

Success Stories

2001

*Building Tourism
by Reconnecting
with Your Community's Heritage*

*Eleventh Annual Rural Tourism Development Conference
Cypress Bend Golf Resort and Conference Center*

*Many, Louisiana
November 7-9, 2001*

Success Stories

Eleventh Louisiana Rural Tourism Development Conference

November 7-9, 2001

Many, Louisiana

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Tourists Want to Know All About You

Alice Whiting

Acadia Tours with Alice, Crowley

Truly, this is a humbling experience to be recognized by the State Department of Tourism and to be selected to sit among these 5 outstanding citizens of Louisiana. My gratitude to Mayor delaHoussaye for the nomination: she, her staff, and the City Council have been most supportive of my endeavors.

What a great theme for all of us in rural tourism, “Building Tourism by Reconnecting with Your Community’s Heritage.” Our heritage is so important to each of us...and in this state, we have wonderful sources!

I live in Crowley, Louisiana, about 25 miles southwest of Lafayette...in “Cajun Country”, BUT we have other distinct cultures that have left their mark on our heritage. As well, we are the Rice Capital of America.

For 25 years, we owned a business called, “Teacher’s Pet and Whiting Office Supply.” Even though we did business statewide, our main store was located in downtown historic district of Crowley. I often had out-of-town visitors commenting on how lovely our town was, with the Victorian homes and quaint downtown area. So, I would tell them a little history of our town and direct them to walk through our Residential Historic District.

In 1996, we sold our business, and I stayed on for 3 more years as “consultant.” I was not yet ready to retire, so I decided to give tours of our area. I then said, “Now, what exactly do I have to show tourists?”

Well...

- ❖ Thirty-three blocks of lovely Victorian homes, well maintained and reminiscent of the Anglo-Saxon, mid-western families that settled this town of Crowley.
- ❖ A downtown commercial district on the National Register.
- ❖ A Grand Opera House, build in 1901, which is being completely restored. (This building also houses Dixie Hardware Store which is unique in that you get service, and can find anything you want!! There is also a lovely gift shop.)

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Tourists Want to Know All About You

Alice Whiting

Acadia Tours with Alice, Crowley

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I started with residential and commercial historic districts on the National Register, a Grand Opera House, and the Rice Capital of America. I was also aware that to maintain interest of tourists, a good tour guide must be well informed. I purchased books on the early history of Acadia Parish and Crowley. I studied books on architectural design and styles of our homes and commercial buildings. I became involved with the committees and organizations seeking to establish Crowley as a Main Street, USA (and we were successful).

My next step was to make a presentation to our City Council, outlining what I proposed to offer to the tourists. Most importantly, I had to gain approval for a bus route in the historical district that would accommodate tour buses. We have a wonderful, progressive mayor and city council, all dedicated to the promotion of Crowley and all its assets. They were most cooperative in working with me.

Within my parish of Acadia, there were already (2) established tourist attractions:

- ❖ Crystal Rice Plantation: An authentic Acadian home, filled with pristine antique furnishings from all over the world, (including art, china, crystal, porcelain, and an antique automobile collection).
- ❖ Le Petit Chateau de Luxe: A magnificent French chateau. We call it our "Castle," complete with turrets and a moat, with furnishings from the period of Louis XV. Phillip Desormeaux, who lives on the premises and whose dad designed the chateau, gives a most interesting tour.

These gave me two more interesting attractions for tourists.

In 1997, I attended a Rural Tourism Conference where I learned that tourists are interested in our agriculture and countryside. I contacted Kelly Hundley, a jolly farmer of German-Irish descent, who has a spectacular collection of miniature farm implements and is a great storyteller. We worked out a tour to take the tourists out in the fields to see either rice combines or a crawfish boat and live crawfish. We planned to end the tour at the farmhouse for a home cooked Cajun meal (with rice as the main dish, of course).

What else is unique about our area? Music!! Greg Mouton, was just completing a music store and workshop to handcraft the Acadian Accordion, which is vital to all Cajun bands. Greg and I met, and he agreed to give presentations to tour groups on making these accordions and to play a little Cajun music. Sometimes tourists dance, and his wife always serves refreshments.

Once I had arranged tours and received the approval of the city council, I contacted the LTPA and the Lafayette Visitor Center regarding membership. I also became active with our Parish Tourist Commission. All of these entities helped with exposure. Two and a half years ago, I developed a website and à now linked to LTPA and other tourist centers in my area.

With all of my tours, my goal was to introduce tourists to the real people of Louisiana. They would meet the Cajun in the hardware store, as well as the Cajun who makes the accordion and plays the music. Tourists could see how our farms operate and what our main crops are. Tourists could enjoy staple dishes prepared by real citizens...not just the chefs on TV. Finally, they would be made aware of our many cultures and people that have attributed to the wonderful “gumbo” of lifestyle that has emerged here in Louisiana.

We can all attract tourists in our rural areas by reconnecting to our community’s heritage. And we do not have to fabricate new attractions. Often what folks enjoy seeing is already on our doorstep.

Community-Wide Hobby Draws Flocks of Tourists

Jackie Siears and Jean Landry

Grand Isle Migratory Bird Celebration, Grand Isle

Mix together colorful neo-tropical birds, avid bird-watchers, and volunteers dedicated to preserving the environment. Toss in a generous helping of youthful pirates and a few politicians with a sense of humor. The result? The Grand Isle Migratory Bird Celebration!

Grand Isle, Louisiana, is a resting place to birds for migration in the spring and fall. For more years than the residents can remember, bird-watchers have come to the island to enjoy this migration. Locals have noticed the bird-watchers, but did not know what the excitement was all about!

Bird-watchers were also watching the changing habitat. Developments slowly but seriously diminished the woods and marsh area, leaving the migrating birds with no safe sanctuary. In 1988 these concerns led to the formation of the Sanctuary Group, a union of birding clubs, environmental groups, tourist commissions, civic organizations, and local and federal governments. Since 1998, it has expanded to include several local Grand Isle groups including the only school on the island.

The Sanctuary Group has been successful in bringing together public, private, and corporate landowners to create the Grand Isle Birding Trail. Under the direction of the Nature Conservancy, which already owned a 13-acre preserve on the island, a cooperative management agreement was formed with ExxonMobil, Louisiana State University, and the Grand Isle Port Commission. This agreement has added 58 acres to the protected lands on the island and the birding trail will link all these properties together. The Sanctuary Group has also been successful in drawing together bird-watchers and local residents to celebrate the arrival of migratory birds.

In 2001 Grand Isle had a month long celebration of birding. Local people opened their homes and yards to bird-watchers, many placing "Bird-watchers Welcome" signs in their front yards. Businesses welcomed bird-watchers on their marquees and offered bird watcher discounts. Sanctuary group members led bird-watcher walks for beginners, teaching the local residents to identify the migratory birds. Mayor David Camardelle and the

Board of Aldermen of Grand Isle performed an original play about bird-watchers, presenting it at a gumbo dinner for bird-watchers and locals alike. Students from Grand Isle School participated, serving food at the theatre while dressed up as pirates. The Sanctuary Group provided the school children with the opportunity to see and learn about a hawk and an owl.

Students also participated in a Grand Isle Migratory Bird Celebration poster contest, and set up a heritage display showing life in Grand Isle. The Sanctuary Group provided prizes for the poster contest and held a ceremony to present them to the students. The Sanctuary Group has also presented awards annually to those who have helped establish the sanctuary.

The Grand Isle Migratory Bird Celebration has brought economic opportunities to Grand Isle and has also helped locals and visitors recognize the importance of the sanctuary lands. The Sanctuary Group is already making plans for the 2002 celebration, once again joining together local residents and visitors to welcome lovely migratory birds to Grand Isle.

Volunteers Love to Work With a Good Leader

Dr. Jerry Golden

The Franklin Parish Catfish Festival, Winnsboro

The history of the Franklin Parish Catfish Festival began in 1986 when a group of individuals discussed the feasibility of establishing a local event to promote Franklin Parish. The parish at that time was experiencing the emergence of a new aquaculture industry. Thousand of acres of ponds were constructed, one processing plant existed and a second processing plant and feed mill were being planned. This new and growing industry presented itself as an excellent theme for a festival. The festival could be a great instrument to promote industry and Franklin Parish.

Representatives from all major organizations in the parish were brought together as a planning committee. Areas of responsibility were identified and chairpersons appointed. The first festival in 1987 included a children's area, a sound stage, sale of catfish plates, food and craft booths, catfish cooking and eating contests, a civil war reenactment, sale of a commemorative poster, and an emphasis on a day of family fun. It was held on the front grounds of Winnsboro Elementary School.

Sources of revenue for the festival were catfish plates, Cokes©, T-shirts, and vendor fees which brought in \$16,000. The cost of the first festival came to \$10,000. The Tourist Commission contributed \$5,000 to the festival leaving the organization with \$11,000 for the event in 1998. Estimated attendance for the first festival was 1500. Based on attendance and revenue, festival organizers looked to 1998 with great expectations.

The annual budget is now \$70,000 and attendance ranges from 15,000 to 25,000. Today's festivals have two or three sound stages, 250 craft and commercial booth spaces, 25 food vendors and five catfish plate vendors. The children's area has grown and there are more and larger attractions and exhibits. There are a number of corporate sponsors supporting the festival. It is now the largest one-day festival in the state of Louisiana. We remain a family oriented event that reflects the values of Franklin Parish. Success has allowed the festival to give back to the parish as much as \$17,000 a year dedicated to the needs of the community. The secret of our success is to use limited resources wisely.

**Recommendations For The Use Of Limited Resources
In A Small Town To Make A Large Event Happen**
(Handout Given Out During Dr. Jerry Golden's Presentation)

Set up a volunteer organization.

1. Set up a volunteer organization with the exception of a secretary.
You may be able to share a secretary with another organization.
2. If you use paid personnel you will never have enough money.
3. The enthusiasm and camaraderie of volunteers will motivate others to join with you.
4. Help comes because people understand the magnitude of what you are doing as a volunteer.
5. Select talented people: This is the crew that made our festival successful:
 - Draftsman - In charge of grounds and booth assignment
 - Newspaper Editor - Advertising
 - 911 Administrator - Line up festival day volunteers
 - LSU Extension Office - Food Court
 - Entertainer & Booking Agent - Entertainment
 - Successful Business Person - Seek out sponsors

Involve the mayor.

1. Place him/her on your committee if at all possible so he/she knows how the event operates and your needs.
2. He controls the needed personnel and equipment.
You cannot afford to pay for the festival without his help.

Have a broad theme.

1. You can honor your theme and still have something for everyone.
2. The people you attract to your event are your major revenue - more is better.

Involve a newspaper person on the committee.

1. Advertising, press releases and promotions are what they do best.
2. They can arrange more free publicity than you can ever afford.
3. A picture with caption is worth as much as an article and more than an ad.

Involve the police chief and/or sheriff.

1. Security
2. Traffic control
3. Communication during event
4. Crowds are more comfortable with a lot of uniforms around.

Sponsors

1. Local businesses and companies from nearby cities which supply services and products to your town - utilities, radio & TV, car dealers, cell phone companies.
2. Don't just ask for money, offer them something to sponsor.
 - Radio & TV advertising
 - Billboards
 - T-shirts
 - Soundstage
 - Childrens Area
3. Whatever they do, put their name and logo all over it and in large print.

Music

1. Pay for a good band with good equipment to set up for the day[†] and let all groups plug into their equipment. Allow them to perform twice during the day and fill in for no shows.
2. Do not allow groups to set up their own equipment, you will have more downtime than music.
3. You can get a lot of inexpensive entertainment from good bands because you can offer them a large crowd, which to a good young group means more than money.

Advertising

1. TV - a. 6 & 10 PM News - Expensive but worth it.
 - b. Cable channels offer lots of spots for little money.
2. Billboards - sponsors like their names on billboards. Offer Lamar Advertising the chance to add their logo to the board if other sponsors agree in exchange for reduced rate.
3. Southern Living Magazine monthly calendar.
4. Industry journals also have event calendars for their service areas.

Avoid financial setback of a rainout due to weather.

1. Pre-sell T-shirts in stores a month in advance.
2. Offer schools and non-profits \$2 for each shirt sold.
3. Offer cash prize to the school selling the most.
4. Give businesses \$2 break on shirts they buy for their employees and encourage them to have a day where they all wear them to promote the event.
5. Make all vendor fees non-refundable.

Sporting events

Encourage sports groups to have annual tournaments on the day of your event, incorporating the festival name in the name of the tournament. Softball, golf, tennis, etc. First Annual Franklin Parish Catfish Festival Softball Tournament. This increases the crowd for your event and their tournament.

Cultural Friendship Is Contagious and Successful

Kermit Bouillion
Acadian Museum, Erath

I wish I could say that I created this idea of a “Living Legends” program, but I did not. Patricia Sawin, a folklorist from USL received a grant in 1996 from the Louisiana Division of the Arts and the Acadian Arts Council in Lafayette Parish to conduct a series of workshops called, “The Living Traditions of Vermilion Parish.” While I assisted her with photography and video, I was pretty much a volunteer and a bystander.

When the grant ended, I realized that the goodwill generated from it was great. I felt that we had started something interesting and needed to continue this series.

In about 1998, I opened the Museum Café adjacent to the Acadian Museum in downtown Erath and began to expand the “Living Legends” program to include musicians and politicians. I changed the name of the award to the “Order of the Living Legends.” Knowing that Cajuns like to have a good time, I incorporated a Cajun band at each induction ceremony, sponsored a dance that is free and open to the public. Attendance has increased and the news media regularly attends.

After two years of operating the Museum Café, I sold the business to a friend in Erath, but I specifically asked that the Acadian Museum be allowed to continue the Living Legends series through the Café, and he agreed.

It is important to honor people while they are still with us. One day while I was introducing an elderly Cajun musician and a Living Legend, he walked up to the microphone and with tears streaming down his face. He said that this was the first time ever in his life he was honored for his contributions to Cajun music. This musician was so talented that I thought he had been honored many times before. Surely this must be old hat for him. After that day I realized that no one was thanking people who were contributing in some way to the Cajun culture. As a matter of fact, I noticed that many

fundraisers were being held for those who were deceased. I thought that it would be nice to honor people while they are still with us, and they could come to the museum with family and friends to thank everybody who has helped them in some way. We decided right then that we would never honor someone deceased. That is why we call it the “Living Legends”—one must be living to receive our award.

We expanded from honoring only musicians to honoring judges, chefs, teachers, pharmacists, politicians, and civil defense workers who were also legends in their own right. We recently honored a federal judge, appointed by President Kennedy in 1962. He is still a federal judge and hears cases each week. The local newspaper wrote a nice opinion piece that thanks the Acadian Museum for acknowledging him and also thanked the judge for his contributions. In fact, the newspaper sent a photographer to the event and the next day a full color photo of our living legend on the front page did not hurt our program one bit.

Publicity for an event like this is paramount, and the Acadian Museum each week will fax and email the event to all media in the state. I personally prepare the press release and fax it from my home computer.

Persistence is important. If you think you are doing something good, keep at it. It may be months or years before someone recognizes the value of what you are doing. Through the Living Legends Program, we are slowly putting Erath and the Acadian Museum on the cultural map of Louisiana.

Visitors Seek Package of Related Experiences

Sandra Pellegrin
Cajun Tours, Houma

Cajun Tours is a local tour company that began by taking individuals into the bayou communities around Houma, Louisiana, to view a net shop, shrimp factory, crab factory, crayfish ponds, above ground cemeteries, etc. Visitors were taken into marshes and swamps, and guides gave talks on the land. Visitors then had lunch in restaurants along the local bayous.

Visitors also heard Cajun music while on tour, and visited a local home of an alligator hunter. He talked to them about his lifestyle. Mr. Dovie Naquin, the local alligator hunter, also talked to visitors about the local environment and how it is changing, showing them the loss of land and talking about the ducks and other waterfowl. Cajun Tours joined the National Tour Association and started working to get motorcoaches to book.

Today, Cajun Tours is a very successful company that is working with naturalists throughout the world to come and view rural tourism. Cajun Tours is now active in the Louisiana State F.I.T. Program, bringing in individual travelers for one or many days to visit other areas of Louisiana and enjoy rural tourism.

The tour company has branched out along the coast of Louisiana and is running rural tourism tours from Houma to the Texas border. It does bird-watching tours to Cameron Parish and Grand Isle. Cajun Tours also visits rural towns throughout Louisiana and sets up agricultural tours, and ethnic lifestyle tours to showcase the people that settled Louisiana.

Cajun Tours also promoted gospel music tours in Canada. Last year many motorcoaches came in to enjoy the local gospel music that Louisiana is famous for. Cajun Tours has worked long, hard hours to promote rural tourism and today the company brings in nearly one million dollars to the local economy.

The Spirit to Try Something New Leads to Tourism Development

Travis S. Richard

Stansil Rice Mill, Gueydan

Travis Stansil Richard grew up in the rice business. His grandfather started the Stansil Rice Mill back in the 1920's. Stansil Gourmet Rice is known and shipped throughout the country. It is a part of South Louisiana.

Travis has been president of the company for the last 10 years, quite an accomplishment for a young man. Six years ago Travis' interest turned to tourism and showing people part of the wonderful heritage of South Louisiana. Two years ago, he opened the working rice mill to tour. His first tour was kicked off in coordination with the Gueydan Centennial and 454 people participated.

Travis' contribution to tourism continues. He recently patented a gourmet fish fry made of rice. He is working with other rural South Louisiana businesses and individuals to develop Vermilion Parish's first registered tour, which will have a great impact on tourism for our area. The tours will be daylong and include the rice mill, a crawfish processing establishment, Delcambre shrimp boats and Shadows on the Teche. This innovative young man has purchased an editing studio to prepare promotional videos for tour guides, replacing the more traditional brochures. His entrepreneurial spirit is helping tourism develop in Vermilion Parish.

Enhancing Louisiana Scenic Byways: The Potential Role of Folklife

Susan Roach, Ph. D.

Louisiana Regional Folklife Program

Louisiana Tech University

Ruston, LA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The recently established Louisiana Regional Folklife Program places folklorists in five regions of the state with the following goal: to provide in-depth documentation of Louisiana's folk traditions and to facilitate its appropriate use by the public and cultural tourism. Currently, three of the five regional programs are funded and have folklorists placed in state universities. This proposal outlines why and how these regional folklorists (and other cultural specialists) might enhance the Louisiana Scenic Byways through identification and interpretation of existing cultural features appropriate for the travelers using the system. Folklore genres and types of cultural features researched by folklorists are given with strategies that could be incorporated into the Scenic Byways system in any region of the state. A specific stretch of Scenic Byway, north from Lake Providence south to St. Joseph offers a case study listing of selected sites along the byway. Finally, interpretive products that might be prepared for travelers using the Scenic Byways include Touring Brochures, Interpretive Kiosks, Interpretive Centers, Web Site with Tour, Audio Cassette or CD Tour, Computerized tours, and an Activity Book for Children.

INTRODUCTION

In December 1998, with the legislative funding of Louisiana Regional Folklife Program in the Louisiana Division of the Arts Folklife Program, the first of five regional folklife programs began. Currently, folklorists are now working at Louisiana Tech University (Region 1), Northwestern State University (Region 2), and University of New Orleans (Region 5), with University of Louisiana at Lafayette (Region 3) and Louisiana State University at Baton Rouge (Region 4) still to be funded. The goal of the program is to provide in-depth documentation of Louisiana's folk traditions and to facilitate appropriate use of this research by the public and cultural

tourism. The nature of this program suggests that it would be a natural partner with the Louisiana Scenic Byway system since folklorists' training alerts them to the six intrinsic qualities that can designate scenic byways: scenic, natural, historic, cultural, archeological, and recreational.

FOLKLIFE AND CULTURAL TOURISM

According to the U. S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration's *Community Guide to Planning and Managing a Scenic Byway*, one of the major intrinsic qualities necessary for a scenic byway is cultural: the "visual evidence of the unique customs, traditions, folklores, or rituals of a currently existing human group." These are typical research concerns of folklorists, who also use the five other intrinsic qualities to provide contexts for the cultural materials they collect. Cultural features identified and documented by regional folklorists for the Scenic Byway system could be used in various ways:

- First, pointing out and/or describing these features can help provide the traveler with a sense of place. An overview of the region could simply inform the traveler about the region and identify what might not be readily apparent.
- Second, providing the traveler with opportunities to experience available cultural features directly will add depth and authenticity. This might be as simple as listing restaurants that serve traditional regional foods or as complex as programming storytelling sessions at area museums.
- Third, while there are many ways for cultural programming to occur, folklorists could work with museums, libraries, and existing festivals to identify, program, and present different types of traditional local culture.

In addition to traditions already included in existing cultural tourism, potential programming and interpretive materials could be developed using folklife research in the Delta (or in other areas of the state) in the following folklore genres:

- **Foodways:** ethnic and regional foodways (Southern, Soul, Italian, etc.), buttermaking, cane syrupmaking, barbecue, fish cookery
- **Regional narratives:** flood stories, local legends, and characters (Jesse James, Ben Lily, Bonnie and Clyde, etc.).

- **Occupational lore:** cotton growing, cotton press calling, cropdusting, logging, boatbuilding, trapping, netmaking, riverlore (river pilots' stories, rope skills, river customs)
- **Agriculture traditions:** Typical crops, planting techniques, harvesting, traditional and contemporary methods of farming.
- **Folk and vernacular architecture:** Traditional house types native to the region: dog trot, shotgun, bungalow; plantation complexes: big house, out buildings, commissary, sharecropper cabin, etc.; traditional farm buildings: barns, smoke houses, other out buildings; traditional churches, country stores, 19th century retail structures.
- **Religious ritual traditions:** River and lake baptisms, Easter Rock, grave decorations, memorial days, all day singing, and Catholic processions and St. Joseph's Day altars
- **Music:** old time country music (family and community bands, benefits and country music shows), bluegrass, rockabilly, blues (delta blues, rhythm and blues with guitar, bass, horns, harmonica), gospel music (African American gospel quartets, shaped-note singing, gospel radio shows, Mennonite a cappella family singing, and Pentecostal Church music)
- **Crafts:** tupelo gum dough bowls, split oak basketry, carving, whittling, quilting, soap making, and hunting horns.

The interpretive and programming strategies for these genres could vary according to the type of folklife being presented, the funding resources available, and the needs of the community. Included below are possible suggestions for a specific stretch of scenic byway from Lake Providence to St. Joseph (on Bienville Trace Scenic Byway I), with the idea that these same types of strategies could be used in other Scenic Byways in other areas of the state:

- In the case of foodways (also called culinary tourism), many local restaurants, such as the Ole Dutch Bakery in Lake Providence and Emily House in St. Joseph already feature traditional regional and ethnic foods of the region. More research for other restaurants focusing on important food traditions would need to be done. These restaurants would need to be documented and listed in the Scenic Byway interpretive information. Traditional foodways demonstrations and concessions could also be incorporated into existing area harvest festivals and interpretive centers such as the Tensas River National Wildlife Refuge, which could program local

hunters and families to demonstrate preparation of traditional game and fish dishes. Foodways can also be incorporated into museum exhibitions and demonstrations. To illustrate, the Centennial Center in LaSalle Parish and the Martin Homeplace in Columbia have regular demonstrations of traditional foods such as biscuits and corn bread.

- Regional narratives are an excellent means of giving a sense of place and easy to collect and program. For example, the Tensas Council on Aging is interested in collecting stories from its program participants, many of whom lived through three major floods in the Delta. The regional folklorist will work with center staff and volunteers to train them to interview older community members using folklore and oral history methodology. Then the folklorist could work with the groups to include appropriate presentation of the seniors and their stories at their fall Turkey Festival or periodically in the St. Joseph Plantation Museum. The collected transcribed stories that give interesting information about the area could also be used in interpretive materials developed for the Scenic Byways interpretive products.
- Folklorists can also help the traveler “read the landscape” to form a sense of place by focusing attention on occupational lore, agricultural practices, and folk and vernacular architecture. In the case of the Delta, much of the lore might be based on river work and cotton farming. Being taught how to “read” the older remaining architectural structures and the cultivation of the fields, the traveler would gain insight into the settlement and history of the region and contemporary farming. A verbal and photographic description of traditional architectural styles and different crops and how to recognize them would assist with this reading. For example, travelers unfamiliar with cotton farming could learn to identify the abandoned, sometime picturesque, cotton gin as a marker of a past thriving plantation. Information on the types of crops currently grown would add interest. To further understanding of the contemporary plantations, tours could be set up with operating plantations that were willing to have tourists. Folklorists could also collaborate with area commodity festivals to present more interpretive information about the crops produced—the occupational folklore surrounding the production of the crop and the changing of the traditions surrounding production. This might

include talk stage presentations focusing on this lore and its traditions as well as exhibitions using photographs and text.

- Religious ritual traditions currently practiced in the region could also be further researched by the regional folklorists and listed as events occurring along the Scenic Byway if they are open to the public and if the host wishes to be listed. The collaboration of the folklorist with the religious group and the community would be most important in deciding what events should be listed. Currently, the lucky traveler may happen upon the incredibly beautiful outdoor baptisms still practiced by a few African American Baptist churches in the area, but may not know whether it is permissible to stop and watch the ceremony. Also visitors interested in religious music would be fortunate to hear the spirited music in many of the churches in the heart of the Delta if they were told when and where they would be welcome.
- Likewise, the secular music still being made in the area that produced Delta blues, old time country, and Jerry Lee Lewis's rockabilly could be interesting to the visitor. Regional folklorists could provide information on the traditional music gatherings that dot the region—country music shows, bluegrass festivals, and clubs. Where there are no official public gathering places for music, the regional folklorist could assist communities in identifying local traditional music performers and developing presentations of traditional music in museums, parks, and community centers.
- Traditional crafts are another regional resource that can give the visitor a tangible object conveying the region's sense of place to take as a souvenir. Regional folklorists seek out and document the artists who make traditional crafts such as white-oak basketry, folk toys, quilts, hunting horns, decoys, turkey and duck callers. After an inventory of regional crafts, the artists can demonstrate and sell their work in the region to help express the regional sense of place.

While folklorists deal with other genres, these types of genres offer basic appeal to the tourist seeking an authentic cultural experience. Including members of the community in the presentation and interpretation of the region will also reaffirm the community's heritage and increase its value to the community.

REGIONAL FOLKLORISTS' ROLE

Folklorists are cultural specialists trained to do ethnographic documentation of existing cultural features traditional to a region or group of people. Typically, they do this through observation and interviewing of tradition bearers within a culture and by placing the obtained information in its appropriate environmental, historical, and sociological contexts. In other words, folklorists are usually accustomed to reading the landscape for visual evidence of the cultures that inhabit that landscape. Noting the multitude of influences on the people and folk traditions that they study, folklorists also draw heavily on historical materials and contemporary culture and frequently network with cultural organizations and community groups. Such research makes it possible for folklorists to understand a region's sense of place. Folklorists in the Louisiana Regional Folklife Program would be able to provide services that are beneficial to the scenic byways project in a variety of ways:

- They are also conducting research on a variety of traditions in their regions.
- They work in the public sector and are frequently called on to present the information they gather to the general public in easy-to-understand language to convey this sense of place and an understanding of the traditions in an area.
- They can provide technical assistance to institutions and organizations interested in documenting and presenting folklife.
- They are also sensitized to consider how presentation of a culture will affect the cultural group or the outside audience (tourists) seeking to observe or participate in the culture. In some cases, the folklorist might not recommend presentation of a particular tradition if it might be offensive or unsafe or could have repercussions for the group being presented or the audience. For example, in the northeast Louisiana Delta region, the religious folk tradition of Easter Rock, originating in Antebellum time, is still presented on Easter Eve at a small African American Baptist Church in Winnsboro. While the ceremony is known in the community to be open to the public, only a few members outside the church usually attend. However, if this event were to be listed as available for tourists, the church and the group holding the service would need to be contacted and made aware of the potential consequences of such public listings so that they could decide if they wished to be included in such a listing. Facilities such as parking, restrooms, and information to the tourists about appropriate dress and behavior would need to be considered. A folklorist knowledgeable about the event and tourists' needs could mediate to be sure that such a listing

would be in the best interests of the church and the Easter Rock presenters and the tourist as well.

- They are currently traveling the routes in their region to get a sense of their regions. In doing this travel, they could double check Scenic Byway routes for problems, changes and additions. For example, the trip made for the case study below revealed some Louisiana Scenic Byways map ambiguities in the route itself. From Lake Providence to St. Joseph, the Scenic Byway leaves highway 65 somewhere around Newellton (the road number is not clear) and detours around Lake Bruin on an undesignated road number that is unclear even when consulting the state highway map or a more detailed parish map. Tourists attempting to follow the Scenic Byways map may become confused with such lack of specificity. While there is a note at the bottom of the map asking the user to "Please use in conjunction with the Louisiana State Highway Map," the note is not immediately obvious; nor are the highway numbers for the traveler to follow always apparent. Also, some Scenic Byways do not seem to connect with other roads on the Scenic Byways map. On future maps produced, it would be less confusing to at least put major highways. One Scenic Byways map lists festivals that are no longer held; regional folklorists could assist in updating current listings.

HIGHWAY 65 SOUTH FROM LAKE PROVIDENCE TO ST. JOSEPH: SELECTED SITES LISTING

To illustrate how folklife and other cultural resources might be used to enhance the Scenic Byway experience, research findings from folklife fieldwork and existing tourism resources are listed below for a north-south stretch of the Bienville Trace Scenic Byway I, from just north of Lake Providence to St. Joseph. This listing is not intended to be a complete inventory of this stretch of Scenic Byway, since it was drawn from prior travel and folklife research not done for the purposes of inventorying for the Scenic Byway program. The following sites were compiled from the Louisiana Delta Folklife Project, the Regional Folklife Program fieldwork, and a variety of printed and on-line resources including the Scenic Byways Map, the Louisiana State Tourism Department Guide, *The Fabric of Our Culture: A Directory of Louisiana's African-American Attractions*, *Louisiana Museum Guide: A Directory of Louisiana Museums and Historic Sites*, *A Place to Remember: East Carroll Parish, LA* by Georgia Pinkston, and *Only in Louisiana* by Keith Odom. The sites are listed in order from north to south on Highway 65 to Newellton, then Hwy. 4 to 608, to 605, to 128 at St. Joseph (Complete list of sites available at: www.latour.lsu.edu).

INTERPRETIVE PRODUCTS

With the information collected and organized by folklorists in collaboration with communities and state agencies, various interpretive products for the traveler using the Scenic Byways could be developed. These interpretive products could be designed for each byway or for the various byways in each region.

Touring Brochures: Ideally, each Scenic Byway or each cultural region's byways could be presented in a separate brochure with the route and symbols for distinctive features along the route. Interpretive information or photographs could illuminate the major cultural markers, features, and events along the upcoming stretch of highway.

Interpretive Kiosks: Distinctively designed interpretive kiosks could be positioned at the beginning and either periodically or at transition points outdoors along each Scenic Byway. The kiosks could present photographs and information on the major cultural markers and events along the upcoming stretch of highway.

Interpretive Centers: If kiosks are not feasible, established sites such as visitor centers (e.g. the Byerley House in Lake Providence) could present the same interpretive information.

Web Site with Tour: Photographs and interpretive text could be presented on-line in addition to or instead of using Kiosks or brochures. It needs an easy print feature to facilitate its use.

Audio Cassette or CD Tour: The audio tours could present features along the Scenic Byways along with regionally appropriate music and stories about the region. If folklorists have collected audio tapes of stories about the region covered by the Scenic Byway, some of these might also be included on the tour to provide authentic voices of people and their dialect in the region. This project might be similar to the state of Mississippi's free, three-tape set of audio guides to the arts and culture of three major regions of Mississippi: North, South, and Central.

Computerized tours: The same interpretive information could also be presented via computers that could be rented at Visitor Centers.

Activity Book for Children: An activity book could be developed with the various cultural features identified for the tour. Activities could be designed for various age levels. Activities might include the following:

(1) traditional folk counting games: children would receive points for each designated item seen first. Items such as cows, horses, various planting equipment, specific crops (seasonally dependent), folk house types, etc. might be used; photos of each house type could be presented in a book with points given for each house type (illustrations such as those used on the Division of Historic Preservation Web Site: <<http://www.crt.state.la.us/crt/ocd/hp/STUDYUNIT/hpsuills.htm>> could be used); tally sheets could be provided.

(2) Coloring and connect the dots: regional landscapes and/or animals, folk architecture, planting equipment, musical instruments (frottoir, ti-fer or triangle, harmonica, guitar, fiddle).

(3) Crossword puzzles and Bingo: these games could be developed with information from the tour.

(4) Stickers featuring various regional cultural features: architecture, events, foods, etc. to be placed in an appropriate graphic context (photo, sketch).

CONCLUSION

Louisiana Regional Folklorists are well situated in their regions for assisting the state with enhancing the state system of Scenic Byways and tapping into the scenic, natural, historic, cultural, archeological, and recreational factors of their regions. Since their folklife research depends heavily on the contextualization of the folk tradition in the regional history and ecosystems, folklorists are knowledgeable about topography, land use, regional patterns, and belief systems. Incorporating this type of information into interpretive texts can help the Scenic Byways traveler understand the special qualities of place. In some cases, the folklife research needed to enhance particular Scenic Byways is already done; in others, much more needs to be done. Of course, the amount of time needed for a regional folklorist to assist with fully developing all of these strategies for a stretch of scenic byway would be significant. Given the current duties of the regional folklorist, it would be necessary to prioritize the routes and the types of development desired so that each folklorist could make assistance to the Scenic Byways a part of the annual plan.

POWERPOINT PRESENTATIONS

The following is a list of the 2001 Louisiana Rural Tourism Development Conference presentations that were submitted to Louisiana Sea Grant College Program. You can access the presentations by logging onto the LATour website <http://www.latour.lsu.edu> and follow the link to presentations.

“The Importance of Community in Tourism” - Mr. Curt Cottle, Director, Heritage Tourism Development Office, South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism.

“Developing Tourism Opportunities and Preserving Community Identity” - Mr. Jason Stagg, Atchafalaya Trace Heritage Area.

“Helping Develop the Tourism Product” - Ms. Stephanie Locklar, Ms. Rebecca Acosta, and Ms. Bobbie Eastin, Louisiana Travel Promotion Association.

“The Texas and Pacific Railway Depot Rehabilitation Project” - Ms. Nancy Morgan, Cane River National Heritage Area.

“Enhancing Louisiana Scenic Byways: The Potential Role of Folklife” - Ms. Susan Roach, Louisiana Regional Folklife Program

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 Unique City, Charlene Daniels - Ponchatoula
The Piney Hills Regional Association, Sue Edmonds, 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 Handmade/Homegrown Festival, Lubertha Powell -
Homer
CoCo Marina, John Glover - Cocodrie

1993

Plantation Pecan and Gift Co., Buddy and Carol Lee Miller - Waterproof
RV River Charters, Inc., E.G.Conrad, Jr. - New Orleans
Lloyd 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 Mahew, 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
Major 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. Folse - 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. Oliver - Town of Sunset
Warren A. Perrin - Erath

2001

Alice Whiting - Crowley
Jackie Sears and Jean Landry - Grand Isle
Dr. Jerry Golden - Winnsboro
Kermit Bouillion - Erath
Sandra Pellegrin - Houma
Travis S. Richard - Gueydan