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# LOUISIANA RURAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

## CONFERENCE

October 12-13, 1992  
Lake Charles, Louisiana

### Summary of Proceedings



## **Summary of the Proceedings**

# **SECOND LOUISIANA RURAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE**

The following excerpts from the conference have been prepared by the Louisiana Sea Grant College Program from tape recordings of the presentations. The intention is to provide a reference of the highlights of each presentation rather than a word-for-word reproduction.

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Excerpts from the welcome by **Lt. Gov. Melinda Schwegmann**, who supports rural tourism development. Her words were echoed by speakers throughout the conference.

"The entire state of Louisiana should work together as a team" to attract and entertain tourists.

All of Louisiana is attractive to tourists. "People don't come (just) for Bourbon Street anymore, they come to see the rural areas that make Louisiana really unique."

Large and small communities should work together to develop tourism in Louisiana.

"What's good for New Orleans is good for Louisiana and what's good for Louisiana is good for New Orleans."

"None of us are going to win if we compete with each other. We need to work together."

Quoting Doe Isaac of the Southwest Louisiana Convention and Visitor's Bureau:

"Tourism Promotes Sharing."

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Excerpts and conclusions from **Keynote Address by Robert H. Becker**, director of the Strom Thurmond Institute, Clemson University, Clemson, South Carolina.

## TOURISM AS A BRIDGE ECONOMY

### I. BACKGROUND

Like a vein of gold, tourism annually contributes tens of billions of dollars in direct expenditures to the South's economy, and that aggregated economic sector is the fastest growth "industry" for many of our states, and our region. As impressive as that amount appears, it will pale when compared to the potential tourism revenues which will develop as the South is "discovered" by a traveling, aging population, seeking interesting places to visit and spend a larger portion of discretionary dollars. Visitors are drawn to the region by its abundant natural resources, diverse cultures and its historic grace; an appealing mix of pleasant places and friendly people. It seems almost effortless to sustain the growth. A popular scenario for tourism development goes something like this - "Attract the visitor, have them leave as much as money as possible, and get rid of them." But in the wake of the tourist is a different South.

Communities eye the impressive tourism dollar-generation figures and want a piece of the action. But, without a plan for tourism management, community business districts, locally-owned restaurants, and quaint shops which originally attracted visitors, slowly yield to a plethora of ice cream parlors, fast food burger outlets, and tee-shirt emporiums, a commercial homogeneity replaces economic diversity and a tourist ghetto is born. Like the metaphoric gold vein, tourism is a fickle economic base, easily played out without careful nurturing.

The key to effective tourism development and management lies in understanding the "specialness" of a place or region and the attachment of financial and human resources to maintain those special qualities. A simple test to identify "specialness" is to think of those places and businesses you show your out-of-town friends when they come to visit. Similarly, how many places do you avoid or label "a tourist trap"? Those are the first steps toward identifying those special places which will attract visitors to a community and compel them to return.

The idea of a special place is difficult to define but easy to identify; you know when it's present or missing. I believe special places, particularly special towns and cities, are developed with a sensitivity to the environment, heritage, and culture of a region. These places are on a human scale and enmesh the flow of people with the built features. They reflect a vitality of daily life.

An attitude about a place being special is not derived from inherent qualities about a place. In the natural environment, swamps and wetlands were thought of as places to be "reclaimed." These places were filled, drained, or destroyed at an alarming rate. Only recently have we gained an appreciation for the qualities of these places and enacted legislation to save and recover these fragile ecosystems. Likewise in our built environments the old was too often replaced with new efficient structures. The value of heritage and architectural uniqueness is acquired, often after those special places are lost.

I am not certain what leads to the loss of "specialness" or the creation of the commonplace, but I suspect it is a bureaucratic drive for planning uniformity and a propensity for efficiency at a minimum cost in our built environments. Values of specialness are easy prey for arguments of economy. After all, shouldn't a developer be allowed to maximize a return from his investment? The answer is not simple, but rests with a willingness for a governing body and involved citizens to see beyond the immediate expansion of a tax base with an eye toward the type of setting and community which is being created. Too often our apathy or blind adherence to a single point of view

produces towns and cities without character; the subtle changes just seem to happen. Too many cities are becoming look-alike nodes of glass towers and ubiquitous brown brick cubes and too many small towns are becoming forgotten main streets, abandoned for a strip development along a nearby highway.

These downtowns are the economic frontier of the rural South; they can be special places. Most people find delight in sidewalks twisted by the roots of great oaks. Traffic may move quicker along wider thoroughfares and people may walk more easily and briskly along smooth sidewalks uncluttered by trees, benches or irregularly edged buildings, but then I suspect there is less to notice or admire, so why linger?

As rural communities begin their relationship with tourism, citizen groups need to follow a few common sense precepts. First, tourism is best in a well diversified economy. Second, uniqueness and diversity are good. Third, development of an advertisement brochure is NOT the first thing to do. Fourth, get advice. Finally, involve citizen groups (and don't forget the kids) to identify what makes your community special and to decide how a tourism development program will fit into the daily life of your town.

We have found that there is something unique in every little community that people want to see, an authenticity and genuineness that people are trying to find. Our challenge is: how do we develop a tourist-based economic sector and yet retain communities where people live, raise their children, and build neighborhoods?

As we look for that link between the community and the tourist with associated opportunities and problems, the idea of a bridge as the metaphorical link may be appropriate. A bridge brings things that are apart together; it crosses difficult times or spaces; and it doesn't go on forever.

**A. The South is unique:** Our mix of pleasing environments, history and cultures will draw visitors. To paraphrase Faulkner: "We are fortunate in the South that God has done so much for it and man, so little." It is our task to understand this heritage, find our economic comparative advantage and yet retain the quality of our places and towns.

The Southern Growth Policy Board (SGPB) further developed that idea in their 1986 report *Half Way Home And A Long Way To Go*. Traditionally, the South has lagged considerably behind the rest of the nation until this last census, where the gap was narrowed. The SGPB looked at the South's comparative advantages and concluded that the cultural and natural heritage of the South is a pillar upon which economic competitiveness could be developed.

The idea of comparative advantage asks: What do we have that others don't - What can we build on? Our culture and natural resources become obvious assets.

In the SGPB report *Half Way Home And A Long Way To Go*: Among a list of 10 tenets or comparative advantages, the report concluded that the South should build on its cultural and natural resources. "In the South, beauty is our money crop," a crop we harvest the year around, found in historical communities. People fish our clean rivers and enjoy our shellfish, people make a living, people come, visit and spend money. Companies only choose to locate where cultural and natural environment is pleasing to their employees and families. The buzz word is "quality of life."

Continuing this theme, the SGPB report *After The Factories Revisited* looked at every southern county (1,343), divided them into two categories: metro and non-metro, and compared them. Among non-metro counties, those which incorporated tourism and retirement as part of their economies had a significantly higher per capita income than the non-metro economies that had not incorporated tourism and retirement. Tourism may be the bridge to rural community economic development.

**B. Why does this work?** Answers come from many resources. A particularly fine resource, *American Demographics* (a magazine I recommend most highly), examined marketing trends and pointed out that the baby boomers, who are now in middle age, are trying to buy their roots. These people live in urban areas, are often unhappy with their jobs. Further, a Gallup poll discovered these same baby boomers said that if they could

change one thing in their lives, they would like to live in a small community and be part of something genuine again.

We see indicators of this trend in our daily popular culture. Consider television shows; some of the most popular programs are about small communities. Even a *New York Times* survey in 1989 pointed out that visiting small towns was the third most popular vacation destination, ahead of national parks and amusement parks.

C. Dollar exchange: But our purpose in tourism, whether it is nature-based or community based, is to exchange dollars and to gain dollars. If an economic market is not the purpose, the result is outdoor recreation. (Not tourism, but a perfectly good activity for the well being of citizenry.) When people build an economic system, they exchange dollars. We must decide what we are willing to trade, to give up, for that dollar exchange. There is always something gained and something lost in a dollar exchange.

## II. BRIDGES CROSS DIFFICULT TIMES OR SPACES

A. BTEs: Because of this identity with community, details about the community are as important as the tourism attractions. These details are called background tourism elements (BTEs). Those are the things, besides general location, that attract people: the food, the cultures, the folkways that make the experience unique. It is often those subtle elements that are easily lost to shoddy development or poorly thought out marketing strategies. Uniqueness of special places often goes unnoticed by those living in a particular place on a daily basis.

B. A Unique State/Community: No other state has as distinct and identifiable culture as does Louisiana - you can build on being one-of-a-kind with shades of variety. What an immense resource - a very strong comparative advantage. Communities have to look at their natural setting, their landscape, and their culture through the eyes of others. It is important to advocate tourism only in terms of advocating community. Any activity that divides a community instead of bridging groups together to the idea of community should be rejected.

C. Preserving the Community: Community doesn't mean commerce. It is an irony - to select tourism development options that destroy the social context of the community reduces the sense of place. Be cautious in equating success with economic growth.

For example, Helen, Georgia decided to become Bavaria in Georgia. The people of Helen all were attracted by the idea of a theme, even though little actual heritage linked Helen to a German background. But the theme drew both visitors and money. Helen is economically successful but people making money in Helen, Georgia, are not the people who started the theme with the idea of saving the community. The economic success occurred because of those who came in for the business opportunity; with little collective memory or sense of building on the existing community.

Good commerce is not necessarily the same as good community. Disney is good commerce but I don't know that you would want to live there.

## III. BRIDGES DON'T GO ON FOREVER

Tourism is an economic relationship. We are economic animals, valuing the capitalist arrangement. We can look at economic relationships from demand or a supply point of view. Our orientation to tourism development may determine the long term stability of our economic development strategies.

A. Demand Point Of View: A demand orientation is best summarized by the cliché - "Give the customer what they want." A demand orientation suggests we think about the market out there, find out what people want and give it to them. If we can produce what they want, they'll buy it. This is an industrial approach.

But what happens when the demand changes? Asbury Park and Cape May, New Jersey both started as quaint, seaside communities at the turn of the century. Both were doing well. Each had a good natural environment upon which to build. Times were good. Asbury Park caught on to a wave of tourism and excursions before World War I. They

answered the demand question - What do they want? - and built boardwalk and amusement park which was very successful for a short time. Cape May chose not change, not to meet that demand. They didn't make the large tourist dollars while Asbury Park grew. Today, however, Cape May is the gem of the Jersey coast, and Asbury Park, now quite run down, is trying to go back to the original village. Asbury Park wants to capture a market that was once naturally theirs but now will be very difficult to recover.

**B. Preferred Approach Is The Supply Point Of View:** A supply side orientation asks: Who are we? What do we have? What are our assets and our resources? and What can we be that we want to be with the assets we have at hand?

A supply side orientation depends on understanding what resources can be directed toward specific economic development strategies. Zimmerman, in 1951, said, "Resources are not; they become." This means that an object is just an object until we give it a value, claim it for some purpose. A tree may be seen as board feet to a lumberman, or habitat to a wildlife advocate. Once it is valued, it becomes a resource. Although the uses or values for a resource may not be apparently compatible, every time the resource is claimed the object is more highly prized. Seeing something differently will often result in seeing opportunities. There are qualities, events, and places in each community which people value. These are the assets upon which a sound community-based tourism strategy can be built.

#### IV. DEFINING COMMUNITY RESOURCE FOR TOURISM

**A. People's Values:** The assets of a community are what all of the people identified with the community choose to value. How do you understand the place, or the sense of place, and define the resource? In a National Coastal Research Institute project at Johns Island, S.C., we used disposable cameras to develop a sense of the collective "vision" of the community. We asked volunteers from the different segments of the community to take pictures of what they valued in the community and what they disliked. Then, working with community leaders, we correlated the pictures to develop a total view of the resource; what they are, what they have, what they value, and what they do not value. In comparing the photos, the leaders found an 80 percent agreement on what people valued, and about 65-70 percent agreement on what people did not value. (Most of what they did not value were things that had changed by ordinance like shiny, generic-looking buildings that were not unique to the area.) The Strom Thurmond Institute at Clemson University in South Carolina is now doing this type of survey in six communities. It is based on the idea that visitors/tourists will value what the people in the community value. The assets are resources upon which to build.

**B. Scope Of Resource:** Sometimes communities are too small to stand alone. They are unique but just too small. These communities fit into a region - a larger resource. This same type of survey activity can be undertaken and the community can be defined as part of a regional or sectional collection with each small community playing a role in the area development strategy.

**C. Bridge To New Residents:** A real value associated with community-based and nature-based tourism is the link to attracting new residents, especially new retirees to a community or region. It appears that when visitors enjoy an area, an idea develops in the visitor's mind: wouldn't it be nice to live here. For many this question is being answered with a decision to relocate.

In South Carolina, we did a state study of people who moved in to the state from another region. The results:

1. New residents transfer wealth into a community - those who relocated to small communities bought disposable income of about \$40-50,000 each.
2. The new residents thought carefully about the move, taking three or four years to decide before actually making it.
3. Many had been visiting South Carolina up to 20 years prior to making a decision.



4. They are stable sources of income and many start small businesses.

5. Most recovering towns in this survey region now have a number of small, hobby-type businesses operated by relocated retirees. Those retirees also bring net worth of \$250,000.

This growth is impressive but will pale to the immigration that is possible in the next 25-40 years. The baby boomers will be coming South. They're the largest group of tourists today. *American Demographics* predicts this influx of people will last about 40 years until the baby boomers die. Therefore, tourism strategies give a community 40 years of opportunity.

Tourism succeeds over the long term in a diversified community, where tourism is only one of the arms of economic development. This tourism time bridge provides opportunity to start the businesses and move people in, and encourage local entrepreneurial attitudes.

Visitors are looking for quality, but the entire community has to buy into a vision of authenticity and quality as the basis of economic development. Every place has something special to offer. Living in a special place requires care and dedication of citizens and their elected officials to retain those qualities. The type of management required for creative development, innovative compromise, and sustainable growth is difficult, time consuming, and sometimes more expensive. But special places like those found along the rural byways of the South are worth effort, time and money. To do anything less is not acceptable.

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**Excerpts from Rural Tourism Success Stories**

Linda Curtis-Sparks, Executive Director  
Sabine River Authority, State of Louisiana

**AUTHORITY'S ROLE IN DEVELOPING TOURISM**

Three factors we've never had before:

**I. A plan**

Toledo Bend is 21 years old. Plan was needed for economic development and for retirement development.

**A. Five year plan-we have been working on it three years**

1. to educate local businesses to the value of tourism and tour dollar

a. preserving the local quality of life and sharing it with visitors.

b. sharing visitors with other businesses - encouraging visitors to shop at other establishments or visit other attractions instead of hoarding the business. Hospitality makes people want to stay in the area longer while it preserves local harmony.

2. to form a good neighbor club to help new-resident retirees adjust

3. to build infrastructure - roads, develop major bass stocking plan, renovate the public recreation areas and encourage private marinas and recreation sites to do the same

**B. Twenty-year plan - future**

1. developing ideas now

2. to unite a four parish unit - regional development - the more you work with others, the better it does.

**II. Work the plan with a passion**

A. No 40 hour weeks - doesn't stop at 5 o'clock-stops when function stops

B. Investing in the project with enthusiasm, believing in project, willing to invest time and money in it.

C. We bring in anyone we can: sports and travel writers, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries personnel, travel bureau conventions. "They see we're trying to help ourselves, so they help us."

Example of hosting sportswriters conference (4 days): marina housed the writers without cost, guides provided free services, grocery stores donated food, Lions' Club cooked meals, one town sponsored a tamale fiesta, and out of these efforts 24 articles on the area were published in various outdoor sports publications.

**III. People working together**

A. Leadership willing to take responsibility and recognize people

B. Everyone pitching in - "no one asked why, just said I'll take this part."

C. Used local resources: Extension Service, vocational school, retail merchants

D. Combination of hospitality and development

Took advantage of Extension Service hospitality training

E. Working with other tourism organizations

Contacted Southwest Louisiana Convention and Visitors' Bureau in Lake Charles, contributed \$4,000 to their projects "because it's going to pay off for us."

The Sabine River Authority is a state agency responsible for the management of Toledo Bend Reservoir, a 186,000 acre reservoir in Northwest Louisiana on the

Louisiana-Texas border. Our success story deals with setting goals to enable the lake area to reach its potential after operating for over 20 years in a somewhat status-quo position.

You will never get where you want to be until you set goals and establish a time frame to accomplish those goals. In early 1990 the Sabine River Authority realized that in order to get the private development of restaurants, hotels and entertainment areas on Toledo Bend, we first had to get a large volume of tourists and retirees to the area and we had to improve the infrastructure of the lake area. Our five year plan addressed these two major issues.

To increase the volume of tourists and retirees, we developed additional promotional activities and advertisement; educated our local businesses about the economic value of tourism and retirement; trained their employees to be better informed and friendlier; and, formed a New Neighbor Club to welcome the retirees.

The second part of our plan deals with infrastructure. We hardsurfaced 24 major access roads leading into Toledo Bend. Several hundred miles of boat lanes are being cleared and marked with buoys, a major Florida bass stocking program has been initiated and recreation sites are being upgraded.

Signs of success began to show in 1991 when we recorded 14 long weekend periods of full occupancy on the lake. This was the first such occurrence since the mid-1970s. Figures already show the 1992 season will be even better. Other indicators of this success are:

a. Hotel/Motel occupancy tax increased 35 percent in 1991 over 1990.

b. Sales tax in city of Many (parish seat) increased 11.2 percent in 1991 over 1989. There was no new business or industry to attribute this increase to except tourism.

c. Request for information through the Toledo Bend Information Center increased from 524 during the period between July 1990 to June 1991 and increased over 5,000 between July 1991 to June 1992.

d. Real estate transactions on lake properties showed a 25 percent increase in 1991 over 1990. January-April of 1992 showed a 25 percent increase over January-April of 1991.

e. The major retail businesses in the lake area experienced a 12 percent-20 percent increase January to April of 1992 over January to April of 1991.

A major factor influencing the unusual rapid rate of success was and still is the cooperation of many community and civic organizations working together on large and small projects. For the first time in the history of this area, everyone is working toward a common goal and the enhancement of the area as one. No one cares who gets the credit - just that the project be successful. We have also received great cooperation from other state and federal agencies. It seems that once they realize that an area is working together, progressing and willing to do something to help themselves, many agencies are much more willing to assist in the efforts.

## Excerpts from Rural Tourism Success Stories

Joan Williams  
Pack & Paddle Inc.

### CYCLING AND CANOEING IN RURAL AREAS OF THE STATE

- I. Meet market demands
  - A. Demands stimulated by
    - 1. public attitudes of the times
    - 2. books
    - 3. movies
- II. Change with changing market demands
  - A. Began with canoe rental
  - B. Added on-site - adjacent to water - canoe rental
  - C. Added tour service and bicycles

I blame my old fashioned father for telling me one day, "Joanie, you ought to start a business. You're giving away too much time." I was a civic volunteer and had just completed the book *Canoeing in Louisiana*, published by the natural history museum. The movie "Deliverance" had just hit the movie houses and people went canoe crazy. Everything was right to start a business.

The demand for rental canoes was clear and we filled it right out of our backyard. To better accommodate the business, we quickly found a 400 sq. ft. Acadian house sitting on the banks of the Vermilion River. It was just six blocks from our home and the rent was right -- \$85 a month. The building had been sitting empty for quite a while. We chased out the lizards and mice, plugged up the holes in the floor, painted the building white and the tin roof red, added flower boxes filled with blooming petunias and hung out our sign.

After just two months in business, tragedy struck. One night, a burglar came and emptied out our little store. We accepted the loss, restocked and put in a burglar alarm system. We knew Christmas was coming and everyone told us that everything and anything sold at Christmas.

With high expectations, we readied our store for Christmas. Thanksgiving came and went and nothing happened. Hardly a customer darkened our door. My husband's mother started shopping. She decided that everyone was going to receive Pack and Paddle gifts. Using her imagination, she made a pretty good dent in our inventory. That made us feel a little better. A few friends and neighbors also shopped. Then about 10 days before Christmas, people were standing in line to buy. As we needed things, we'd send one of the children home to retrieve one of the wrapped gifts. By Christmas there was hardly anything left under the tree and we had emptied the store. We were ecstatic.

That summer, we decided to add a canoe outpost on the Whiskey Chitto River. We had been renting canoes from the store and supplying maps, but we figured if we made it easy for people we would rent more canoes. So the family, under the direction of my father-in-law, went up to the river and built a wooden building, consisting of a small office and four bunk beds. We found a local person to keep the canoes for us and our three sons worked the outpost on weekends.

However, the locals did not take too kindly to this new business. Some wished they had thought of it themselves and others did not like the tourists, whom they called foreigners, going down their river. Threats began. And finally one night the outpost was burned to the ground. "Bad wiring" the police report read. The man who was keeping our canoes asked us to come get them. He had received personal threats and threats to shoot holes in the canoes.

Not everyone was against the new operation. The grocery store in Mittie begged us to keep the outpost open. One couple offered our sons lodging on the weekends and they offered to keep the canoes. Before long, we realized that a partnership with this couple would solve our problems. We supplied the customers and canoeing equipment, and they supplied the labor and trucks. The business flourished and soon we were renting 80 to 100 canoes on Saturday and Sunday. About two years later, as I was driving through Oberlin, I spied a sign in a cafe window that read, "Welcome Canoeists". At last, the locals were realizing the economic benefits of the canoe operation.

It is sometimes difficult to get local people and even government people and politicians to have the vision to see how a small item such as a canoe or a bicycle can have economic impact. It does! We saw success with canoes and now we want to grow with bicycles.

Bicycle touring is growing rapidly throughout the nation. We can cash in on this new form of tourism in Louisiana but business, government, and highway people must work together.

Even foreign visitors are interested in bike touring. On one of our bike tours, we were staying at Oak Alley plantation and met a tall, handsome couple with touring bikes. We asked them what had brought them to the United States to tour. They replied, "We have this book called *Backroad Tours of French Louisiana*." I was stunned. I learned that they had purchased the book at a small bookstore in Denmark. How it got there, I'll never know. To date we have sold about 3,000 copies of this book, *Backroad Tours of French Louisiana*, and people are using it in cars and on motorcycles. It tells them where to go, it gives them the bed and breakfast accommodations, it gives them routes to follow and it gives them things to see while they are in an area. We also have a touring company, and I've advertised nationally in bicycling magazines and we've had several thousands requests for the brochure over a period of 4 or 5 years. But people are interested in coming and bike touring in Louisiana. Rural areas can cash in on this new form of tourism, but businesses, government, and highway people must work together.

We hope to get the Louisiana lieutenant governor's support for our bicycling plans in general and especially for creating a bike path on top of the levee between Baton Rouge and New Orleans. A linear park of this kind would cost next to nothing and could bring thousands of cyclists a year into rural areas. These cyclists stay in motels, they eat in the restaurants, they visit the little stores. They could bring a lot of money into rural areas. There is federal money available for bike trails and linear parks of this kind.

To sum up. Louisiana has great potential to become a center for bicycle touring. We must make every effort to make Louisiana as bicycle-friendly as possible. Here are a few ideas to improve cycling conditions.

1. Educate of the cyclists and drivers through drivers education.
2. Build all our roads with a three- to four-foot shoulder.
3. Bridges should all have a lane for foot and bicycle traffic.
4. Promote litter-free roads.
5. More bed and breakfast accommodations.
6. Rail to trails conversions as they become available.
7. Paving the tops of our levees.

Lets go for the Gold!

**Excerpts from Rural Tourism Success Stories**

**Karen Babb, Director**  
**West Baton Rouge Historical Association**

**KEYS TO A MUSEUM'S SUCCESS**

- I. Community involvement
  - A. Historical association
  - B. Local industry
  - C. Individual citizens
- II. Financing through
  - A. Fundraisers
  - B. Local tax
  - C. Donation from citizens
- III. Perpetuation and Growth
  - A. Meet and maintain original goal (preserving local history)
  - B. Develop and expand program
    - 1. now: local historical education for school age children
    - 2. art for local education and enjoyment

The title of my segment of the program, "Keys to a Small Museum's Success," is appropriate for us, the West Baton Rouge Museum, because one of those keys is to discover and unlock your organization's unique resources and potential.

The West Baton Rouge Museum, located in Port Allen, Louisiana, was first opened to the public in 1969 in what was the records vault at the rear of a former parish courthouse. The museum was founded by the West Baton Rouge Historical Association, an organization which had been formed during the previous year by a small group of citizens who were concerned about the parish's vanishing heritage. In 1969, the museum welcomed 111 visitors, with visitation increasing to nearly 1,000 in 1970.

Although the historical association's beginning was an inauspicious one, the organization quickly gained support, more than quadrupling in size. The museum expanded as well with the addition of two galleries.

The main museum building now houses exhibits on parish history and life style, including such items as a 1904 working model of a sugar mill and a circa 1830 American Empire bedroom. A circa 1850 slave cabin, which is believed to be the oldest still standing in the parish, was moved to the museum's grounds in 1976. The newest addition to the museum is the circa 1830 French Creole Aillet House, so-named after the family who owned it for over a century. The house was purchased by Dow USA and donated to the West Baton Rouge Historical Association the day before it was scheduled for demolition. Dow also moved the house to the museum and renovated its exterior as part of the donation. The historical association is undertaking the formidable task of researching and renovating the house's interior. Community interest in the house has been high, as evidenced by numerous offers of artifacts, information, and monetary support. In addition, a portion of the museum's regular funding, through the historical association and a small tax millage which has been in place since 1975, has been allocated for the house's renovation.

The West Baton Rouge Museum was originally intended to help preserve the history and culture of West Baton Rouge Parish and its people. Since its founding, the museum's scope has broadened to include art, with heightened emphasis placed on the

museum's educational role in the community. Programs are offered for children and adults throughout the year. This past spring, all parish 4th graders participated in Living History Days, learning of the area's agricultural heritage. Summer Art Days, led by area artists, has attracted over 100 children for more than a decade. The Ethel Claiborne Dameron Memorial Lecture Series, named in honor of one of the museum's founders, has featured noted speakers such as Lindy Boggs and Doug Williams. The Whitehead Gallery features six changing exhibits a year, ranging from history to crafts to the fine arts.

Community help is essential to our museum. Besides the help from Dow and the historical association, an LSU landscape design class will soon be creating a historically accurate planting scheme for us.

Although our story may appear to be a smooth one, this has not always been the case. During the 1970's, visitation fluctuated wildly from year to year, ranging from 600 to 4,200. To relieve this condition, the historical association board voted to hire the museum's first professional director in 1989. Since that time, attendance has risen steadily from 2,189 in 1989 to 3,658 in 1991. Attendance for 1992 is expected to exceed 4,500. The impact of the museum's visitors from outside the area on the local economy was nearly \$100,000 in 1991, creating three new jobs in the parish.

It has been said that one way to measure an organization's success is to determine whether its achievements work toward its goals and overall vision. For over 20 years, the West Baton Rouge Museum, despite limited financial resources, has been providing quality exhibits and educational programming for the people it serves through the selfless dedication of those who believe in its mission. I call that success!

## Excerpts from Rural Tourism Success Stories

Shelley Johnson, Executive Director  
Southwest Louisiana Convention and Visitors Bureau

### FIVE-PARISH MARKETING AND PROMOTION PARTNERSHIP

- I. Tourism plan needs regional cooperation
  - A. state agency
  - B. five parish consortium
  - C. Cajun Riviera Festival Association
- II. Regional promotion plans
  - A. Use existing events
    - 1. trade shows
    - 2. workshops
    - 3. cooperative ventures
  - B. Share publishing projects
    - 1. brochures
    - 2. advertising in specific publications

Tourism planning is an important process aimed at guiding future actions to attract more visitors. Because such planning requires a major collaborative effort, the Southwest Louisiana Marketing Consortium was organized in December 1990. The parishes of Allen, Beauregard, Calcasieu, Cameron, and Jeff Davis make up the five-parish area once known as the "Imperial Calcasieu" to early French settlers. Home to 260,000 people collectively, the parishes have historical, cultural, and economic ties and have always been active participants in a number of tourism efforts. The consortium operates on an ad-hoc basis and serves as an excellent forum for discussion of matters of regional relevance. It has produced a number of successful brochures, publications, and advertisements and marketing projects, mentioned below.

**Trade shows:** By sharing the cost of booth space, the consortium has successfully participated in the January 1991 BusExpo in New Orleans, July 91 Bayou Bash in Houston, Texas, and LTPA Travel and Vacation Show programs 91-92. The Southwest Louisiana Convention and Visitors Bureau sales force will attend a trade show and represent the entire consortium with brochures and information. The bureau also does the follow up solicitation to all shows.

**Workshops:** Workshops have been conducted to assess attractions and tourism potential, and to define priorities in each parish. A Southwest Louisiana Marketing Workshop for consortium members was held in March 1992 with the cooperation of SOT, LTPA, and LSU SeaGrant.

**Cooperative venture:** Tourism Awareness Day picnic at the Pentagon is a cooperative venture which promotes the economic importance of tourism to the State of Louisiana and Southwest Louisiana.

**Brochures:** Promotional brochures have been created and designed to promote and market southwest Louisiana. We published *Birding Guide to Southwest Louisiana*, *Festival Guide to Southwest Louisiana*, *Creole Nature Trail Brochure*, *Southwest Louisiana Visitors Guide*, *Christmas Brochure*, and *REDA Brochures*.

**Advertise in specific publications.** We chose *Birders World*, *Birders Digest* 91/92; *Texas Monthly* 91/92; *Woodalls Campground Directory*.



Special Projects: In November 1991 the Southwest Louisiana Regional Economic Development Alliance entered into an agreement with the Southwest Louisiana Convention and Visitors Bureau to conduct a tourism development project. Funding support is provided by the Department of Economic Development. The Southwest Louisiana Tourism Development Project consisted of two parts: Part one was the preparation of a region-wide promotional piece that linked the region and produced individual parish brochures; part two was the development of an integrated plan that addressed development issues and involved considerable local input and feedback.

The lead organization in the preparation of this plan was the Southwest Louisiana Convention and Visitors' Bureau. The SWLACVB was created by an act of the Louisiana Legislature in 1972 for the purpose of "soliciting visitors for the city of Lake Charles and Calcasieu Parish." Since then, the bureau's role has expanded and evolved into being the lead marketing organization for the entire southwest Louisiana region.

Tables 1-4 depict the growth in tourism that has taken place both statewide and in the Southwest Louisiana REDA region since the 1980s. The amounts appearing in these tables have not been adjusted for inflation.

Most notable are the double digit increases in domestic travel expenditures and travel payroll. Statewide, the expenditures of domestic travelers (includes both leisure and corporate travel business) rose by nearly 23 percent in the four-year period between 1987 and 1990. These increases can be attributed to several factors. Particularly significant is the overall economic upturn that has taken place statewide and in southwest Louisiana since 1987. This has positively affected hotel occupancies in the Lake Charles/Sulphur area, and thus figures have been rising steadily in the last four years.

But the advertising and promotional activities undertaken in the last five years by the bureau and area tourism groups have also begun to bear fruit.

Cabins in the Holly Beach area have reported nearly full occupancies during the last two summer seasons; visitations to area wildlife refuges, beaches, and parks are up; and the recreational vehicle and camping business has been steadily growing in Beauregard Parish. The revitalization of downtown Jennings is the centerpiece of that community's development efforts, and the Jeff Davis Parish Tourist Center located at the Oil and Gas Park on I-10 reported a 50 percent increase in the total number of visitors between January 1991 and January 1992.

Also of great interest to the region is that its share of Louisiana's growing "travel pie" has been increasing. As can be observed in Table 4, the five-parish area accounted for 2.7 percent of the domestic travel expenditures in Louisiana in 1987. By 1990, the Southwest's share had risen by a full percentage point to 3.7 percent.

**TABLE 1**  
**IMPACT OF DOMESTIC TRAVEL ON LOUISIANA**  
**1987-90**

Category	1987	1990	Percent Change
Total Travel Expend.	\$3.5 bil.	\$4.3 bil.	+22.8 %
Total Travel Payroll	\$730.8 mil.	\$857.8 mil.	+17.3 %
Total Travel Employ.	67,000	76,300	+13.9 %

Source: Louisiana Office of Tourism

**TABLE 2**  
**IMPACT OF TRAVEL ON CALCASIEU PARISH**  
**1987-90**

Category	1987	1990	Percent Change
Total Travel Expend.	\$89.5 mil.	\$128.1 mil.	+43.1 %
Total Travel Payroll	\$16.9 mil.	\$20.4 mil.	+20.7 %
Total Travel Employ.	1,776	1,790	+.8 %

Source: Louisiana Office of Tourism

**TABLE 3**  
**IMPACT OF TRAVEL ON FIVE-PARISH AREA**  
**1987-90**

<b>Category</b>	<b>1987</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>Percent Change</b>
<b>Total Travel Expend.</b>	<b>\$101.2 mil.</b>	<b>\$161.3 mil.</b>	<b>+59.4 %</b>
<b>Total Travel Payroll</b>	<b>\$18.8 mil.</b>	<b>\$23.9 mil.</b>	<b>+27.1 %</b>
<b>Total Travel Employ.</b>	<b>1,969</b>	<b>2,100</b>	<b>+6.7 %</b>

**Source: Louisiana Office of Tourism**

**TABLE 4**  
**SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA AS % OF LOUISIANA TOTAL**

**1987**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Five-Parish Area</b>	<b>Louisiana</b>	<b>Percent of Louisiana</b>
<b>Total Travel Expend.</b>	<b>\$101.2 mil.</b>	<b>\$3,759.7 mil.</b>	<b>2.69</b>
<b>Total Travel Payroll</b>	<b>\$18.8 mil.</b>	<b>\$763.4 mil.</b>	<b>2.46</b>
<b>Total Travel Employ.</b>	<b>1,969</b>	<b>73,177</b>	<b>2.69</b>

**1990**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Five-Parish Area</b>	<b>Louisiana</b>	<b>Percent of Louisiana</b>
<b>Total Travel Expend.</b>	<b>\$161.3 mil.</b>	<b>\$4,344.2 mil.</b>	<b>3.71</b>
<b>Total Travel Payroll</b>	<b>\$23.9 mil.</b>	<b>\$857.8 mil.</b>	<b>2.79</b>
<b>Total Travel Employ.</b>	<b>2,100</b>	<b>76,330</b>	<b>2.75</b>

Source: Louisiana Office of Tourism

**Excerpts from Rural Tourism Success Stories**

**Lubertha Powell, Cooperative Extension Service  
Claiborne Parish Handmade/Homegrown Festival**

**HOMEMADE FESTIVAL**

- I. Develop what you have
  - A. Local talent
  - B. Local committees establish and maintain project
- II. Cooperation is the key to success
  - A. Promote each other - don't compete
  - B. Encourage local/state/federal agency help and cooperation
  - C. Help individuals grow into new businesses

The Claiborne Parish Handmade/Homegrown Festival economic development project is becoming well known through its monthly event, as a result of lots of community effort and local involvement.

It was organized with about 38 regular vendors selling handmade or homegrown items. The festival name reflects the characteristics of the items for sale. Thirty-eight 8'X10' booth spaces each rent for \$10 per month. These are almost always booked (with the exception of vacation months). We encourage each vendor to sell different items to increase his own business and to decrease his competition with the other vendors.

The festival has sustained itself since its beginning. A \$3,000 Chamber of Commerce grant provided "seed" money. To date, more than \$246,000 worth of merchandise has been sold through this festival. Booth rentals have brought in another \$8,050.

The overall goal of this project is to foster business expansion, create and/or retain jobs and enhance local income. This project was launched in Homer in November 1990 to improve the local economic development climate in our parish by creating part-time jobs, expanding our tax base, and taking advantage of the talents of our many parish and area craftsmen. Local committees were established for every aspect of the project. Even the 4-H'ers participate.

The Handmade/Homegrown Festival enhances the economy of Claiborne Parish. It is a rural parish, population of 17,405, with limited job opportunities. Most people make a living from forestry-related work like pulpwood, logging and tree farming.

Because of its pristine environment including Lake Claiborne, the parish is a potential gold mine for tourism. The Handmade/Homegrown Festival has helped to attract tourists.

Most agencies and governing bodies are working together to enhance the various tourism attractions that are now available in the parish. In fact, one of the greatest successes of this project is the cooperation of agencies, governing bodies, community leaders, parish tourism commission, ministers, organizations, civic groups, all working together to further economic development within the parish. The Handmade/Homegrown Festival along with the Claiborne Parish Tourist Commission endorsed the Extension Service hospitality training program. A total of 123 persons participated to increase their knowledge in customer relations and become aware of tourists' needs and wants.

Three businesses have grown out of this festival: a variety store, a home-based flower shop business, and a home accessories business. Plans are being made for one

more business to reseat and refinish furniture. Together 25 new jobs have been created in Claiborne Parish.

Entertainment for the Handmade/Homegrown Festival is provided by school bands, choirs, community bands, parish vocalists, cloggers, and other gospel and spiritual groups.

At the festival, the youngest sales person is 12 years old and the oldest, 93. The 12 year old sells jewelry and the 93 year old, woven oak baskets. Best sellers are baked items, homemade candies, white oak baskets, wood crafts, toys and canned goods, curtains, carved items, home accessories, fresh vegetables, fresh homegrown fruits and nuts.

The Handmade/Homegrown Festival increased community pride and self-confidence. The talents of aged and minorities throughout the parish have been improved, and group involvement has been accomplished. People working together in this business venture have been fantastic.

## Excerpts from Rural Tourism Success Stories

Johnny Glover  
CoCo Marina, Inc.

### COCODRIE'S FISHING ADVENTURES

- I. Diversify an existing business
  - A. Choose at a renewable resource
  - B. Take time to observe those already successful in the target business
    1. Copy the successes - talk, listen
    2. Adapt others' successes to your situation
  - C. Consider the values of your customers
    1. Clean? Modern? Rustic? Natural?
    2. If values different, arrange for the groups to blend
  - D. Don't forget your old customers while adding new ones
- II. Be a good host
  - A. Put all of the facilities in one place
  - B. No matter how rustic, quality is always attractive
  - C. Invite writers, officials, to visit and learn about you
    1. Investment pays off in publicity and help
    2. Don't just invite him, send him a ticket

CoCo Marina provides services and facilities for the oil, seafood, sportfishing and tourist industries. On any given day you will encounter a cross section of our south Louisiana way of life. South Louisiana lifestyles commingle in harmony at CoCo Marina. Day in and day out, whether eating in our restaurant or utilizing one of our many services, it is not uncommon to encounter an equal number of acquaintances from the oilfield, seafood, sports, and tourism industries and our friendly locals who are the ingredient that makes our unique business possible.

In the mid to early 1980s, 90 percent of our income was oilfield oriented; i.e., fuel dock, dock rentals, car parking, and a general provision store. Since the mid-1980s, we diversified our facility so that we would not be completely dependent on a depleting resource (oil). We chose a renewable resource, sportfishing, because we knew that southwest Louisiana has some of the best fishing in the world.

But how do you go from an oil field facility, not environmentally friendly to the greater extent, and bring in the tourists who demand clean, quality, nice surroundings? Well we in Terrebonne Parish have a unique way of life and we have unique people. I decided to give it a shot.

But before I did, I took my vehicle and I headed to Florida. I wanted to see how other people do business and Florida was already doing tourism and sportfishing. I traveled the Florida Gulf Coast all the way to Key West. I stopped at every little sportfishing facility. I picked their brain. Sometimes I was a nuisance to them because they were busy, but overall they were helpful. When I was done, I had an idea what was going to have to be done, what was expected. I knew I had a lot of work ahead of me. But I knew that we had the resource, I knew I had the product, and the product had gone untapped.

I came back and I built what I call condominiums. Some people may call them camps, but I learned from Florida and from other areas to call them condominiums. It sounds better to the tourist. We put up some nice facilities.

In the transition period my main emphasis was on harmony, a market mix. I didn't want to lose my oil industry customers while adding my new tourism customers. In the



mid to late 80s, we serviced the oil industry, the seafood industry, the sportfishing industry, and the tourist industry and we put it together and we made everybody feel comfortable. The groups influenced each other. We made the oil people, not accustomed to a clean surrounding, feel comfortable. They loved it and everybody started to have a little pride in what we did. It took tender love and care. Right now I'd venture to say that we have some of the nicest sportfishing accommodations in south Louisiana.

One thing that made us unique compared to Florida is a central location. At Coco Marina you can fish, eat, sleep all within 100 yards of each other. In Florida, you must drive from hotel to fishing, and drive again to get a meal. Florida moves tourists around. We made our facility unique; we offer everything in the total package at one location.

Our main objective was to seek, find, and bring to my facility people who did what I wanted to do. Sportswriters, TV commentators, syndicated TV shows, TV personalities. We hosted them on our own private dollar. Then we did our own video so if Coca Cola, Conoco or Exxon or IBM thought about our facility or would like to know more about it, I could slip a video in the mail, give them a 10-minute presentation, let them show it to their board of directors or the people in the group. And it worked. We have had no less than 100 sports writers at Coco Marina and probably no less than 200 articles written. I invite them, send them a plane ticket, and meet them at the airport.

Today our income can be broken down to: oilfield 30 percent, seafood 15 percent, sportfishing and tourism, 55 percent. Of these totals, 70 percent of our business originates outside our region and 45 percent of this is outside of our state. This means new dollars are being injected into our area's economy. These figures are a reflection of our expanded services which include crane service, bulk fuel sales, heliport, restaurant, charter fishing, RV parking, condo, studio, room rentals, private party catering, fishing tournaments and entertainment of professionals in various fields--primarily fishing and tourism.

**Excerpts from Department Updates: Culture, Recreation and Tourism, Economic Development, Wildlife and Fisheries, Transportation and Development, Governor's Office**

**Moderator; Danny Young, Executive Director of the Louisiana Travel Promotion Association (LTPA)**

**PANELISTS:**

**Secretary Mark Hilzlm, Department of Culture, Recreation & Tourism (CRT):**

When I came into the department, my charge from Mrs. Schwegmann was to take down the walls that we had built around the department. Those walls made us selective on who we let in the gate and who we didn't. We also had walls we built within the department.

When you first look at the components of CRT, they might look somewhat different from each other. For example, what do parks and litter have to do with each other, or with tourism and the arts? They all compliment each other pretty well. If we are going to make tourism the industry that we know it can be in Louisiana, we must realize that all these elements are going to be assets we have to get a handle on quickly. Once we realized that we have offices that really complement each other, that can very easily be united into a single mission or effort, we worked hard. We have been successful in a very short period of time to knock the walls down on the inside and get to the point where people on the inside now are starting to work with each other a lot more. And that is exciting.

We are starting to use the small task force concept of getting things done. If one of you all were to walk into my office one day or have an appointment and you want to talk about Monroe, I might have a group of people meet together with us. I would invite somebody from parks because we have commemorative areas in that Monroe region, a state park in that region. I would have somebody from tourism come in; I might have somebody from OCD come in who could talk about historic preservation in the arts program. We would have people from throughout the department who had expertise not just in one area but expertise in all areas all focused on trying to help you. And I think really that is a little bit of what the whole rural tourism effort is all about.

It's not just tourism people. I'm not here just wearing the tourism hat. It's people that represent all the good things we have to offer in Louisiana and all the important assets that we can use to make all the diverse elements understand that they really do support each other and that they really all need to help each other. That is what rural tourism is all about.

This task force method lends itself to a good marketing effort. Rural tourism is not only the selling but it's also getting in touch with what you really have to sell and who the players are that might help you do that.

What are we in the Department of CRT doing right now to help with the rural tourism effort? Well, I could be very egotistical and say that we are coordinating and handling the rural tourism effort, but I know better than that. A lot of people were working on the rural tourism effort for a very long time before I ever showed up on the scene. They were working together informally on their own to try to make some things happen. We have now formalized those efforts. We have a coordinator who spends basically all of her time on the rural tourism effort; and that is Sharon Calcote. We are trying to infuse our advertising program, which is the largest advertising effort in the state, with the goals and the needs of the rural tourism program to make sure that we address the big city type efforts and give the visitor, or potential visitor, a sense of the extraordinary depth of resources that we have. We want to show them the extraordinary

depth of attractions that we have in our rural areas so that people will get off the beaten path a little bit and see what's really there. And hopefully that then translates into dollars in your community.

We've realized very quickly that CRT, even as a state agency, cannot function alone. We need to work much more closely with other state departments. Paul Keller is the classic example of trying to bring all the state agencies together in the united effort to attack problems. And we are trying to be a part of that network too.

We have made a tremendous progress in working with the DOTD to try to address what we think are some common problems. We are working right now with General Patin directly, in developing a program with a format that can be used statewide to develop clear signage. Those who have worked around DOTD for a few years know that they have seven or eight independent districts with each district manager empowered within his region. I don't need to tell you some of the problems that might have occurred in the past with seven different people giving seven different opinions on how to get some things done. We are now able to work directly with each district manager. General Patin is now working with his district managers to try to get a uniform approach towards issues like signage.

We have about 2.5 million visitors a year stopping at visitor centers. Visitor centers are a place to get a cup of coffee, go to the bathroom, stretch your legs -- and that is a sales tool. If people are comfortable at a center because of a positive, happy, friendly, clean, attractive atmosphere, they're going to linger. If they linger, we have a chance to sell them on staying an extra amount of time in Louisiana. I don't need to sit down and start working through the economics of 2.5 million visitors staying another day and a half each year in Louisiana. So it's really important that we keep these visitor centers growing and improving.

Louisiana has the first visitor centers in the country. But we still have those same visitor centers...right now. We have asked the interim emergency board for about a \$0.33 million dollars to start drawing architectural plans to improve four of the centers.

We are working with DOTD on the byways project. It is fortunate that the federal government has realized the importance of getting people off the interstate highways and onto what used to be the primary highway system, now it's the secondary system. The Scenic Byways Program is going to provide an opportunity for states to get federal matching money -- four to one match -- to take those areas that have gone through a very rigorous process and met some pretty stringent criteria to be included in a national byway system.

In this program, once a road is a designated byway, it will be eligible for these funds to spruce up and enhance those roads to make them more economically competitive. (Announced that Louisiana received funds for some projects in the first Byways Awards for 92-93 funding - details on this in Secretary Jude Patin's address below.) CRT reviewed many applications and Louisiana submitted about forty-five projects to the federal government. We got four of them funded. One reason that we did not get what I consider our fair share of the funding is that we do not have a Corridor Management Plan in place. That was one of the criteria for funding. Fortunately one of the grants Louisiana received was for development of that plan. We have four projects that have been funded for a total of \$102,000. The first would be to prepare byway brochures on the existing byway system. The second would be to develop and place attraction signs within that byway system. The next would be to put directional signs within the byway system. The fourth, and I think most importantly, would be the funding to develop the Corridor Management Plan plus an educational outreach program to teach and assist communities to meet the criteria for having a thoroughfare become a designated byway. The 93-94 application process is now in place. This \$102,000 from ISETEA (Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act) will be matched by funds from DOTD and CRT.

A couple of final observations. Pow-Wow is coming to New Orleans in May. Touring services from other countries come to the United States to buy travel services for their U.S. tour packages. It's positively the most impressive two-three day business show that you will ever see. They do about \$2 billion dollars of business within a couple of days. For more information about Pow-Wow see me.

Right now we are in the process of taking proposals for our next three-year advertising contract which would be let for July 1 of next year. If you have advertising firms in your area (it has to be a Louisiana firm) that are interested in finding out more about that, call the Office of Tourism and request a copy of the RFP package right now.

In summary, our goals are to try to run as honest and aggressive a department as possible, to try to tear down the exterior walls to include other related agencies and the public in the decision making process. We also want to create energy within the department and, with others, to translate our activities into economic growth for you.

**Secretary Kevin Reilly, Department of Economic Development(DED):**

I want to reiterate what Mark Hilzlim said about making a team effort out of our efforts to advance the cause of tourism, whether it be rural tourism or urban tourism. Tourism is one of the most important economic activities that we have in this state and Mark has worked closely with us on our problems and our solutions. It's important that we pull together.

Today I want to talk to you about the just-finished constitutional convention. We will have to vote on Nov. 3 on some of the amendments to the constitution that the convention came up with. I probably share with you the wish that the convention would have been more successful in the area of reforming our tax base. But they did come up with some good ideas as far as controlling expenditures in this state is concerned. When I was first elected to office in 1972, our debt service was a bit over \$40 million a year (principle and interest). This year, it will be approximately \$750 million. Before we can provide one dollar of services, we have to service that debt. Our state general fund is about \$4.6 billion dollars. So one out of every six dollars that we take in has to be paid out in debt service before we do anything else. The federal government, similarly faces a \$4 trillion debt and something approaching \$300 billion in expenditures to service the debtors. Our federal debt service is the largest single item in the budget.

When you go to vote Nov. 3, look at these amendments that the constitutional convention put before you. One amendment would limit the use of one-shot money. For the last 10 years, we've been using windfall money that comes one time to pay recurring expenses. That's just exactly like the homeowner or the householder that has \$10,000 in his savings account and every year he dips into it for \$2-3,000. Pretty soon he's used up his savings. Then he has to either cut back his lifestyle or go bankrupt. This is what we have to do in Louisiana with our expenditures. I recommend this highly.

You are saying "What in earth has this got to do with development of rural tourism?" We cannot begin to advance economically, whether it be in tourism or any other way, unless we control our spending. Unlike the federal government, we can't print money. We have to live within our income.

On the ballot I would like to recommend to you Amendment No.2 to correct an ambiguity in our constitution. This ambiguity in our present constitution might forbid the state government or a local government from contributing something of value to an individual or private corporation to promote economic activity. Right now one way of interpreting the constitution would forbid the market commission from lending money or endorsing loans for an economic activity in a particular area if the money went to a private person or corporation. But we've been doing this for years. This needs to be clarified. I recommend to you that you look at Amendment No.2 because it does have an impact on people involved in the tourist business. You are constantly doing things in the private sector. Economic activity has to come from a partnership between the state and local government and the private sector. If we don't have that ability to help each other financially, our hands are tied behind our backs.

On balance I think that Louisiana is on a roll. The economic activity around the state right now is unbelievable. Exxon just broke ground in a \$150 million addition to its refinery in Baton Rouge. The owners of Continental Grain Elevator on the Mississippi River in the LaPlace area are going to move their whole headquarters to Slidell, creating 80 very well-paid jobs. Baker Heritage Hosiery Co. is going to have 400 jobs in the LaPlace area, St John's area. We have a major air-conditioning manufacturer going into the Natchitoches area, providing almost 500 jobs.

That's only the start because of the North American Free Trade Agreement with Mexico. The long term strategy of the air conditioning manufacturer includes a co-venture with a Mexican firm so that we can open up the Mexican market and probably have as many as 1,500 or 2,000 employees ultimately working in that Natchitoches factory.

I think that if we can once again establish Louisiana as the gateway to Latin America, if we can bring these people into Louisiana, we'll keep them here and we'll entertain them and we'll send them home happy. We need to concentrate on our transportation. We do not have a real international airport, a hub. It has cost us. For example, when we had Braniff, Eastern, Pan American, and some of the other airlines flying to Latin America on a regular basis, about 25% of the business at Oschner Clinic in New Orleans was Latin American. Today, because only Aero-Mexico flies regularly, Oschner's business is about eight percent Latin American. Where did that business go? To Houston, Atlanta, and Miami. We've got to work hard to recapture that. Mexico has been our largest single customer. They constitute about 60 percent of the purchases in the a free trade sector. Louisiana is really on a roll. Economic times are good, they are going to get better.

**Secretary Jude Patin, Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD).**

My department has as one of its goals to promote the tourism trade opportunities in our state. As your Secretary I want to build a framework for improvement, and initiate the construction of a total, modern, intermodal transportation infrastructure system for the state of Louisiana. This process will enhance the economic development of the state by creating jobs in the construction industry and ultimately result in Louisiana becoming a leader in international commerce and becoming the state with the cleanest, the safest and the most beautiful transportation infrastructure in the nation. I believe that my goal is achievable.

The key to promoting economic development and tourism in any state is an efficient, effective, well built, total intermodal transportation system. I am referring to all modes of transportation: highways, rail, ports and harbors, public transit systems and airports.

Recently DOTD was awarded a \$500,000 grant to develop a statewide master transportation intermodal plan. This plan will outline a statewide transportation system that will integrate all modes of transportation. The concerns of the rural communities will be incorporated in this plan so that those areas can compete, participate, and benefit from the economic development and tourist trades of the state. We have also received a federal grant of \$100,000 to improve our scenic byways here in Louisiana. These funds will allow us to undertake several projects to enhance our scenic byways and to have more of our roadways designated as scenic byway routes. There are in excess of 500 miles of scenic byways designated in Louisiana at this time. We hope these funds will allow us to add more routes, to erect additional signage, and to make those routes more beautiful and more interesting.

We have, now, three new rest stop areas planned for I-49 and we're working hard to spruce up many of the older rest areas that we currently have available in the state.

In our efforts to develop projects to preserve and enhance the natural beauty, we need to keep those areas clean and litter-free. Soon after I took over the duties as your Secretary of Transportation and Development, I appointed a litter control task force. This task force has developed and provided me with a prioritized list of new ways in which we in the department can combat the litter problem that we have in Louisiana. We are in the process of implementing a number of these measures which include the development of a new DOTD anti-litter campaign, making recyclable litter bags available at rest areas and tourist centers, placing and maintaining marked trash receptacles in public areas that are controlled by DOTD, and developing a larger anti-litter sign for displays. These measures are in addition to the department's on-going anti-litter program. We also enlisted the help of Louisiana citizens in our battle against litter. Our Adopt a Road Program continued to grow. We have over 900 agreements with citizens and businesses that have agreed to clean a section of the roadways twice a year.

Another successful beautification program DOTD is involved in is Project Wildflower. We work with a group called the Louisiana Project Wildflower to preserve these native flowers that bloom all year round. In addition to enhancing the natural beauty of the roadsides, wildflowers help to control erosion. DOTD also works with organizations and municipalities by providing plans and specifications for landscaping designs.

My personal goal as Secretary of the department is to give to the citizens of Louisiana a beautiful, clean, and litter-free state with a quality intermodal transportation infrastructure system.

In conclusion I invite you as partners to share and partake with me in my efforts to improve the economic posture of our state and to enhance the natural beauty of Louisiana. I am confident that together we can build a better Louisiana.

**Bob Dennie, Editor of *Louisiana Conservationist*, representing the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF):**

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries has a strong bond between tourist promotion and outdoor recreation. We cannot always work together with you on everything because our long range goals are directed toward animals. And we don't always have the funding to do some of the things that are more immediate promotion. But we do help when tourism people call us. Our department is much smaller than it was 10-12 years ago and the demands are greater on everybody. Funds are short, demands are high.

Forty years ago we didn't have a huntable, statewide deer population. We had 20 percent of the state open, 80 percent closed. Forty years later we have more deer than when the Indians came. We have 95 percent of the state open now to deer hunting. Turkey was the same thing.

We do management restocking, habitat enhancement, and enforcement. Successful hunters, fisherman -- whether they be resident non-resident. -- mean big money to the state of Louisiana. These people spend money, they travel.

You're going to have a lot more hunters and fishermen traveling this state because of this catastrophe that Hurricane Andrew gave us in the Atchafalaya Basin. Basin bass fishing will have a 14-inch size limit. So fishermen are going to be looking for other places to fish.

One of the greatest assets for nature tourism people is the map in your packet of wildlife management areas in the state of Louisiana. We have 45 wildlife management areas in the state right now, with a little over a million acres. These areas are open to the residents and non-residents of the state of Louisiana. However, a change is occurring in these areas. They are open to the hunters and the fishermen because they buy the licenses and the license fees are what we use to purchase and manage these lands. (A lot of this land belongs to large companies who let us manage it for game and habitat enhancement.) A new law says that from now on the outdoorsmen who have not paid for a license in the past will have to buy a permit for \$10 to use these lands. These non-consumptive people have been using these areas without paying to fix the roads and put the fences up and manage the wildlife. We had to have more funds. Effective April 1993, non-consumptive users of the management areas will have to buy a permit but hunters and fishermen will not because they already buy a license. That will be their passport into any of these 45 areas. You will see this spread all across this state. So look at your map because these are the areas in your part of the state that can help you bring people in.

Maybe you haven't been promoting these areas but the fishing is outstanding, the hunting is excellent. Deer hunting? In Louisiana last year we had 187,000 deer hunters who spent 3,333,000 man-days in the woods hunting. Deer is the biggest large game animal in the state.

Turkey hunters? Last year we had 19,000. This is a very select group. They spent 1,127,600 man-days in the woods after the wild turkey. These are really dedicated people coming from all over the country.

Last year we had 15,000 people hunting woodcock on our wildlife management areas; they killed 97,300 birds. They make an economic impact from the dogs, the hunting clothes, the shotgun shells, the gasoline, the groceries.

About 90,000 people in the state of Louisiana went rabbit hunting last year, killing over a million rabbits. Our number one small game is squirrel. About 159,300 people last year killed over 2,000,840 squirrels.

Over a million ducks were harvested by 71,800 duck hunters last year.

Fishing? We have outstanding fishing in this state.

Look for the bass fishing tournaments. They moved all of the tournaments out of the Atchafalaya to other places. Most of these tournaments are catch and release.

We are restocking the Atchafalaya, but it will take time. We're getting a lot of fish donated from other state and game agencies across the country. We have to stock the



species in a progression...we can't just go in and dump fish. We have to wait for the bad water to get cleared out. We will bring in bream and crappie and the bass last.

We are a birding state. The brown pelican, our state bird, was basically wiped out 15-18 years ago. Florida donated some for study of the effect of pesticides coming down the Mississippi. It became a restocking program because these birds started mating when they were a 12-18 months old. Now we have good populations of this bird.

The white pelican migrates down from Oregon/Washington coast and one of the few birds that will migrate from northwest to northeast.

The hunter and the fisherman were the first conservationists.

We've started a program called rigs to reefs where we take the abandoned oil rigs in the Gulf of Mexico and lay them down to develop into marine habitat. A map of these areas is available from the department with all the rigs marked on it.

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**Excerpts from Panel 1: Nature-Based Tourism Opportunities For Rural Louisiana****Moderator: Elinor Craven, Director****Division of Outdoor Recreation, Office of State Parks****PANELISTS:****Carol Walton, Field Trip Coordinator  
The Nature Conservancy****ATTRACTING ECOTOURISTS TO LOUISIANA****I. Why do people need an ecotourism organization - Can't people plan own nature outings?**

A. People really do want to get out in nature and learn and see things. But most are just too busy to actually research what rural Louisiana has to offer.

B. By offering planned outings with interesting destinations and knowledgeable leaders, you entice many people into areas where they otherwise wouldn't go on their own.

**II. Types of nature/eco tours****A. Seasonal**

1. spring and fall bird migrating
2. plant emergence

**B. Special interest group**

1. children
2. church groups
3. ladies clubs
4. canoeists
5. hikers

**C. Special location**

1. game preserve
2. unique place  
hills, cypress swamp, pristine area, barrier island

**D. Special topic**

1. bird watching
2. evergreens
3. Cajun country

**E. Do several types at same location**

For example: hike, canoe, all day, two hour

**III. Considerations**

A. Guests need relaxing, stress-free experience

B. Time should be allotted to socialize as well as learn; "we want people to have an educational and fun experience."

C. Topic experts enhance the quality of a tour- botanists, ornithologist, geologist - in depth information guaranteed

**D. Prepare your guests**

1. Tell them about mosquitoes, mud, primitive accommodations, other potential discomforts. If people arrive knowing what to expect, things run more smoothly and their experience is a better one.

2. Make sure they have fun so they remember a foul day as a fun day.

E. Take care of the area - preserve it for your future guests and yourself

#### IV. Provide for your guests

A. A packet - mailed before the tour. Include a list of equipment they should bring to have a comfortable, complete experience; list of items you will provide; map to find tour site.

B. A schedule of events

C. Appropriate snacks - if its cold, add plenty of hot chocolate and coffee for guest comfort; if its hot, plenty of cool beverages.

D. Follow-up questionnaire to evaluate trip. Gives you information and lets tourists know your care about their wishes and needs.

#### V. Sales strategies

A. Workshop field trips

A weekend-long photography workshop at Little Pecan Island drew photographers, not necessarily nature lovers. They had all kinds of photo opportunities, learned about photo techniques, and became interested in nature and eco-tourism along the way.

B. Invite tour company officials and tourism writers

Once they see the value of your facility, they will include it when designing tours or writing stories about tours

C. Produce brochures about tours

D. Publish in appropriate magazines

First I would like to tell you a little bit about the Nature Conservancy for those of you who aren't familiar with it. It was established in 1951 in Washington, D.C., for scientific and educational purposes. The Nature Conservancy is a national and international non-profit conservation organization. Its mission is to preserve plants, animals, and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on earth by protecting the lands and water they need to survive. Today the Nature Conservancy has protected more than 6.3 million acres in the US and Canada and millions more in Latin America. The Nature Conservancy of Louisiana was established about five years ago and we've already protected over a 150,000 acres in Louisiana. We're funded entirely by donations from individuals and corporations. And in Louisiana we have almost 5,000 members and 650,000 members nationwide. Each state chapter of Nature Conservancy has its own field trip program. These field trips vary greatly from state to state, ranging from two-hour outings to three-week long international trips. Our field trip department has grown enormously because people really do want to get out in nature and learn and see things. The problem is they're just too busy to really research what rural Louisiana has to offer. That's where ecotourism organizations can play a really big role. By offering planned outings with interesting destinations and knowledgeable leaders, ecotourism entices many people to venture into areas they wouldn't otherwise go on their own.

The Nature Conservancy does several types of trips each season. We offer field trips to our nature preserves and to non-Nature Conservancy areas such as Cameron Parish for birdwatching. These trips generate revenues for the local economy by utilizing several businesses such as tour boat operators, restaurants, gas stations and, in some cases, hotels. We sometime put together trips for special interest groups like children's classes, church groups, or ladies clubs. Another very popular trip we do is a four-hour hike through a unique region (the Tunica Hills) of Louisiana where we actually have steep hills and ravines.

We found that the average hardworking person wants an outing that is relaxing and stress free. They want to socialize with other folks who are also interested in the environment, having an educational a fun experience.

Lots of good planning on the part of the tour operator can compensate for even the worse weather conditions. We provided lots of coffee and hot chocolate along with

snacks for these good natured participants of this trip. It is important for people to be fully prepared for the experience they are paying for. Two weeks prior to each trip I send each person an information packet describing the area, what's special about it, maps of how to get there, and, most importantly, a letter saying what to bring, what to expect and what we'll be providing. If people arrive knowing what to expect, then things run more smoothly and their experience of the area is a much better one. They just want to be prepared and it's the tour operator's responsibility to prepare them. Incorporate a bit of local culture by including local food or activities, like a Cajun lunch and fais-do-do.

We also offer specialized field trips like wildflower trips or touring wildlife management areas, or birdwatching.

**Strategies for ecotourism:** We have just produced a brochure for Little Pelican Island and have put an ad in the national Nature Conservancy magazine. Another marketing strategy I used was to invite a special tourism professional to visit the lodge. He is the owner of one of the first and most successful ecotourism companies in the U.S. and his company does mostly birdwatching tours. This could mean a lot to Cameron Parish because of the high visibility that Victor Emmanuel's tours bring to little known areas.

Another strategy was a weekend long photography workshop weekend. Realizing the endless possibilities for nature photography at Little Pecan Island, I used the theme of an educational workshop to get people interested.

In addition to the information packet I send prior to each trip, I also send a follow-up note with a questionnaire immediately after the trip. This personal touch leaves the trip participant with a very good feeling toward us and the area they visited.

**Publicize:** The Nature Conservancy puts out a Louisiana newsletter every quarter; the national headquarters puts out a magazine that goes to its 650,000 members.

There's a definite market out there with the desire to see and experience Louisiana's natural areas and it's up to all of us to see that these areas stay pristine and beautiful. Thank you.

Stacy Brown, Public Relations Director  
Hodges Gardens

### HOOKING UP WITH NEW TOURIST MARKETS

- I. Know existing markets and protect them
  - A. Research to define existing markets
    1. use local universities to do research
    2. use in-house methods
      - a. license plate surveys
      - b. visitor questionnaires
  - B. Learn from research
    1. demographics
      - a. geographic area from which they come
      - b. age
      - c. sex
      - d. time of year of visit
      - e. units - organized tour, families, church or club groups
      - f. time spent at the attraction
    2. proportions - how many visitors in proportion to the total population from each area. Compare to the existing size (potential market) of that area
    3. visitor needs or wishes
      - a. within the attraction
      - b. for visitor comfort (amenities)
  - C. Implement what learned
    1. advertise or publish in publications catering to the demographic groups you want to penetrate or secure. Time these ads or articles to appear just before peak visitor times.
      - a. brochures
      - b. ads-in newspapers, magazines, television
        1. content of the ad
        2. type of visitor you depict in ad (if you show a family group, families will be attracted. If you show senior citizens, seniors will be attracted)
      - c. flyers inserted in bank statements
      - d. news releases to media about special events
    2. develop attractions to increase visits during "slow" periods
      - a. traveling slide shows to be used as programs by local clubs or groups - they learn from the show and then want to come to attraction to learn more
      - b. specific events or attractions based on a season or holiday
    3. improve amenities to assure visitor comfort
      - a. brochure describing what to bring, time to allow on site
      - b. brochure/map of site for use during visit to give more information and enhance enjoyment
    4. purchase a booth at travel shows
    5. work with tour groups to assure comfort for large groups and for the individual units visiting at the same time.
    6. be sure to hold on to existing visitors - don't make changes that would be unacceptable to them.
  - D. Other strategies - remember everyone is a potential tourist
    1. invite writers and tour owners - as your guest. If they like it, they'll spread the word.
    2. encourage local visitors

- a. as ambassadors
- b. to boost clientele - even if it means reduced rates or special events- they will promote your attraction as well as use it
- c. put brochures in local businesses
- d. put brochures at other attractions and put their brochures in your business - help each other - no attraction stands alone
- 3. work with local industry
  - a. they might use the attraction for a special event
  - b. they will promote attraction in their newsletters
  - c. brochures in new employee packets
- 4. advertise or promote in conjunction with other local businesses
- 5. join professional tour organizations and become involved with them

I have been asked to speak to you today about hooking up with tourist markets. Since I am familiar with Hodges Gardens, I'm going to be using it as an example. But many of the things apply to your organization as well.

The gardens were informally opened in 1956; formally dedicated in 1959; and in 1960 Andrew Jackson Hodges, our founder, put them into the non-profit foundation that still owns and operates the gardens today. It is governed by a three-member board of trustees and our income is derived from our gate receipts, the gift shop and greenhouse profits, and from investments off the endowment fund. I have been the public relations director for about five years and I've had the pleasure of seeing many changes, not only in the physical aspect of the gardens but in our outlook as well.

A few years before I came, changes started to become known in the gardens. They sought new attractions and new markets. In the last few years, the Sabine River Authority brought the community together and this has helped my job also.

Before we can hook up with new markets we must first know what our existing markets are and be sure that we protect those markets. It is not profitable to go after a new market at the risk of losing your current customer base.

Do some research to determine how to improve your current markets, what some feasible new markets are for you, and how to attract them. This does not have to be expensive. Many universities have organizations, classes or students that are looking for research projects. Another way is to do your own in-house research. We use a combination. If you would like more information on how to get in touch with the universities or who to talk with, I will be glad to help you.

We also use a variety of in-house research. One very inexpensive way is a license plate survey. Many of you know that here in Louisiana each license plate has a little letter that tells you where the car has come from. Just as they are driving through your place of business, mark down where that car has come from.

We also conduct questionnaires at some of our special events, like when we have booths at fairs. People are always glad to fill out a little questionnaire, as long as it is not too time consuming. This can also help judge the effect of advertising. Advertising can also be judged by the license plates. By counting the number of cars that come in from a place where we'd advertised the day before in the newspaper, we get some idea of the number of people who read our ad. This is beneficial in determining the ad's effectiveness.

Combined, these research projects give us a wealth of information. First, look at the geographic area. You can learn where your visitors are coming from and the proportions in which they are coming. Conversely, you can determine from what areas few visitors are coming although they live and work within your market area. We can also learn about the local market. That is a market we need to protect. You can learn about the size of the area from which people come; whether the visitors are in- or out-of-staters. Age groups are revealed; and conversely, what age groups you are not serving will be revealed. You can learn whether the visitors are employed or retired. Surveys

can also tell visitors' median family income, season of visit, and if they are organizational or club members. Travel characteristics are important. You can see what their primary destination in your area was; whether they traveled in a group, as a family, or as an individual. You can find out the size of their travel group and then develop accommodations for other sizes as well.

To preserve the existing customer base, we need to enhance our current market enjoyment. Surveys allow visitors to express needs-for more information, better amenities.

Our survey told us that many wanted more information -- both before they came to the gardens and after they arrived. To handle this we designed two new brochures. The first one -- our outside brochure.-- tells them what they need to bring with them to be able to enjoy the gardens, estimates the amount of time they will probably need to enjoy them, and describes special time-restricted attractions or special festivals. The second one is our gate brochure or inside brochure. Given to our visitors as they enter the gardens, it has a very detailed map of our formal gardens. This was never available to our visitors before and it gives lots of information on what they're seeing as they travel through the gardens. It also gives them more information on what's blooming, the history, and the festivals.

Visitors also cited a number of physical needs in the survey. They wanted improved or added basic facilities like more water fountains, an added parking area, and some type of food service or vending machines. They wanted improved signage in our greenhouse, easier accessibility for the handicapped and maps indicating the location of handicapped access facilities. We made the lodge more accessible to the senior citizens by offering a special weekday rate. We made our wildlife more visible by adding salt blocks along the roads and starting some feed plots.

The survey noted that the longer our visitors stayed the more they enjoyed their visit. To encourage them to stay longer, we added a boat ride, we opened an arboretum, a lakeside nature trail and we're currently working on RV parking and outdoor camping. We also added festivals and special events.

You'll notice that there are many ways to segment markets and it's very difficult. There are no clear cut or cut and dried ones. Things overlap.

Geographically we saw the need to penetrate markets at a certain distance from our attraction. We advertised in magazines because their readers are located in a wider area. We use TV and cable during the spring to catch the "fish" while they are biting. We also use travel shows, we've attended the last two AARP conventions. And we work with group tours to extend our coverage into these different areas. We invite FAM tours to the gardens, complimentary, as our guests (group tour leaders, tour operators, travel writers etc.). We also work at the market places to encourage group tours to come our way. We need to work on extending our age groups and developing attractions for those sexes or groups which were not visiting in large quantities. We do this by adding attractions such as hiking trails, boat rides, making our fishing more accessible, our festivals and special events.

We changed our advertising strategy. We show families in groups and we emphasize that we have more than just flowers as a way to draw in those people who were not heavily visiting. We still advertise specific flowers (our original attraction) but we also show the different things that we have to offer. We needed to increase the other seasons by promoting some of our year-round attractions such as our gift shop, greenhouse, and Louisiana Purchase memorial and by increasing our floral attractions in the other seasons. We advertise more year-round. Activities also increase attendance during the slower periods.

Attendance can be increased psychographically (drawing special interest groups) by advertising in special interest and trade magazines, newspapers and newsletters. We also travel and give slide presentations to groups, work on seminars aimed at special

interest groups. Once people hear you speak or see your slides, they want to come and see or hear more.

Let's explore other ways to hook up with tourist markets. Keep in mind that everyone is a potential tourist: people in the community, the media. Your community is very important. You need their support. Our community has been very supportive of the gardens. We have a lot of members of our organization as well as season pass members who are very good ambassadors. You need to work very closely with your tourist commission and with your local media to keep the community involved and informed. Volunteers are excellent ambassadors in passing the word on and being very helpful in the work they give. Being rural we need to hold special events at reduced rate because the majority of the people in our rural area have a lower income than our visitors' median average income. We've done this with the reduced entrance fee, festivals, special events, and the family nights. Working with local attractions to promote the area as a whole is very important.

You can't stand alone. People won't come just to one place. They want to see other things while they're in the area. So you need to work together in promoting the area as a whole. Local industry is important. They are very good about putting information about the gardens in their newsletters free of charge. We attract not only their customers but their employees as well. Many banks are willing to put a statement stuffer in with their monthly bank statement, free of charge. We provide statement stuffers on our special events and we use over a 100,000 of these each year. It's inexpensive.

Put your information in new employee packets and put your brochures in the local businesses. Send press releases to the media but make sure the information you send them is, indeed, newsworthy. If they get a lot of information from you which they can't use, they'll start tuning you out. So you need to be selective about what you send them.

Get to know the media. Court them. After you send them a press release, give them a follow-up phone call and say, "Look, did you receive my information about the scarecrow contest that we're holding? The school children are going to be here on Friday. Can you come out and take pictures of them?" They'll often say, "Oh, that's great. Sounds like a great picture opportunity. We'll be there." Have video, black and white pictures and slides available. This is very important. They sometimes can't come to the event but they'll publish your picture.

We do both year round and seasonal advertising, using television, magazines, newspaper, outdoor billboards, and radio. We exchange brochures with other attractions in other areas and provide them for tourist information centers. We work on promotions with other attractions - producing brochures and events cooperatively. We also work with promotion agencies such as LTPA . It's not good enough to just become a member of these tourism organizations. You need to become involved. You need to meet the other people involved in the tourist industry so they will know who you are, what you have to offer, and you will get to know who they are and what they have to offer. You can promote one another.

As you can see, there is no simple one-two-three step answer in hooking up with tourist markets. Every situation is different and many factors work together. Each organization must discover their individual needs through research and develop long and short range goals. We must not become stagnant or try to stand alone. It's only by working together that we can be successful. Thank you.



Mike Liffmann, Assistant Director  
Louisiana Sea Grant College Program

### COASTAL SPORTFISHING AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Coastal sportfishing is an opportunity awaiting development. But before we get into details, let us begin by looking at some of the numbers for trends in coastal tourism development. Note that we've excluded Orleans, Jefferson and Calcasieu parishes from our definition of coastal parishes and have focused on the predominantly rural parishes. You notice that for our study parishes, between 1985 and '87, travel expenditures, travel payroll, and travel employment were down. These numbers were derived from the U.S. Travel Data Center. The numbers have not been adjusted for inflation, and if they would have been adjusted, I'm afraid that the numbers would have been worse than they appear here. But the numbers begin to improve in the '88-90 period, and have been improving considerably. (These numbers also have not been adjusted for inflation.) We do know that during this period, the inflation rate has been much slower. So things are turning around in the coastal parishes as far as travel-related activities are concerned.

There are several factors to which this can be attributed. On the one hand, tourism is on an overall growth trend nationally as well as internationally, and this is also true state-wide. You as local tourism, municipal and parish leaders have done a magnificent job of making it happen by working with hotel/motel taxes, and festivals to help build program and community improvements.

The new and very substantial state advertising campaign which began in 1991 really launched Louisiana into a brand new tier of states as far as spending big bucks to promote tourism. The advertising budget seems to have worked. You are seeing new people from new markets and certainly from the markets that this advertising campaign has tried targeted. Also noteworthy is the fact that there has been an incredible amount of meaningful cooperation between the urban convention and visitors' bureaus and the rural tourists commissions.

Why, then, can't we seem to do more with coastal sportfishing as a tourism opportunity? It is an underutilized opportunity that can help attract out-of-staters. We have about 200,000 persons who are licensed anglers in the coastal zone and have salt water fishing licenses. We have 80 marinas and private launches throughout the region, 150 public boat launches, and 60 charterboat operators and fishing guides. We have been enjoying sportfishing in Louisiana, but we haven't created an environment that will allow us to capitalize on the opportunity to share it with people from other states.

According to the National Marine Fisheries Service (the latest available numbers are 1989), the percentage of sport fishermen coming from out of state increased slightly between 1980 and 1989, but the majority of the fishermen using coastal Louisiana reside in coastal Louisiana. Notice that the percentage of anglers that reside elsewhere in the state but do saltwater fishing has been increasing as well.

The number of out-of-state sport fishermen is remarkably low compared to the number of out-of-staters fishing in our neighboring states. Notice that the number of out-of-state sport fishermen angling in Mississippi increased from about 17 percent to 27 percent between 1980 and 1989; the number in Alabama doubled between 1980 and 1989; Florida has remained fairly stable.

Recapping, if you compare the Louisiana numbers for just a second, you will notice that at 1989 we had about seven percent out-of-state sport fishermen using our waters compared to 20-27 percent out-of-state sport fishermen using our neighbors' waters.

Why then does coastal sportfishing remains an underutilized tourism resource? Three reasons: Infrastructure, management and marketing, and overall community attitude toward visitors.

With very few exceptions, our land-based infrastructure is not integrated. While we have marinas and charterboat operators, we don't usually integrate or coordinate these operations so that the sport fisherman can get all the facilities and services he wants in one place. Instead, our facilities are fairly rustic and spread out. For instance, the quality motels are in Sulfur, the guides are out in Huckleberry, and the fishing grounds are in the gulf of marsh.

Financing for development is weak. Banks and other financing institutions have not been eager to loan money for these types of developments, so many people have had to dig into their own pockets. Development has also been constrained by various types of regulations from federal and state governments. Those that come to mind are the Federal Emergency Management Agency as well as the Environmental Protection Agency and coastal zone management-type regulators.

The distance between major highways and coastal destinations is significant. Most of our coastal fishing villages are fairly remote, averaging two to three hours from major cities such as New Orleans, Baton Rouge or Lafayette. Signage continues to be a real problem.

Another category of problems that are keeping coastal sportfishing from becoming a strong tourism activity are management and marketing primarily related to charterboat operations. Most of these are basically mom-and-pop operations, fairly small, and they are so busy in trying to operate their businesses on a daily basis that they really don't have an opportunity to work on marketing and promotion. Some of these problems are further complicated by a lack of unity among the charterboat operators. They need to work on this and share ideas on issues that they share in common: regulations, management practices, financing, infrastructure, marketing and promotion, and let us not forget, insurance and liability.

Although improving from past years, many communities still have poor attitudes towards visitors in general, and anglers in particular. "These are our fish and we don't want you to take them," has been a frequently heard statement. The Galliano speed trap has angered many visitors. The problem between the commercial versus the recreational fishermen also continues to surface, although it is not nearly as noticeable now as it was a few years ago.

Some of these obstacles are slowly being overcome. We have several model marinas now, and they are all fully integrated. They are visitor destinations all by themselves. CoCo Marina, Venice Marina, and Sportsmen's Paradise are excellent examples.

We are also starting to see improved access and better four-lane highways. There is certainly improved access off U.S. 90 and off Interstate 10. The I-310 route via Boutee will really improve access to the coast. It should cut travel from Baton Rouge to Leesville, Fourchon, Grand Isle by at least 20 or 30 minutes.

A statewide marketing initiative is also being considered. The state legislature during the latter part of the Roemer administration set up the Louisiana Marine Recreational Fishing Advisory Board. I am privileged to sit on that Board, activated in late 1991. Its primary purpose is to promote sportfishing as a tourism resource.

We notice too that there has been an outreach on the part of several of the tourists commissions to attract the operators and guides. Most notable are the efforts in Terrebonne, Lafourche, Calcasieu and Cameron parishes. The tourists commissions also are working within their communities, trying to educate the citizenry, officials, and business community about the value of tourism to their community. In summary, some things are slowly beginning to happen to make coastal sportfishing more of a out-of-state tourism resource.

What can be done to accelerate this process? The charterboat operators need organize and establish a charterboat association. They can then more easily obtain business management help from a variety of sources including the regional universities' small business development centers, Sea Grant, the Extension Service, etc. We at Sea Grant are prepared to provide these operators with some technical assistance. Charterboat operators and guides ought to continue working with the tourists commissions and the LTPA in trying to promote their services.

Tourists commissions ought to accelerate their outreach activities. There is a lot to be done. Co-op brochures to hook up with the big city markets. The one that comes to mind of course is New Orleans, where we have thousands and thousands of visitors each year looking for all kinds of outdoors experiences. Why not work with several of the hotels, the Greater New Orleans Tourism and Convention Bureau, and try to attract the visitors that stay in those mega-hotels? Invite those conventioners to fish with you for a day or two or three. The only way the big city hotels will work with any attraction is if it is a first class operation.

The state of Louisiana is also getting involved. The Louisiana Marine Recreational Fishing Advisory Board is a step in the right direction. There should be a statewide brochure or promotional piece to help with in-state marketing. Of course, we need to continue to deal with the signage issue, and we must involve Wildlife and Fisheries in the planning and development.

Sportfishing in coastal Louisiana is one of those well-kept secrets which, with work on the part of all parties, can become a well-known tourism business. Thank you for your attention.

**RECENT TRENDS IN LOUISIANA  
COASTAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT**  
(excludes Orleans, Jefferson, and Calcasieu parishes)

<b>PERIOD</b> <b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>1985-87</b>	<b>1988-90</b>
<b>Travel Expenditures</b>	<b>-12%</b>	<b>+13%</b>
<b>Travel Payroll</b>	<b>-29%</b>	<b>+6%</b>
<b>Travel Employment</b>	<b>-39%</b>	<b>+11%</b>

Source: U.S. Travel Data Center

**TURNAROUND CAN BE ATTRIBUTED TO MANY FACTORS, INCLUDING:**

- **Tourism's overall growth trend;**
- **Rapid and enthusiastic response of local tourism and other municipal leaders;**
- **New and substantial state advertising budget;**
- **Increased cooperation between urban CVB's and rural tourist commissions.**

**STATUS OF COASTAL SPORTFISHING  
AND TOURISM**

- **One word — underutilized  
(by out-of-staters);**
- **200,000 licensed anglers;**
- **80 marinas and private launches;**
- **150 public boat launches;**
- **60 charterboat operators and fishing  
guides**

## LOCATION OF RESIDENCE OF FISHERMEN SURVEYED IN LOUISIANA

YEAR	LOUISIANA		OUT OF STATE
	COASTAL AREA	REST OF STATE	
1980	95.3%	1.8%	2.9%
1984	92.3	2.5	5.2
1985	93.0	3.2	3.8
1986	90.9	2.1	7.0
1987	87.4	4.8	7.8
1988	88.9	3.7	7.4
1989	87.9	5.3	6.8

Source: National Marine Fisheries Service, Marine Recreational Fishery Statistics Survey, Atlantic and Gulf Coasts, 1980, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987-1989.

**OUT-OF-STATE RESIDENCE OF FISHERMEN  
SURVEYED IN MISSISSIPPI, ALABAMA, AND FLORIDA**

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>MISSISSIPPI</b>	<b>ALABAMA</b>	<b>FLORIDA</b>
<b>1980</b>	<b>16.6%</b>	<b>11.6%</b>	<b>21.7%</b>
<b>1984</b>	<b>23.7</b>	<b>25.5</b>	<b>21.0</b>
<b>1985</b>	<b>27.3</b>	<b>23.3</b>	<b>22.3</b>
<b>1986</b>	<b>24.4</b>	<b>22.4</b>	<b>22.6</b>
<b>1987</b>	<b>24.4</b>	<b>17.8</b>	<b>23.4</b>
<b>1988</b>	<b>20.4</b>	<b>22.7</b>	<b>20.1</b>
<b>1989</b>	<b>26.7</b>	<b>23.7</b>	<b>20.3</b>

Source: National Marine Fisheries Service, Marine Recreational Fishery Statistics Survey, Atlantic and Gulf Coasts, 1980, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987-1989.

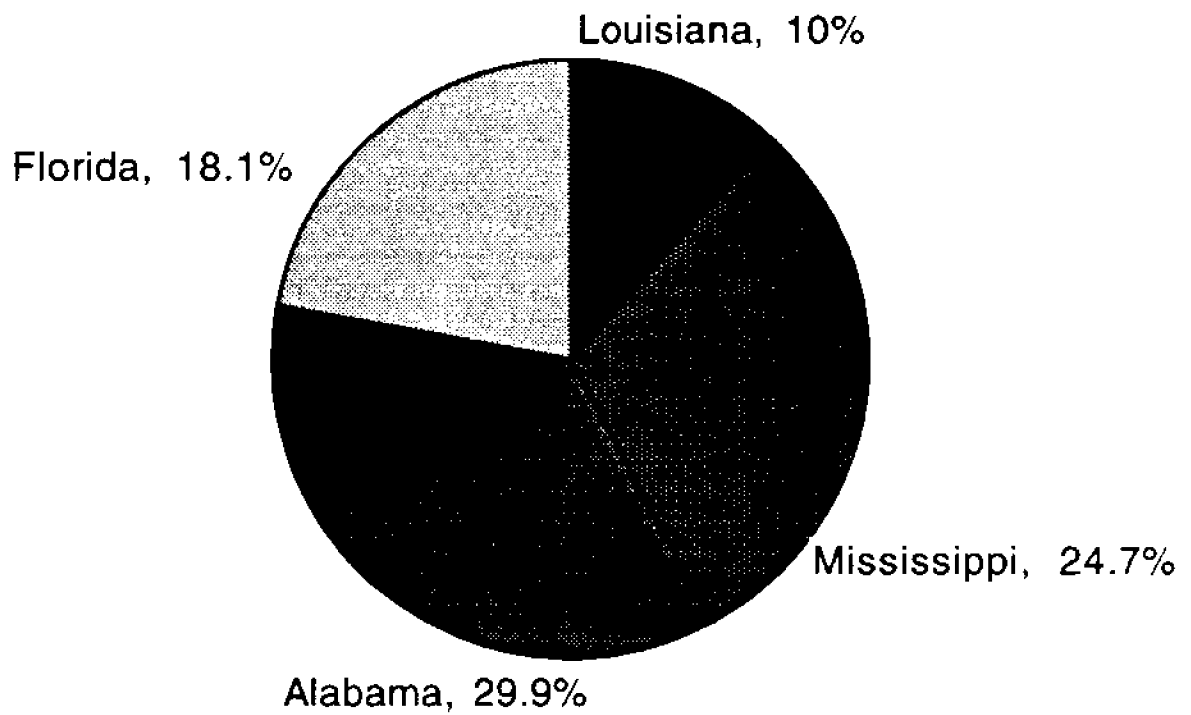


# EIGHT REASONS WHY COASTAL SPORTFISHING REMAINS AN UNDERUTILIZED TOURISM RESOURCE:

<b>CATEGORIES</b>	
<b>A. Infrastructure</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Land-based infrastructure</li><li>2. Financing for development</li><li>3. Distance between major highways and coastal destinations</li><li>4. Signage</li></ol>
<b>B. Management and Marketing</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>5. Business management, marketing, and promotion</li><li>6. Lack of unity among operators</li><li>7. Poor ties between operators, tourism promotion organizations, and the industry</li></ol>
<b>C. Community</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>8. Prevailing community attitudes toward visitors and anglers, in particular</li></ol>

PERCENTAGE OF OUT-OF-STATE FISHERMEN IN 1991

36G



ONLY 10% of Louisiana's fishermen came from out-of-state.

**Excerpts from Panel 2: Louisiana's Scenic Byways Program  
Moderator: Frances Leake, Executive Director  
St. Tammany Parish Tourist Commission**

**OPENING REMARKS**

With the December 18, 1991 signing by President Bush of Public Law 102-240, the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act or ISTEA, the United States entered a new "post-interstate" era of surface transportation. This huge and complex legislation provides six-year authorization (through fiscal year 1997) for highways, highway safety and mass transportation, with total funding of more than \$155 billion. This landmark legislation for the first time mandates that consideration be given to the general needs of recreational travel and tourism in the transportation planning process. The planning will require input from the state, city, and rural levels.

Some notable travel and tourism successes were achieved in ISTEA. One of these successes was the inclusion of a Scenic Byways Program - \$80 million over six years has been designated to establish a national scenic highway program (\$50 million, six-year grant and a \$30 million interim grant for the first three years, both with an 80 percent federal share).

The three-year interim grant of \$10 million per year is only available to states which had designated byways by legislative act prior to December 1991. We did. For the past three years, a 13-parish recreation and tourism council under the leadership of the Capital Resource Conservation and Development Council (RC&D Council) has given more than 10,000 volunteer man hours to creating a scenic byways system within St. Tammany, Assumption, Ascension, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Iberville, Livingston, Pointe Coupee, St. Helena, Tangipahoa, Washington, West Baton Rouge, and West Feliciana parishes. The Louisiana legislature by concurrent resolution designated the RC&D tourism council on behalf of the state to initiate a pilot project for scenic Louisiana byways program in preparation for anticipated ISTEA. They passed Senate Bill 203 in the 1991 legislative session, designating some 500 miles of roadways within these parishes as a first Louisiana scenic byway. This act qualified Louisiana to be eligible for the ISTEA interim byway funding. This panel will now address those ways by which Louisiana's scenic byway can wind its way throughout the state.

Danny Clement, Coordinator  
**Capital Resource Conservation & Development Council Inc.**

**LOUISIANA'S SCENIC BYWAY PROGRAM:  
 WHAT , WHEN, WHO, HOW**

**What: Louisiana Byways Program**

**Definition:** A state or local road designated by the state of Louisiana which represents the best the state has to offer as a recreational and educational experience to visitors desiring to view natural and manmade scenic resources, to experience the culture of the state, or to understand the history of the state. Louisiana byway routes are more than scenic routes such as mountain or seashore drives; they include our scenic areas but also our cultural, historic, and recreational features.

**When?** The pilot project began on Tourism Awareness Day in 1990. A group of approximately 50 representatives from the 13-parish pilot project area developed a definition, criteria, and ran several times most routes within those parishes, inventorying the potential attractions along the proposed routes. After several months of work, the group reached a consensus decision on about 500+ miles and created the law and mechanism by which the rest of the state could participate in the byway program. In 1992 the Louisiana Legislature approved the official Louisiana Byway logo - a red antique touring car. Also in 1992, we assisted with the state's scenic byway grant proposal to FHWA. The scenic byway program began in 1990 and will extend through 1997.

**Who?** The local communities through regional initiatives. Whatever successes we have had as of today will not be important unless we are organized locally to help assure the traveler has a positive experience along the byway. We have assisted with five workshops throughout the state encouraging all regions of the state to participate.

**How?** The Louisiana law which created the byway program lays out the procedure by which groups can include routes in the Louisiana byway system. An organization of individuals, designated by the police jury, are to convene and develop a regional group of several parishes, and form a byway task force. This task force will inventory attractions, run routes, and reach a consensus decision on the best route through their area, obtain approval from CRT and DOTD, and then appear before the joint Legislative Committee on Transportation for approval.

When they say there is \$80 million available for scenic byways, we all immediately think that we are going to get that \$80 million dollars. But there are 50 states and everybody is competing for that money. To further complicate it, they broke it down into two funding categories. At this time, only \$30 million is available through the Interim Scenic Byways program - \$10 million for 1992, \$10 million for 1993, and \$10 million for 1994. In 1995-97, \$14 million will be available each year. Louisiana was able to compete in 1992 for the interim funds because we had a scenic byway program and the legislature had designated routes before Dec. 18, 1991. Louisiana actually received \$100,000 for four projects within the pilot area. Note that from \$80 million, we actually received \$100,000 in 1992, much less than was requested.

The scenic byways program is not the only program covered under the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), and unfortunately when this first started we were under the impression that the scenic byways portion was an additional pot of money that the state of Louisiana would get for scenic byways. Not so. This money for scenic byways comes out of our normal federal allocation of funds which we use to overlay roads, build interstate, and all of that sort of things. So that was kind of a setback for us. Hopefully Congress will amend the bill and designate the scenic byways portion of it as additional funds that we would get.

Excerpt from Panel 2:

P. J. "Buck" Frederick, Maintenance Division Chief  
Department of Transportation and Development

### TYPES OF FUNDABLE PROJECTS

ISTEA sets up six categories or classifications of projects that can be eligible for funding under the Scenic Byways Program. Very little guidance is provided as to what's eligible. They just give you six rather general descriptions and you use your imagination.

The first category is planning, designing, and development of a Scenic Byways Program. Under planning and development, a request can be made for funds to be used to develop formal criteria for designating scenic byways and establishing a mechanism by which to begin the designation and approval of the scenic byways. Planning does not include preliminary engineering on a projects-specific activity. The planning in this case means looking at the programmatic application of an initiative like an inventory of scenic byways or potential scenic byways.

Although development of scenic byways program might involve promotional type activities to broaden the program to possibly get more involvement from the tourism side, it is important to avoid becoming too commercial with it.

Scenic byways' quality may be judged environmentally or through the aspect of economic development. A true study to analyze these and determine how the various components fit together could be considered for funding eligibility under this category.

The second category is making safety improvements to a highway designated as a scenic byway to accommodate increased traffic or changes in the types of vehicles using the highways due to such designation. We erroneously thought that we could use this to get some of our highways improved or roads repaired. That's not what they are talking about here. The key to this particular category is: if it is deficient now then its just deficient and they are not going to do anything to bring it up to standard under this program. But if its adequate now and the fact that you are going to designate it as a scenic byway is going to generate traffic either by volume or by type that then makes the road inadequate, then scenic byways funding can be used to improve the roadway.

There is an overlap between the second category and the next one which is construction along the scenic byway of facilities for the use of pedestrians and bicyclists, rest areas, turn outs, highway shoulder improvements, passing lanes, overlooks and interpretive facilities. Turnouts, highway shoulder improvements, and passing lanes could also be considered under safety improvements. This category of project should not be interpreted to mean starting from a scenic byway and building pedestrian walkways and bicycle facilities out into the wilds. All construction must be along the byway. Funding might be obtained to develop a master plan for bicycling along the major network of scenic byways. Rest areas as referred to here are not like our tourists information centers or rest areas on the interstate, but are more the picnic type in conjunction with an interpretive center. They can't be museums or state-wide in nature. They should reflect the theme of the byway.

The next category is improvements to the scenic byway that will enhance access to an area for the purpose of recreation (including water-related recreation). This is to provide accommodations for access from the byway to the location where the water is or to get to the top of the levee to look at the river. Boat launches are not eligible for funding.

The next category is protecting historical, archaeological, and cultural resources adjacent to the highways. For example, purchasing an easement or the outright purchase of an attraction adjacent to a scenic byway to protect the attraction is eligible under this category.

The last category is developing and providing tourist information to the public including interpretive information about the scenic byway. This could take many forms, i.e., brochures that are general in nature about the scenic byway in the state or in a particular area of the state. Brochures can be route-specific and could be read as you drive along the route. This category can also be used to develop videos for viewing at interpretive centers or to publicize the scenic byway program.

As time goes by I guess we are going to understand all these categories a little better.

Excerpt from Panel 2:

Butch Nobles, Division Realty Officer  
Federal Highway Administration

### CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT PLANS

ISTEA did many things: it revolutionized our highway programs and the way we work with the state and other local agencies in designing and building those highways; it brought in new ideas such as scenic highways and scenic trails. One emphasis of this bill was on increasing flexibility to state and local governments. The purpose of this program is to identify highways of historic, recreational, cultural significance off the beaten path, to protect those for both the local communities and for tourists. It is a two-pronged program.

The provision on scenic byways established a Scenic Byway Advisory Committee composed of representatives from various sources. That committee, already selected, is charged with making recommendations to the Secretary of the Department of Transportation on the federal level. One category for recommendation is consideration of the scenic beauty and historic significance of the surrounding area for proposed designated highways. A second category is the operation and management standards for highways designated as scenic byways. These standards should protect and enhance the landscape and view corridors surrounding such a highway and minimize traffic congestion on such a highway. The committee will make its recommendations for minimum standards in this area by June 1993.

In the interim (until they have those criteria) we have this interim program. Louisiana got \$100,000 out of this first year's interim money. Among the grant items funded by this \$100,000 is almost \$44,000 for a corridor management policy and education program. The subject grant is awarded with the understanding that the scenic, historic, cultural, natural, and archeological integrity of the highway and adjacent area along which the eligible projects are to be carried out will be protected. Conservation and tourism must go hand in hand.

A corridor management policy on the state level will be developed and local communities will establish a corridor management plan for scenic highways and scenic corridors in their area. Why do we need this? Planning is an important part of doing anything, especially if you are talking about government actions - federal, state or local. Good planning encourages local government to consider future goals, and translate them into priorities. The plan will set the need and demand for public expenditures and the infrastructure that it will take to identify and protect scenic highways. A comprehensive plan is basically a community's blueprint of what it wants to do in the future. It needs to specify what actions are to be taken, when and how, for the highway to be useful for the local people and appreciated by tourists.

Why do I say corridor plan instead of scenic byways? The corridor is bigger than the road. A scenic corridor includes the road, the right-of-way and the scenic, recreation, historic, or cultural areas around that highway that make it scenic. The aesthetic quality of scenic byways and scenic corridors is fairly easily compromised. Unregulated development will have a negative impact on the quality of the corridor.

The group Scenic America made several recommendations concerning scenic byways. They recommended a corridor management plan that would take into account a visual inventory and mapping to identify important scenic, historical, cultural resources; identification of natural resource protection zones; comprehensive plans to identify future developments; roadway reconstruction guidelines, roadway safety improvement guidelines and more. They also recommended a tree protection policy, and a visual pollution control policy on federal interstate and primary routes.

Louisiana's scenic highways to date have some primary routes, no interstates, and a good many secondary roads. Those secondary routes are not under control. There are a good many ways to help protect scenic corridors. Zoning at both the local level and state level is one method. Scenic highway corridor reservations should be done at the state level. Special corridor districts, and special conservation districts can be established. The state can buy wider-than-usual right-of-way, accept property donations from property owners to create a buffer, or swap property to create a buffer in return for tax credits of some sort.

As you move forward in identifying scenic highways, having them designated as such under Louisiana law, and developing a corridor management plan, I hope that you will call on those of us on this panel to help you.



**Panel 3: More on Funding for Tourism**  
**Moderator: Steve Henning, Associate Professor, Dept. of Agricultural Economics**  
**and Agribusiness, Louisiana State University**  
**Baton Rouge, La**

**PANELISTS:**

Carolyn Andre, Director  
**Pointe Coupee Tourist Commission**

**CONVINCING LOCAL OFFICIALS**

**I. Preparation**

- A. Gather together people familiar with area
  - 1. make lists to inventory tourism assets
  - 2. drive the roads and make a tape recorded inventory
- B. Get what you can without money

**II. Seek Funds**

- A. Research
  - 1. contact state Office of Tourism and other appropriate state agencies
  - 2. keep notes on hints you receive
- B. Approach police jury (or local government agency)
  - 1. Talk with each juror individually
    - a. be positive
    - b. Be persistent
    - c. be honest and keep jurors up to date - even after funding
  - 2. Use other politicians (state and federal legislators) to plead your case with jurors
- C. Establish group to receive and use funds
  - 1. Get jury to appoint a tourist commission
    - a. give them opportunity for political appointments
    - b. give them list of real-working nominees so you get a working commission
  - 2. Establish self as employee
    - a. gives you credibility to seek jury help
    - b. gives you a small salary
- D. Other funds sources from government agencies
  - 1. occupancy tax- present legislation for passage
  - 2. fund raiser -invite jurors, even if they don't come
  - 3. ask to be included in the Louisiana state advertising plan
  - 4. work with surrounding parishes

The Pointe Coupee Tourist Commission is funded by the police jury. It didn't just start yesterday. In 1987, we knew we had a lot of assets in Point Coupee parish but nothing was being marketed. So we gathered together a group of people that knew the potential of Pointe Coupee Parish. One of the first things we did was compile an inventory by making lists and driving the roads, making tape recordings as we drove.

Then we began to figure out what we could get for nothing. Publicity is something that you can get a lot of for nothing. You make a few phone calls, meet a few people, spend a little bit of your own money, and a lot of your own time. The first year I put 5,000 miles on my vehicle with no help from anybody.

Bruce Morgan in the Office of Tourism, told me who I needed to talk to. I also talked to Elinor Craven (Director, Division of Outdoor Recreation, Office of State Parks). I started gathering notebooks of these different bits of information.

We knew we couldn't go much further without some kind of help from our police jury. We realized it is a tough job in convincing some of these people. You start with the jurors that you think understand what you're trying to do. Eventually we convinced enough of our police jurors that anything that we did was better than nothing, so they found \$1700 for us that had been stuck away in a bank account for tourism about 10 years before. Talk with your individual jurors; they're the ones that are going to help you accomplish things that you may not be able to accomplish otherwise.

The police jury was the only source of funds initially. We didn't have any hotels to speak of in Pointe Coupee Parish. We had one bed and breakfast, two mom and pop hotels. We didn't have an occupancy tax. But you have to kind of lay things out for them, and lay all positive things out for them. But we got the tax, and we got more accommodations. Remember, whether you have apprehensions or not, don't let the police jury know it. Because the more positive you are the more they think its possible. Be persistent. Pointe Coupee Police Jury learned rather quickly that I didn't take "no" for an answer. They sometimes gave me the things I wanted just to get me out of their hair!

We were able to get a tourist commission appointed. The first commission you may get appointed is not going to be the commission that you want to work with most of the time, because every police juror is going to have somebody they want on that commission. You are definitely not going to get your workers from that first commission. Present people already working with you as nominees to the police jury. The police jury does not want any surprises or criticisms. You'll get criticisms. You kind of develop a shell. You can't let those few criticisms that you are going hear bother you.

If you are funded specifically by the police jury, they are generally not going to have the funds to give you the fabulous salary that you would envision. Sometimes it may never mature. Your reward is knowing that you are helping the people of your parish. If you are depending on your police jury solely for your funding they are probably going to give you as little as they can get by with. In my case they gave us \$17,500.

Because we were in the museum and our museum is under our parks and recreation department, the police jury was able to take the money from a parks and recreation tax. You may not have that situation. I learned over time that you manipulate, and you use what you have at the time. Later on you try to smooth over the situation, but sometimes you have to do things that you would rather not do.

Sometimes your police jury needs a little help in helping you. I have relied on my senator and representative in the past. Our former senator was very instrumental in getting our byways legislation passed. Unfortunately he wasn't re-elected, but he really prodded our police jurors into tourism and they went along (sometimes reluctantly) simply because he was pushing them.

Above all, be honest in what you are doing. My police jury knows that I'm fair to everybody, and I will try to work with everyone, but they have to work with me also. Above all, I'm fair to everybody and I don't say what I don't mean.

I've had to supplement our funding. I did get an occupancy tax passed. We have three bed and breakfast homes now and one mom and pop motel, and our occupancy tax revenue has increased. From that first year when we took in about \$500, we've grown to \$2,500 today and the year isn't over yet. You also may have to have fund raiser. This year my commission decided to do a wine tasting fund raiser. With it, they anticipate raising about \$5,000 to use towards advertising. My advertising budget has never risen above \$2500, so I haven't been able to take advantage of many advertising opportunities. This year we placed one ad in *Southern Living* and *Travel South*.. We got 800 inquiries off of that ad. The police jury finally gave me a salary for 32 hours a week. You don't do this job 32 hours a week. You work 40, 50, 60 hours a week. You get phone calls at home. Its just a never ending process.

If possible hire a director. Hire somebody that can answer that telephone and answer that mail even if it's only on a part-time basis. Establish an office.

The advertising program that Louisiana is doing right now has been tremendous for us. Just the fact that they are advertising Louisiana and that our parish and our attractions are showing up in state pieces has resulted in a wealth of inquiries for us. Work together with your surrounding parishes. Don't try to go it alone, it's impossible.

I always remind people that the project is economic development, not just you passing out brochures. When I started in '87 we had one restaurant in Pointe Coupee Parish. Today we have 7-8 nice ones. We've got three new bed and breakfast facilities and two more will probably open in January. This is economic development. You're efforts are going to help everybody in that parish and if they know you are doing it unselfishly they are going to support you.

Always keep you police jury, your city council, and the people informed. Don't ever let any government official, no matter how small, feel like he is left out. We send them newsletters and invitations to everything even if they don't come. You don't need to tell them every little detail. Most of the time they don't want to know details, they just want to know what's happening and the overall picture.

I was a business person before. I didn't know much about tourism but I knew that people needed to know what you had before they could buy it. I just kind of stumbled into this. If there is any way I can help you I am perfectly happy to do that. Thank you.

**LeRoy Ades, Executive Director  
Beauregard Tourist Commission**

**STRETCHING YOUR BUCKS**

I. Prepare a plan that will allow you to stretch existing money by hard work and people participation.

II. Identify your assets

A. People - your team

1. idea people
2. doer people
3. specialists - travel writer, graphic artist, photographer, printer

B. Funding- financial backers

1. police jury-government agency for tax implementation
2. co-oping with other touring organizations
3. bankers
4. friendly business leaders
5. fundraisers

C. Attractions

1. research area characters, history
2. seek our resources- old timers, published local histories, newspaper

archives

3. drive the roads, keep a log, map the area

III. Make a calendar of events

- A. Screen year's run of newspaper to find out every potential attraction
- B. Develop a year's worth of activities to attract visitors

IV. Publicize your area and events

- A. Select a central theme
- B. Select prospective markets
- C. Devise a distribution plan
- D. Design brochures

I want to talk about a few other things that you need to pool besides money, and ways that you can save money when putting together a good rural tourism program that promotes your area and the economic development of your area. The first thing to do is put together a plan.

When you put together your plan, identify the three assets you must have: people, money and attractions. Without those three, its like the old two legged stool - it just doesn't stand by itself.

First, let's talk about people. Putting together your team requires three types. The idea person is the person who says, "Somebody ought to do something about this." They come up with ideas. But idea people aren't enough, because this group by itself will think about it, and think about it some more, and never get anything done.

The second group you need are the doers. These are the people who roll up their sleeves and do the work. They will do all the tasks to get your plan put together and into effect.

And the third group are the specialists. For instance, you need a travel writer. Look in your community for people who have writing experience, an interest in writing and an interest in promoting their community. Possibilities include an English teacher, a newspaper reporter, an aspiring author .

Next, you might need a graphic artist. What about the art teacher in your school or a local artist? I had this type of specialist do a basic map of the city of DeRidder and a basic map of Beauregard Parish that I have used many times in various brochures.

You also need a photographer. In every community someone has photography as a hobby. Don't overlook a printer, one who is willing to do work for nothing, cost or at a reduced rate. He may not be the fastest printer in town (the fastest printer probably charges more) but he should be a good printer.

There are other specialists too. Look at your specific needs. Then, look at local businesses or people with that skill or hobby. Interest them in the project, and they will help you.

The second thing you are going to need is the money, and that means financial backers. If you have a tourist commission that doesn't have a bed tax, you have a tourist commission that really needs to start working on its police jury. This tax is a resource to start with, but it will not produce enough revenue for you to operate a full-fledged program.

We have come up with ways of producing revenue through co-ops. We formed an informal partnership (a co-op) with a neighboring parish so that we could work together. When we go to the Travel and Tourism Summit, we present a bi-parish display.

Another co-op that we got into very early is the Western Corridor. It started out as a co-op of all tourist commissions and convention bureaus from Shreveport to Lake Charles along Highway 171. We put our money together and publicized together. Then we found another source of financing. This area is the feeder area for the Sabine River Authority and when we invited it to come and join us, they brought the money that we had been looking for. They have been able to take over much of the costs of producing brochures and advertising that we had been doing separately.

Another co-op is the consortium in southwest Louisiana. We have been able to get things done while conserving the limited amount of money we have and putting it into new areas.

There are other sources of income. Some bankers are interested in developing the economy of the community. You may be surprised at the support you may get from them. There are businessmen out there who are interested in your community because it is their home town. There are also the attractions and the activities which will benefit from the interest of bankers and businessmen. And then there are fund raisers.

Next, identify the attractions or activities that you have. I suggest that you start by researching the history in the area. Look for unusual events or wild, far out people. If you don't have one, make one. Check in sources and local published histories. Listen to the old timers, the ones who love to tell the stories of what it was like when they were young. You may be surprised at how many tourists will come into your information center and spend hours just listening to stories. Frequently, a historical society will print a local history. You can get it in local and regional libraries. Your local newspaper archives are another source of information.

Ride the roads and keep a log. Include what you are doing and carry a map with you. When you see something that has potential or a possibility of being an attraction, plot it on your map. I use little round stickers -- I put one on the map and another in the log and then I write everything about the spot that I can think of next to the sticker. Then I pull out the cameras and take pictures. One camera has color film in it, and the other has black and white.

Screen a year's run of the local newspaper. List all of the events that took place: festivals, church festivals, anything that attracts people. Put down all the information that comes out of this article -- what the activity is, where it is, the date, who's in charge, the address, the telephone number. Later on you can refine this information and use it to put together your calendar. The goal should be to have something in each of the 12 months of the year. As you select these things, fill in the calendar blanks. Get groups to plan events for these open dates and spaces on the calendar.

A word of caution: Don't force it.

The last consideration is publicizing your area and event. Devise a brochure plan. Select a central theme for it. Define your prospective market and devise a distribution plan. If you have any questions on these tips or how to stretch your bucks a little further, call me for more details. I'm always glad to share our experiences with others.

Natalie Dantin, Director  
Lafourche Parish Tourist Commission

HOW TO JUSTIFY AND RAISE LODGING TAXES

- I. Do your homework
  - A. Statistics on hotel/motel receipts to show pattern of occupancy
  - B. Tourist commission financial statements to show uses made of tourist tax dollars
  - C. Daily visitor registration figures
  - D. Advertising opportunities missed because lack dollars to produce
  - E. Benefits received from tourist commission by local businesses
  - F. Description of all the activities in which the tourist commission is involved
- II. Convince your own board
- III. Get the support of local tourism businesses
- IV. Convince the hotel/motel owners to support the tax increase
- V. Convince the parish government
- VI. Convince state representatives and senators

I'm going to describe how we raised our hotel/motel occupancy to secure revenue from an occupancy tax. We had a basic problem in that we are a day-tripping destination from a larger tourist area: New Orleans. Day tripping destination means that tourists visit us for a few hours or one day, but they lodge in New Orleans. We needed to attract overnight tourists. We also needed an office for our tourist commission. We had a two percent hotel/motel occupancy tax in the ordinance that created us (the tourist commission). With that in mind we decided we had to do something about increasing our hotel/motel tax or making an attempt to get some additional funding. Our task was to promote tourism in Lafourche Parish with funding that would be derived from a two percent hotel/motel tax but remember the majority of our people are day trippers so they don't stay in the hotels. We had to make an attempt to increase our hotel/motel tax so that we could make some plans for a building.

Some of our board members would not even agree to seeking this tax increase. They agreed we need a building but they wanted us to find other ways of getting the additional funding.

So we had to do some homework. We looked up and tabulated the hotel/motel tax receipts from previous months, showing that occupancy was gradually increasing. We suggested that our efforts, in promoting Lafourche Parish tourism, were helping this to happen.

We compiled our daily figures with terrific help from the Office of Tourism. This showed our revenues and expenses, so that people would know where the tax dollars go.

We took every opportunity to show that the money was needed. When board members would pick up brochures from other people, or magazine articles or advertising, I said, "If we had more money we could do that, too." It was necessary to convince our own board members first, and we did.

Then we began to build support in the tourism businesses. We went to a lot of the tourism oriented businesses within our area: convenience stores, gas stations, restaurants. They all wanted some of our brochures because they use them. If somebody stops in to get some gasoline or buy a cold drink, they always ask for information on what's

available in the area. If they find it one time, they may come back. This is free information that we provide to the businesses so that they can help their customers.

Mardi Gras was a big deal in our area this year. We had three bus tours that came in and, because most of our local people happened to be outdoors for Mardi Gras, they saw the bus tours - they actually saw the fruits of our labor. Several of the chambers of commerce wrote some articles about the economic impact of Mardi Gras in their area. This helped to convince the board and the local businesses.

Next we contacted every hotel and motel owner in our area. We have two major hotels in our area and some mom and pop operations. We used our facts and figures, we wrote up a letter. We explained our plans and our need for a better facility to serve them. We went to each one individually. You must discuss this need calmly, because sometimes they don't listen the first time.

The state hotel/motel association has a very powerful lobby in Baton Rouge. If one of your major motel people happens to belong to this organization and asks that your local tax bill not be passed, your project is dead before you start. That's why it is important that your board members, businesses, your motel owners, and everybody all agree on the tax plan first.

The biggest task is trying to convince the motel/hotel people that this is a tax that they can pass on to their occupants. LTPA provided us with the comparative information of other parishes' tax rates for hotel/motel tax occupancy. At the time we were still at two percent when all our neighboring parishes were at three percent and one of them was even at four percent. So, it didn't take much to convince the motel managers that they would still be competitive.

Next we approached our local parish government. We contacted everyone of our local parish councilmen on an individual basis explained to them why we needed the extra money, and explained to them how we were going to do it. We emphasized that it was very important to have their support. We were successful. In fact one of the first things our new parish administration did was to adopt a resolution that they were in support of our seeking additional funding. We also got the support of our local chambers of commerce and all of our economic development groups. We had them all write letters to us saying that they were in favor of seeking this increase.

Then it was time to go to our state representatives and senators, and we approached them with our facts and figures, our letters of endorsement, letters of approval and any other information we had. The first bill filed by our new state representative was our hotel/motel tax bill. We followed the bill through the House committee meetings, into the Senate committee meetings and all the way to the governor's desk. The governor signed the local tax bill into being on June 20, 1992. It took from October 1991 when our local board approved the tax until November 1992 for us to receive any revenues.