Bill Elsenrath, Jr.



## **APPENDIX A**





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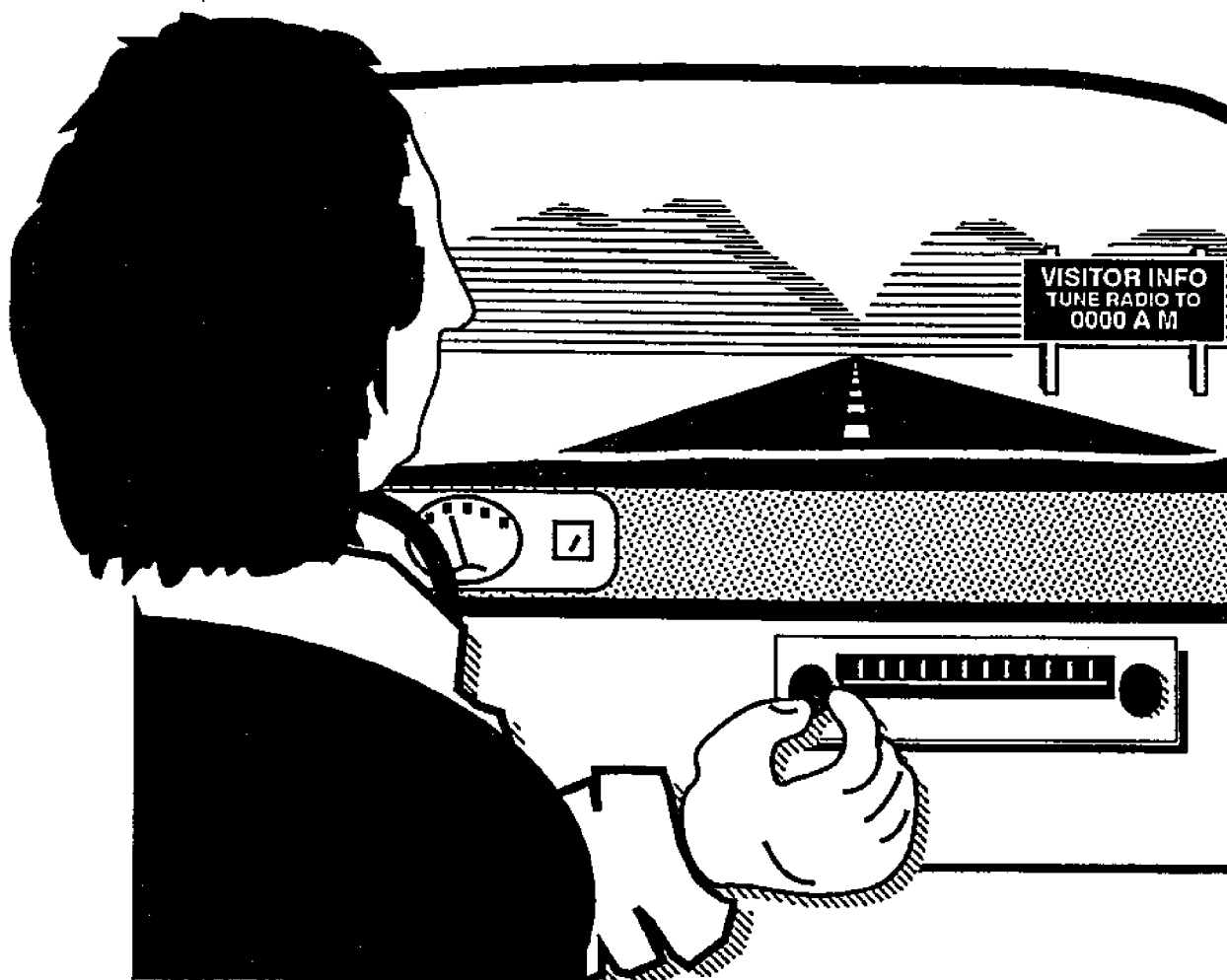
## Special Report 890

Reprinted September 1992

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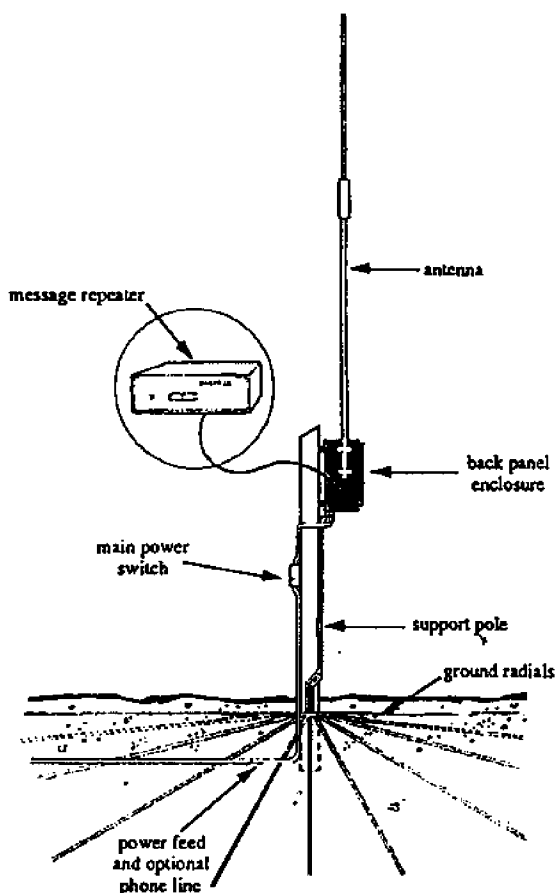
# Low Power Radio

## A New Communication Method for Reaching Target Audiences



# Low Power Radio

## A New Communication Method for Reaching Target Audiences



Rapid progress in communication technology is enabling us to deliver customized information to diverse audiences at their convenience. One tool growing in both popularity and use is low power radio.

Low power radio (LPR) is a specialized form of AM radio broadcasting. This technology made its debut in the 1970s to provide reports about traffic and weather conditions to automobile travelers. Since then, hundreds of LPR stations have been successfully dispensing information across the nation. Operators of LPR stations include communities, airports, chambers of commerce, governmental agencies, ports, outdoor recreation areas — even Disney World!

This report describes LPR technology and suggests ways for Extension educators and cities, parks, businesses and other governmental units to provide information and education to audiences they wish to reach. A representative listing of LPR equipment vendors appears in Appendix B.

Components of a low power radio system. (Adapted with permission from Digital Recorders, Inc.)

## What is Low Power Radio?

Low power radio is a low-wattage radio station which broadcasts on AM frequencies. It is relatively simple to use and inexpensive to operate. Low power radio typically covers a broadcast area of one to fifteen square miles, depending on signal strength and local terrain.

It has four basic components: an audio recorder to capture and repeatedly play back voice messages; an antenna; an AM radio transmitter; and, roadway signs alerting potential listeners to the radio broadcast. (See diagram on page 1.)

Low power radio transmitters fall into two categories: systems operating with 0.1 watts output or less; and, systems operating between 0.1 watts and 10 watts of power. While both can deliver targeted information to listeners, each has different capabilities and legal requirements.

### *0.1 Watt Station*

The least powerful LPR station broadcasts with 0.1 watts of power, covering a radius of up to 0.5 mile from the transmitter. This station's limited broadcast range is offset by increased flexibility in use. Licensing is not required for this station under U.S. Federal Communications Commission (FCC) rules.

The broadcast frequency for an 0.1 watt station may be chosen from among the unused AM channels in the local area. No public notification is needed and almost any message contents may be broadcast, including business commercials. This LPR format can also include music and other sound effects to enhance the message.

An example of the message flexibility inherent in using this low power radio format is found in Bend, Oregon. There, a real estate firm uses 0.1 watt LPR transmitters at homes it is seeking to sell. As they drive by a home, prospective buyers can tune in their car radios and hear about its amenities. This imaginative use of information technology potentially saves time for sellers and buyers!

### *10 Watt Station*

The more powerful LPR station broadcasts with 10 watts of power, covering a minimum radius of about 2.5 miles from the transmitter. This LPR station must be sponsored by a governmental entity and licensed by the FCC. This LPR broadcast format can not include commercial promotions, music or other sound effects (see Appendix A).

The primary purpose of this higher wattage station is to provide traveler information. Messages on a 10 watt station typically address weather conditions, local points of interest and activities, road conditions, travel directions, availability of lodging, and traffic hazards or advisories.

This type of LPR station must broadcast on the frequency assigned to the licensee. At present (March 1992), the frequencies 530 kHz, 1610 kHz and 1620 kHz are available for 10 watt LPR broadcasts. Hearings are now taking place to determine if changes in the allocation of LPR frequencies are appropriate as the FCC expands AM radio to 1700 kHz.

The FCC license application process for a 10 watt LPR station generally takes about three months after submission of the paperwork. Manufacturers of LPR equipment will often provide assistance in completing and filing the appropriate forms.

Key information requested on the license application includes the precise unit of local government that is seeking the LPR authorization and the station's proximity to airports, bridges, tunnels, historical sites, interstate highways, and public parks or lands.

A map of the proposed LPR transmitter site must accompany the license application. Topographical maps can be used for this purpose, with the exact location of the transmitter site indicated. In metropolitan areas, a location map showing nearby streets and buildings is often acceptable for this purpose.

## The Nuts and Bolts of LPR

Low power radio functions with four components: an audio recorder to capture and repeatedly play voice messages; an antenna; an AM transmitter; and, roadway signs alerting potential listeners to the broadcast.

During the early days of low power radio, messages were recorded and stored on a cassette tape using analog technology. Tape wear was an inherent problem that required the periodic replacement of the tape cassette. In addition, operators of LPR stations frequently had to travel to the broadcast site to record new messages or rearrange existing ones.

The dependability and convenience of LPR has increased with the advent of digital technology. This technology eliminates the problem of tape wear and enables LPR station operators to record and alter messages from remote locations, such as the office or home base, by telephone. Digital technology also allows the storage and variable sequencing of multiple messages.

A number of LPR manufacturers exist in the United States (see Appendix B). Technicians for these companies can assist you in selecting appropriate antenna and transmitter equipment for your situation. Regardless of the equipment selected, you should also consider electrical surge protection and lightning arresters for the LPR system.

### *Planning for LPR*

In planning for an LPR station, find out if electrical power is available at the prospective site. If remote message control is desired, telephone access to the site is also needed. If these resources are lacking, messages can be directly recorded on-site and alternate power sources such as batteries or solar energy may be employed.

Most LPR stations operate with a vertical antenna. The FCC requires that such antennas not exceed 49.2 feet above the ground. If you intend to use LPR in a metropolitan area, additional planning is necessary for the antenna. One possibility is to mount the antenna on the roof of a building. There is no rooftop height limitation for the 0.5 mile LPR station. But for the 2.5 mile station operating at 530 kHz, the building may not exceed two stories (three stories for other 2.5 mile LPR station frequencies).

Proper grounding is vital to the effectiveness of a low power radio system. An appropriately installed ground system improves antenna efficiency and reduces lightning surge impacts. Space constraints and soil conductivity often determine which ground system is appropriate for the given situation. Again, LPR company personnel can help you select appropriate hardware.

Signs alerting potential listeners to the low power radio broadcast are essential. If they are to be placed along public highway right-of-ways, permits are typically needed before proceeding. Application forms are available through your state transportation department, along with requirements for sign design and construction. Many state transportation departments will design, construct, and install such signs for a fee.

Since local environmental conditions must be accommodated and LPR enterprises have varying equipment options, the cost for each site must be determined with assistance from the manufacturer. Without installation, a 0.1 watt LPR system typically costs \$2,500-\$4,000 while 10 watt systems range from \$4,000-\$6,000.

One way to hold costs down is to comparison shop among various LPR companies. Also, you might consider purchasing previously used components which have warranties in effect.

### *LPR Messages*

The effectiveness of LPR is directly tied to the quality of the broadcast message. If the script is poorly written, listeners will tune out rather than be tortured by audio babble. Likewise, a powerful script which lacks appropriate delivery risks losing the listener.

From the standpoint of quality control, it is often helpful to have others provide feedback on the clarity of LPR messages before unleashing them on the public. A typical error in message construction is to create a single, long communication. Since most digital playback units can broadcast multiple messages, several shorter messages are better than a rambling dialogue. Also, don't overlook the opportunity to broadcast current information alongside prerecorded messages. This can be accomplished by cycling NOAA weather radio broadcasts into the LPR message stream at predetermined intervals.

Some helpful script writing pointers appear in Appendix B. A quality LPR message doesn't require professional narration, but operators sometimes feel this need. A variety of local options exist for acquiring professional narration, including local performing artists or radio station announcers.

Evaluating your LPR message performance requires a strategy for interacting with listeners. The starting point is to clarify the purpose for employing an LPR system. Then, one way to gain feedback is to encourage listeners to request information from a chamber of commerce or other local agency. In the process of fulfilling these requests, listeners can be asked to respond to predetermined questions related to the LPR messages.

If your LPR message seeks to change behavior, its effectiveness can be judged through observations of target audience activity before and after the broadcast. A great way to accomplish this task is to involve students in the process. Often area colleges and universities are looking for real world educational opportunities for students who are studying business management or marketing.

## LPR Uses and Users

Successful LPR applications, digitized equipment, and modest start-up costs are stimulating wider use of this communication technology. Hence, a variety of organizations are employing this tool.

Typical LPR messages	Examples of LPR operators							
	University outreach	Chambers of Commerce	Campgrounds, marinas	Fairs, special events	Governmental agencies	Airports, ports	Transportation depts.	Tourism
Weather updates		X	X		X	X	X	X
Safety tips	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Road conditions		X			X		X	X
Traffic advisories		X		X		X	X	X
Operating schedules	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Activity listings	X	X	X	X		X		X
Lodging availability		X		X				X
Rules and regulations	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Historic or cultural attractions	X	X			X			X
Ticket or fee requirements	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Parking advisories	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Public park resources			X		X		X	X

Examples of LPR operators (chart adapted from Digital Recorders, Inc.).

Newport, a community located on the scenic Oregon coast, recently established a low power radio. More than 1 million visitors travel through Newport each year. Community leaders are challenged with making visitors aware of recreational opportunities without causing traffic bottlenecks. To address the problem, the Newport Chamber of Commerce, OSU Extension Sea Grant and other groups teamed up to initiate a low power radio station. The station broadcasts information on things to see and do in the local area. Special emphasis is placed on encouraging non-consumptive recreational activities. Other messages have a stronger educational component by focusing on coastal resources such as seasonal migrations of gray whales. Information about marine resource interpretive workshops being conducted by Oregon State University and by a new public aquarium are also broadcast over this LPR.

While the effectiveness of the Newport project is now being evaluated, other Extension educators are already planning to use LPR technology. Some examples of creative low power radio applications being planned by Extension staff in the Pacific Northwest include:

- Agricultural agents communicating pest management and other information "real time" to producers in two counties.
- Extension foresters informing motorists in mountain passes of environmental stewardship practices and travel tips.
- Extension Sea Grant staff collaborating with two states to improve recreational boating safety in a dangerous estuary.
- 4-H Youth Extension staff updating daily activity schedules for summer campers in scattered cabin locations.
- Extension Home Economics staff broadcasting customized food and nutrition education to specific radio listeners.
- Community development agents collaborating with small riverfront communities to encourage more visitation by recreational boaters.

### *Coastal Applications*

The use of this technology for natural resource interpretation is an emerging opportunity. Recently, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife began testing low power radio as a tool for resource interpretation at wildlife viewing areas. In New York State, Sea Grant collaborated with a park commission to test low power radio in a variety of coastal settings. An LPR broadcast at a coastal campground informed listeners of marine safety; and LPR at a barrier beach aided tens of thousands of beachgoers seeking vehicle parking in a multitude of paved lots.

The future of LPR as a distance learning tool in ecotourism is promising. For instance, coastal resorts and parks can use LPR to broadcast interpretative information to visitors at nearby tidepools. With inexpensive AM headphones, the visitors would receive a narrated field trip. These guided tours can also teach and encourage use of appropriate stewardship practices to maintain the ecosystems being observed.

During peak tourist seasons, many coastal highways are clogged with sightseer vehicles. Too often interpretive signs placed in small turnout areas cause tourism-related traffic congestion or accidents. Instead of relying on road signs, research would suggest that radio could be a more appropriate informal learning medium for information targeted at travelers using vehicles.

The use of low power radio can revolutionize interpretation in waterfront communities. In these instances, natural or cultural resources interpretation can take the form of a guided car tour. Waterfront topics addressed by LPR could range from identifying various types of vessels at port docks to marine mammal topics, such as whale watching techniques. Here again, general travel information provided by low power radio can be augmented with educational messages encouraging appropriate care and use of coastal resources.

## Interested in More LPR Information?

LPR communication technology holds considerable promise for a variety of community and educational organizations. Technical information and cost data on low power radio equipment can be obtained from LPR enterprises listed in Appendix B.

More information about low power radio and distance learning can be found in the following:

### Journal Articles

- Beaudoin, M. 1990. "The Instructor's Changing Role in Distance Education," *The American Journal of Distance Education*. Vol. 4, No.2.
- Peart, R. 1986. "Interpretation in Informal Learning," *Journal of Interpretation*. Vol.2, No. 1.
- Romero-Gwynn, E. and M. Marshall. 1990. "Radio: Untapped Teaching Tool," *Journal of Extension*. Vol. 28, Spring.

### Books

- Fazio, J. and D. Gilbert. 1986. *Public Relations and Communications for Natural Resource Managers*. Kendall/Hunt Company, Dubuque, Iowa.
- Sharpe, G.W. 1976. *Interpreting The Environment*. John Wiley, New York, New York.
- Verduin, J. and T. Clark. 1991. *Distance Education*. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, California.

### Reports

- Baker, W. 1991. *National Travelers Information Radio Exchange Newsletter*. Information Station Specialists. Zeeland, Michigan.
- Good, J. 1990. *Waterfront Revitalization for Small Cities*. OSU Extension Service, Corvallis, Oregon.
- McFadden R. and J. Shoaf. 1979. *Travelers Information Station Handbook*. National Park Service, Denver Service Center, Denver, Colorado.

### Papers in Proceedings

- White C. and R. Baker. 1987. Turn Your Radio On: Travelers Information Stations and Their Use in Interpretation. *National Interpreters Workshop Proceedings*. Denver, Colorado.
- DeYoung, B. 1991. Low Power Radio—A Promising "Distance Learning" Technology for Coastal Resource Interpretation. *HII Conference Proceedings*. Hawaii Sea Grant Program, Honolulu, Hawaii.

## Appendix A

Message Writing Pointers (Courtesy of: Information Station Specialists, Zeeland, Michigan)

Writing a script for a Traveler's Information Radio Station may be a new experience for you. The following are points to keep in mind as you plan your new radio broadcast.

- 1) By law, your station must broadcast its call sign every thirty minutes at a minimum.
- 2) Always identify the organization or agency that is responsible for producing the broadcast.
- 3) Do not mention names of businesses on 10 watt broadcasts. The only exception is airline names, which may be mentioned in arrival and departure messages by airports.
- 4) On 10 watt LPR stations, broadcast voice information only. Music is not allowed.
- 5) When giving driving instructions such as "turn right" or "turn left," consider the direction in which people are approaching as they listen to the broadcast. Different instructions may be required for different traffic directions. Give directions slowly and repeat them if possible. Motorists usually cannot make notes and must commit your instructions to memory. Include street names and compass directions when you can to make your instructions redundant.
- 6) Use visual cues which motorists can watch for. Talk about features of your areas which may be of interest to them, especially those which they can view as they hear the broadcast. This increases interest in the broadcast and a greater likelihood that it will be listened to and acted upon.
- 7) Interest may also be maintained by using more than one voice to read short sections of the broadcast alternately. This "two-voice" approach works especially well with male and female voices.
- 8) Radio listeners are accustomed to information being repeated. Do not hesitate to repeat short pieces of important information periodically during the broadcast.
- 9) If your broadcast is comprised of a "general message" that seldom changes and an "update message" which contains current information, remember to promote the update message within the general message one or more times. General message example: "Welcome to the Airport. Rental car return is located on your right as you enter. Stay tuned for an update on the current parking lot status in 30 seconds. On your left is the Terminal A long-term parking ramp...." In this way you can hold the interest of listeners through the general message who may have heard the message before.
- 10) Remember that listeners will tune in and out of your broadcast at random places and may perceive no beginning or end to the programming because of its circular nature. Arrange broadcasts so that they make sense no matter where the listener begins listening. If one piece of information is critical to understanding the whole broadcast, repeat that information often.
- 11) Time the length of the broadcast cycle so that listeners are likely to hear it in its entirety before they have to make a decision. Example:

The Highway Department placed a radio antenna along the interstate highway. The Department located signs announcing the radio signal and frequency 3 miles north of the radio antenna. Southbound drivers must make a decision on whether to exit 4 miles after they pass the signs (a mile south of the antenna). Subtracting 30 seconds for the time it takes to tune in the station, drivers have about 3.5 miles to listen to the broadcast before they reach the critical exit if they are traveling about 60 miles per hour. The length of the broadcast cycle should be 3.5 minutes or less. To allow listeners to hear the broadcast twice, a 1.75 minute cycle should be used.



## Appendix B

These are known sources of AM Low Power Radio equipment in the United States. No endorsement of the enterprises or their products is intended or implied by either Oregon State University or the National Sea Grant Program:

1.) Company: Information Station Specialists

Contact person: Bill Baker

3368 88th Avenue

Zeeland, Michigan 49464

Telephone: 616-772-2300

Web Site: <http://www.theradiosource.com>

2.) Company: Highway Information Systems, Inc.

Contact person: Andrew Turner

4021 Stirrup Creek Drive

Suite 100

Durham, NC 27713

Telephone: 1-800-849-4447

Web Site: <http://www.highwayinfo.com/>

3.) Company: Transportation Intelligence, Inc.

Contact person: Jo Ann Alpiser

P.O. Box 13004

Raleigh, N.C. 27605

Telephone: 1-800-948-8916



## **APPENDIX B**





# Louisiana Rural Tourism Development Conference

## 2000 Evaluation Report

Sea Grant is a university-based program of research, outreach education and communications to benefit coastal and marine interests throughout the nation. In Louisiana, the Sea Grant Program is administered by Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge.

For the last ten years, Louisiana Sea Grant has co-sponsored the "Rural Tourism Development Conference" with the Department of Culture, Recreation, and Tourism, the Louisiana Travel Promotion Association, and the host community. This conference recognizes the growing economic, cultural and historic importance of tourism to our state. Because tourism links coastal businesses, communities and organizations with those located inland, the tourism conference is offered statewide to enhance participant's knowledge and leadership skills.

### Introduction

In November 2000, a total of 99 surveys were distributed via a one-time mail out to those individuals who paid full registration at the 2000 Louisiana Rural Tourism Development Conference in Covington, Louisiana. The objectives of the survey were to determine participant satisfaction and to provide attendees with an opportunity to provide feedback in order to assist in the planning and development of future Rural Tourism Development Conferences.

Of the 99 surveys mailed, 55 surveys were returned yielding a 56% response rate. Review of the results indicates that there is a high level of interest in continuing the Rural Tourism Development Conference. Both data and written comments confirm that the Louisiana Rural Tourism Development Conference provides timely information and allows tourism professionals the opportunity to share and learn from one another.

### Survey Results

- 78% of respondents felt that the **Main Street – State Travel Counselors Round-table** discussion was *Excellent – Very Good*, with an additional 16% indicating that this portion of the conference was *Good*.
- 46 of the 55 respondents answered question 2 and 66% felt that the keynote address, "**Electronic Technologies: What Lies Ahead?**" was *Excellent – Very Good*; with 24% ranking the keynote speaker as *Good*.
- Session II, "**Lessons Learned from Using the Internet to Attract Visitors**" was attended by 54 of the 55 individuals who responded to the survey. 35% felt this panel discussion was *Excellent*, 41% ranked this session *Very Good*, and 20% responded *Good*.
- 53 of the 55 respondents attended session III "**Listening and Thinking Ahead: Applying Information Technology to Tourism Business Basics**," seventy percent rated the session as *Excellent-Very Good* and an additional 25% stated that the session was *Good*.
- 92% of all respondents to the survey felt that session IV, "**Catching Up with Past Success Stories: Then, Now, and the Future**" was *Excellent – Very Good*.
- The Rural Tourism Success Story Awards Luncheon received 44% *Excellent* ranking, 33% felt this session was *Very Good*, and 19% stated *Good*.
- Although 22% of all respondents felt that overall logistics such as lodging, meeting rooms, and hotel food service was *Fair – Poor*, almost half of the respondents (49%) felt that logistics were *Excellent – Very Good*.

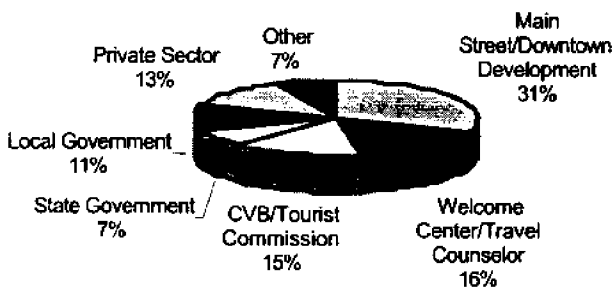
- 37 of the 55 respondents to the survey attended the evening reception/tour and 89% of respondents felt that the Old Covington Galleries tour and reception at Judice's Restaurant was *Excellent - Very Good*. One third did not participate in the gallery tour or evening reception.

Two open-ended questions (9 & 10) gave respondents an opportunity to write-in specific thoughts on topics and suggested speakers for future Louisiana Rural Tourism Development Conferences. (*See Attached Conference Evaluation Results*)

In reviewing data obtained from question 11 of the survey, we queried participants on the number of Louisiana Rural Tourism Development Conferences they had attended. Approximately one-third of participants attended for the first time, while the balance has attended two years or more.

Most respondents (31%) to the survey stated that their role in the tourism industry was a Main Street Manager/Downtown Development. 16% were Welcome Center/Travel Counselors, 15% are employed with a CVB/Tourist Commission, 18% work in State or Local government, 13% are from the private sector and 7% represent the "other" category.

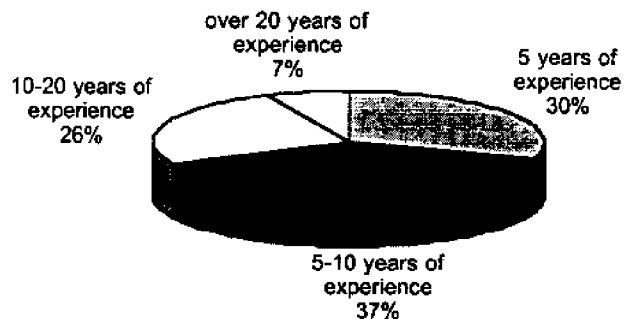
#### Survey Respondents' Roles in the Tourism Industry



Source: Louisiana Sea Grant College Program, 2001

Forty-three respondents answered question 13, in which we asked participants how many years of experience they have working in the tourism industry. Sixty-three percent of the respondents have between 5-20 years experience working with the tourism industry. Thirty percent had less than five years experience working in the tourism industry.

#### Survey Respondents' Years of Experience in the Tourism Industry



Source: Louisiana Sea Grant College Program, 2001

Overall, the participants of the Louisiana Rural Tourism Development Conference survey have stated that the conference is a positive, well-attended and informative event.

Louisiana Sea Grant College Program will continue to partner with the Department of Culture, Recreation, and Tourism, the Louisiana Travel Promotion Association and others in order to provide industry professionals with a conference that enables its participants to continue to strengthen tourism development skills. We wish to thank everyone for their comments and support of the conference and urge continued participation in this and other professional meetings that are held around the state.

## **APPENDIX C**



**10<sup>th</sup> Annual Louisiana Rural Tourism Development Conference  
Conference 2000 Evaluation Results**

1. **The Main Street-State Travel Counselors roundtable discussion was:**
  - 47% Excellent
  - 32% Very Good
  - 16% Good
  - 5% Fair
  - 0% Poor
  
2. **Session I, "Electronic Technologies: What Lies Ahead?" was:**
  - 20% Excellent
  - 46% Very Good
  - 24% Good
  - 9% Fair
  - 1% Poor
  
3. **Session II, Lessons Learned From Using the Internet to Attract Visitors," was:**
  - 35% Excellent
  - 41% Very Good
  - 20% Good
  - 4% Fair
  - 0% Poor
  
4. **Session III, "Listening and Thinking Ahead: Applying Information Technology to Tourism Business Basics," was:**
  - 32% Excellent
  - 38% Very Good
  - 25% Good
  - 5% Fair
  - 0% Poor
  
5. **Session IV, "Catching Up With Past Success Stories: Then, Now, and the Future," was:**
  - 59% Excellent
  - 33% Very Good
  - 6% Good
  - 2% Fair
  - 0% Poor
  
6. **The Rural Tourism Success Story Awards Luncheon, was:**
  - 44% Excellent
  - 33% Very Good
  - 19% Good
  - 4% Fair
  - 0% Poor

**7. Overall logistics – such as lodging, meeting rooms, and hotel food service – for the 2000 Louisiana Rural Tourism Development Conference, were:**

- 24% Excellent
- 25% Very Good
- 29% Good
- 13% Fair
- 9% Poor

**8. The Old Covington Galleries' tour and reception at Judice's restaurant, was:**

- 57% Excellent
- 32% Very Good
- 8% Good
- 3% Fair
- 0% Poor

**9. Were any topics covered too superficially and warrant more time in the future? If yes, please specify.**

- I think this conference was confusing for those with no Internet or computer experience. Those same people commented that "if they wanted a website, they'd contract the job." They didn't understand the lesson – even if you contract you've got to understand the business/language of the Internet. Maybe should've had a beginners lesson. I thought it was wonderful.
- More focus on tourism in "small" towns.
- No.
- More specific information on "how to" and "what is needed" to get up and running for first time or to enhance.
- No. Thanks for interesting topics and presentations.
- No.
- Spend more time with anything dealing with lessons learned and give more time for questions following each session.
- Just a tad too much Internet: the Wednesday morning session was redundant.
- Became repetitive.
- Update yearly what's happening with new technology.
- Round table discussions are very good. If some of the technology subjects could be covered in this or a similar way, would be good – not so boring!
- More variety would have helped. Too much redundancy on Internet issues.
- How to apply the internet to your own business and links to know about in detail.
- No.
- Make more than one lecture available at the same time. Give a better variety of information for those in the various industries to choose from. Not all info is necessarily relevant to each individual.
- Session I – a little bit above our heads. Keep in mind that rural tourism means very small budget.
- I think we had to sit too long at a time. Speakers were a little too lengthy also.

- Starting with Doug Menefee's talk, there was a technology gap between the speakers and the audience, e.g. jargon such as "broadband, A DSL and V DSL." This new information is critical, but sender and receiver were on different bands.
  - More topics on how the internet can increase traffic to your site.
  - Some of the technology talks were a bit deep for a lay person.
10. **Are there new topics and suggested speakers that should be addressed at future Louisiana Rural Tourism Development Conferences? If yes, please specify.**
- I think Internet should at least be a part of every conference. It's now a way of life. I'd like to see topics on direct mail and following up on lead sheets. What about networking, brochure design, gaining support from the community, or signage/road signs?
  - Less emphasis on Internet use.
  - I felt I gained a lot of much needed knowledge. An excellent speaker would be someone from Resource Conservation and Development: Donna Remides (318) 435-7328.
  - Ways to develop an effective Marketing Plan on a moderate budget.
  - Information on building you city government/schools/"area leaders" and developers, etc. to be adequately prepared for visitors/tourists – beyond to retirees and their needs to continue the growth and vision successfully.
  - Ecotourism/Nature-based tourism.
  - Continue focus on technology, sales, and marketing.
  - Internet tracking (i.e. tracking/measuring banner ad success – clicks, impressions, visitation, etc.)
  - Bubba Brown – Panola Pepper Co. – who has linked tourism into his highly successful business.
  - When possible, continue to bring back past success stories. It was good to hear they are continuing to succeed.
  - Catching up with past success stories – great to include annually.
  - Billboards – their effect. How to track best buy for ad dollar.
  - Brochure and advertising or other promotional techniques.
  - More about other rural areas which have experienced success and how they made it happen. Maybe more on past success stories and maybe go beyond our own state.
  - Instead of "this is how I did it" premise for lecturers – how about "this is how you do it" to get the individual businesses involved in the tourism circuit. How better to disseminate the "how-to" for some of the novices. A little more hands on – and involvement of participants.
  - How to be creative with limited budgets; golf outing for those attending; more advance notice of date and place.
  - Success stories are always very interesting.
  - Do continue with the internet speeches. We have a lot to learn and with more exposure, we should be able to stay up to date. Try to include success stories of cooperative ventures, e.g. Heritage Trails, themed tours to many attractions, etc.
  - How can we work with DOTD to clean up our highways (State and Federal)? We make a terrible impression on our visitors. With the amount of time, research and effort we put into attracting visitors, when they do get here it looks like a statewide refuse project gone wild.

- More speakers that have or shall I say a professional that can give us inside info of do's and don'ts of your website.
- The best ways of marketing and promoting the different rural regions within Louisiana. Too often, the term "rural tourism" is used to describe an excessively wide array of areas which differ greatly in their tourism offerings and marketing needs.

11. The Louisiana Rural Tourism Development Conference has completed its tenth year. How many Louisiana Rural Tourism Conferences have you attended? (Please include this years conference in your total)

Years	# Attended
1	35%
2	25%
3	22%
4	5%
5 or more	9%

Additional Comments:

- This is the first and I will return.
- Four – wish I could have attended all. Rural Tourism Development Conference is outstanding – I have learned so much that I have able to use.
- This was my first, but not my last.
- 6 – and these were the best organized and most relevant of all statewide meetings that I have attended. I am always surprised at how far people attend because their return to the attendee has always been well worth it. Sessions which mix different groupings (such as Visitor Centers and Main Street) must continue and be followed up in future years.
- One – I was not in a position until the past year that merited my participation.
- This was my first. I definitely will attend more – I felt right at home – saw people from around the state that I hadn't seen in years.

12. Check the most applicable statement on your present role within the tourism industry:

17 Main Street/Downtown Development

9 Welcome Center

8 CVB/Tourist Commission

4 State Government

6 Local Government

7 Private Sector (Please Specify)

- Cultures – Entertainers
- Information on whole state
- Attraction (2)
- Hotel
- USS Kidd
- Tony Chachere's Creole Foods
- Wholesale/Tour reception

4 Other (Please Specify)

- Government entity
- Gift Shoppe Manager of W.H. Tupper Museum located at Jennings, LA
- LSU Rural Life Museum
- LTPA

13. Check the most applicable statement (related to the above question):

13 I have less than 5 years experience in tourism.

16 I have 5-10 years experience in tourism.

11 I have 10-20 years experience in tourism.

3 I have over 20 years experience in tourism.

14. Would you like to receive information regarding future Louisiana Rural Tourism Development Conferences?

47 Yes

0 No

Additional Comments:

- I was impressed with Bruce DeYoung, Wynne Waltman, Anne Fitzgerald, and the lady from NOLA.com. Encourage all speakers to bring handouts or printouts of power point presentation—your summary was too late and not detailed with “work orders”.
- Really liked Bruce DeYoung. Low power radio. I enjoyed the conference and I did think the speakers were fine. There were some good points. There some boring areas – how much can you say about Internet? I would like to see more of the city...like tours of what a tourist would be interested in (like the history in Natchitoches a few years back).
- None at this time. Bonnie Strate was very prompt and provided the requested information. Thanks again.
- Question 7. The room I had was not up to par. The air conditioner made a terrible noise all night long. The phone was dead and the bathroom facilities did not work.
- Overall, great conference! Nice job.
- Hotel was not the best experience – ran out of food at lunch – In my experience the Covington Holiday Inn has never been up to standards. Overall excellent conference, loved the presentations and speakers! Thanks!
- I have attended 2 tourism related meetings since the Rural Tourism Conference. At both meetings someone mentioned this past conference and how much they enjoyed the meeting content. Some of the comments were this conference allows tourism professionals with live problems the opportunity to share and learn from one another. One of the programs they particularly enjoyed was hearing from the state travel counselors from the Welcome Centers.
- Roundtable discussion – We had lots of fun with this and I think it was helpful for all of us. Logistics – lunch first day had some problems, second day was really good. Covington Galleries and Judice’s were great. The Rural Tourism Development Conferences are truly the most informative and fun events I attend through the LA Office of Tourism. Thanks for all of the hard work.
- The Rural Tourism Development Conference is one of the most beneficial gatherings of the industry. We all learn from each other!
- These conferences continue to be very informative offering much needed info regarding this industry. I have been attending these conferences for many years and will continue to do so.
- Mike and Todd: Thanks for having Travel Counselors as part of Rural Tourism Conference. They feel needed and wanted there and are pleased to share their knowledge.
- Logistics – Refreshments should have been placed in back of room rather than up front by speakers. Heard complaints.
- Rooms were not very nice, and had problems with plumbing and phone. Success story luncheon too long.
- Keep up the excellent work and try to promote this annual event even more.
- Overall, I feel the conference was a huge success. The Gift Shoppe has recently expanded to the web. Not only do we want sales from our online catalog but also visitors to visit our Jeff Davis Parish area.

## LOUISIANA RURAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT SUCCESS STORIES — 1991-2000

### 1991

The Old Lecompte School House, Ann Johnson - Lecompte  
Small Business Development Center, Northeast Louisiana University, Paul Dunn - Monroe  
Ponchatoula: America's Antique City, Charlene Daniels - Ponchatoula  
The Piney Hills Regional Association, Sue Edmunds, Ruston Lincoln Parish Convention and  
Visitors Bureau - Ruston  
Mayor Greg Marcantel, City of Jennings - Jennings  
McGee's Landing, Mark Allemond - Henderson

### 1992

Sabine River Authority, Linda Curtis-Sparks - Many  
Pack and Paddle, Inc., Joan Williams - Lafayette  
West Baton Rouge Museum, Karen Babb - Port Allen  
Southwest Louisiana Marketing Consortium, Shelley Johnson - Lake Charles  
Claiborne Parish's Handmade/Homegrown Festival, Lubertha Powell - Homer  
CoCo Marina, Johnny Glover - Cocodrie

### 1993

Plantation Pecan and Gift Co., Buddy and Carol Lee Miller - Waterproof  
RV River Charters, Inc., E.G. Conrad, Jr. - New Orleans  
Loyd Hall Plantation, Anne Fitzgerald - Cheneyville  
Constable Dale G. Nix - Mooringsport  
Sue and Harry Hebert, City of Plaquemine - Plaquemine  
Southwest Louisiana Zydeco Music Festival, Wilbert Guillory - Opelousas

### 1994

Jean Lafitte Tourism Commission, Nancy Ting - Lafitte  
Global Wildlife Center, Paula Finley - Folsom  
Rochelle Michaud Dugas, Abbeville Main Street - Abbeville  
The Nature Conservancy's Little Pecan Island Preserve, Allen May - Little Pecan Island  
Mayor John Joseph, City of Opelousas - Opelousas  
Sue Norman - Minden

### 1995

St. Francisville Overnight Association, Madeline Neville - St. Francisville  
Virgie Ott, City of Gretna - Gretna  
Kay LaFrance, Columbia Downtown Projects - Columbia  
Ed Kelley, Cameron Parish Tourist Commission - Cameron  
Doorway to Louisiana, Inc., Paul Rosenzweig - Lake Providence  
River Road Plantation Parade Association, Zeb Mayhew, Jr. - Vacherie

## 1996

River Road African American Museum and Gallery, Kathe Hambrick - Gonzales  
Southern Seaplane, Inc., Lyle and Rhonda Panepinto - Belle Chasse  
Tammany Trace, Kevin Davis - Slidell  
Louisiana Nursery Festival, Clyde Holloway - Forest Hill  
City of St. Martinville, Mayor Eric Martin - St. Martinville  
Baldwin's Guide to the Inns of the Deep South, Winnie and Jack Baldwin - Bernice

## 1997

Merryville Historical Society, Keitha C. Donnelly - Merryville  
M. Leroy Harvey, Jr. - Jackson  
Richard Seale - Natchitoches  
Mayor Jim P. Petitjean, City of Rayne - Rayne  
Wildlife Gardens, James and Betty Provost - Gibson  
Laura: A Creole Plantation, Norman Marmillion - Vacherie  
Lt. Governor's Certificate of Appreciation for Contributions to Nature-Based Tourism - Annie Miller

## 1998

Carolyn Phillips - Winnfield  
Alligator Bayou Tours & Bluff Swamp Wildlife Refuge, Frank Bonifay and Jim Ragland  
Frederic Hoogland - Ruston  
Kay Radlauer - Baton Rouge  
St. Augustine Historical Society, Terrel Delphin, President  
Mayor W. Richard Zuber - Jonesboro

## 1999

Chef John D. Folsie - Donaldsonville  
Eugenia E. Robbins - St. Joseph  
Buddy and Lynette Tanner - Frogmore  
Thibodaux Chamber of Commerce - Thibodaux  
Cheryl McCarty - Rayne  
Claude O'Bryan - Winnfield

## 2000

Wilbert (Bill) Elsenrath, Jr. - Denham Springs  
Bill Quenan - Westwego  
Charles (Bill) Williams - Crowley  
Linda Gardner - Vidalia  
Ray Pellerin - Breaux Bridge  
Vivian S. Olivier - Town of Sunset  
Warren A. Perrin - Erath

