

Keynote & Success Stories

October 7-8, 1993 □ Monroe, Louisiana

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**Louisiana Rural Tourism
Development Conference**

**Summary of
Keynote
&
Success Stories**

**THIRD LOUISIANA RURAL TOURISM
DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE**

October 7-8, 1993

The following excerpts from the conference have been prepared by Louisiana Sea Grant College Program personnel 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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SMALL TOWNS PREPARE FOR INTERNATIONAL VISITORS

by

Dr. Lalia Rach

Dean and Associate Professor

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University of New Haven

West Haven, Connecticut

Last year, 45 million international visitors came to the United States, spending about \$71 billion here. They average five times the amount a domestic visitor spends. There is an interest in the U.S., and there are people willing to spend money to visit us. Although you may not seek international visitors, they are coming. But to benefit from this largess, you have to be prepared.

You can just accommodate those tourists as they come, but if you don't plan for them, your lives will change negatively. The assumption that your community won't be hurt by this nonpolluting industry is not entirely correct. Without plans and precautions, tourism cannibalizes the quality of life and the culture in a community. Once you and your community make a conscious decision to enter the tourism business, you have to prepare, and plan, and work very hard to comfortably succeed.

Prepare for your international visitors. Inventory your tourism resources, identifying the uniqueness of your town. Use this inventory to target your international market. After all, the rural areas of the U.S. are the "real America," and that is what international visitors want to experience.

How many resources does your community have? Make a tourism resource inventory using the categories listed below. Attractions and accommodations are enhanced by available transportation, infrastructure, and tourist services.

Information and Services used by Tourists during the Travel Cycle

PRE-TRIP

Tour Companies
Travel Agencies
Personal Computer Electronic Travel Service
Government Agencies
Destination Planners
Travel Clubs
Travel Shows
Media — Consumer advertising

DESTINATION

Banking and Money Exchange
Medical Facilities
Tour Guides
Facility Employees
Convention & Visitors Bureau
Chamber of Commerce
State Dept of Tourism
Other State Agencies
USTTA
Other Federal Agencies

POST-TRIP

Travel Agent
Tour Company
Friends

Measure your town's "Welcome Index" with information, ingress, interpretation, and interaction. The welcome begins in the visitor's home with *information*. When you respond to telephone inquiries, distribute brochures, and advertise, you are inviting tourists. Translate your welcome into their language, using a foreign translator for written materials, and a foreign interpreter for spoken

communication, if possible. Sometimes literally translated/interpreted expressions have a non-literal meaning in the foreign language. You could insult without intending to. Don't use slang because it's meaning may be incorrect in another language. Your welcoming information is meant to make the visitor comfortable just as any host would make the extra effort to put his visitor at ease.

To *ingress* or enter a new environment is exciting and slightly frightening for anyone. Personal comfort is in jeopardy. In reality, every tourist is a guest in your community. Thus everyone in the community needs to know how to make tourists comfortable. Familiarity makes comfort. All people are not comfortable in all situations. Match visitors to your community, inviting only those who can ingress comfortably. Study the preferences and customs of other peoples and target those who would fit into your community. For instance, since Japanese like to shop, golf, and visit urban areas, don't invite them if you offer agricultural attractions.

Interpret your uniqueness for your visitors so that the entire attraction experience is clear. *Interact* with them in this process. You must deliver what you promised — clarity and comfort. To do this, you must train your personnel and review the training regularly. Some of your staff should speak the visitors' language fluently. Even if you still have a language barrier, be sure to provide lots of warmth and generosity.

There are no foreigners, only visitors. Remember, every visitor is just like you, a human being. Humans go where they're invited and welcomed; return to places where they have good experiences. Tourists do not want to be strangers in a strange land. Treat them as friends.

Remember, you, the host, are part of a collective — international guests call you, your town, your parish, your state, and America. All

TOURISM RESOURCE INVENTORY

ATTRACTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

Historical
Cultural
Recreational
Entertainment

ACCOMMODATIONS

TOURIST SERVICES

Tour Companies
Travel Agencies
Banking and Money Exchange
Medical Facilities

TRANSPORTATION

Bus
Taxi
Car Rental
Bicycles

OTHER INFRASTRUCTURE

Water supply
Electric Power
Sewage Facilities
Telecommunications

PUBLIC & PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS

Chamber of Commerce
Convention & Visitors Bureau
Civic Groups
Fraternal Groups

are judged together. Establish public/private partnerships — governmental bodies can benefit by the good impression you make. Seek their help.

Develop packages with other destinations. You don't operate in a vacuum. Advertise together, recommend each other to your visitors. Besides increasing your visitor's good time and thus making him feel welcome, this process gives you an opportunity to stretch your marketing dollars.

Be aware of the entire travel cycle. In the first period of pre-trip planning and organizing, the tourist gathers information that will help in choosing transportation and destination. Welcome him with brochures and ads. In the second period at the main destination, the tourist experiences the available services and activities that help him like or dislike an area.

Make plans so he will have a warm, wonderful time. In the third period, back at home, the tourist evaluates the trip based on his expectations, actual experiences, and memories. You provided all three. Be sure they were positive.

In each of these periods, tourists use specific services listed on the previous page. Be certain that those operating in relation to

your attraction or your community serve each guest well. Is your community without some of these services? Help establish them.

I know that each of your communities is unique and that each of you may have specific questions about welcoming international visitors. You are welcome to write, FAX, or telephone me for help.

Remember:

WELCOME GUIDELINES

A good welcome earn\$ many thank\$.

If you don't ask, they won't come.

Broken promises will mean empty ca\$h register\$.

Know thy visitor! Understand his wants and expectations.

There is no such thing as a foreigner. All visitors are guests.

1993 SUCCESS STORIES

ON THE ROAD AGAIN: TOURISM ALONG US 65

by
"Buddy" and Carol Lee Miller
Plantation Gift Co., Waterproof

Plantation Pecan & Gift Co. had its beginnings in 1970 with the start of a mail order business. Today it is a retail and mail order business as well as a tourist attraction. How did this happen west of Waterproof in Tensas Parish? Waterproof is a town of about 1,200. Tensas Parish has the smallest population of any parish in the state. An appropriate subtitle for this talk would be **"How to survive, grow and create jobs in a rural area with the smallest population of any Louisiana parish."**

Our only products were our farm-raised pecans, both in-shell and custom-cracked. We started this business with the idea of developing it slowly toward retirement. We planned to balance production of young trees with the sales, progressing in a somewhat rational manner. It didn't work that way at all. Our business grew faster than we expected. When we added pork production we began to attend pig sales up north. By putting small plastic bags containing a few of our custom cracked pecans on the door handles of every truck in the parking lot, our business increased. By 1980, we realized we had to expand or get out of the pecan business. We began a retail business with our pecans and pecan products like pralines, sugared pecans, and roasted pecans. We added smoked pork loins, bacons, sausage, and hams. Carol Lee added a pecan cookbook. Since then, we have added several other products like fig preserves, fudge, and fresh fruits from our orchards. The in-house computer program for our mail order business which we developed in 1980 proved so successful we now sell it to other mail order businesses. **The secret is sell at every opportunity but keep the small farm family image.**

We direct market our own farm-raised products. Our pecans and fruit tree crops are good products because they're annually renewable, and they're consumable. We also do further processing to increase value and product lines which increases jobs and our profit. We stress exceptional quality and uniqueness in products. But none of this is profitable without customers.

Since our population is low, we have to utilize non-residents, people from outside Waterproof, for survival and growth. We have to attract drive-in business from Hwy. 65. For the retail business, we've converted from a very rudimentary-type atmosphere to more of a store setting. We use **southern hospitality**. The biggest challenge we've got is to be certain that all staff use it. Some are born with it, some are not. We train everyone to use it. It makes a big difference. Our customers are always our top priority. We try to make them feel at home in our store, and also our mail-order business. We have very few complaints. Those that we do, we handle **personally**. We provide an attractive atmosphere in the store, but more importantly, a friendly smile and a good attitude. A lot of our customers are on their way to Natchez or New Orleans. We'll give them directions, even make reservations for them, make them feel like they're family. I'll guarantee you one thing—they'll mail order from us come December.

What good is a tourist to you, or to your area, unless he stops? And we try to do everything we can, particularly with **signs and local advertising** to get them to stop. Work with the state to get a sign. Our **catalogs** also help us get people from other highways. Believe it or not I had a phone call one day from Iowa, a mail-order customer had just decided that they'd drive down to see who we were and where we lived. We also put **information in Louisiana welcome centers**.

The most effective advertising is a satisfied customer that tells someone else. We benefit from both retail and mail order satisfied customers, and we cultivate repeat business. We extend that hospitality even to those who just want to rest, or to see how pecans grow. We welcome them and send them home with a catalog. You'd be surprised at the result. Tourists bring dollars to our business and to our area. If they stop in Tensas Parish, they usually spend something and that helps us all.

In these ways, we get a high percentage of repeat business every year. We're computerized, but we still project that small, farm-family image, and this is the way we want to keep it.

BARGES FOR RVs: SPECIALIZED SERVICES LEAD TO BIG BUSINESS

by

E.G. Conrad Jr.

RV River Charters Inc.

New Orleans

RV River Charters started out with a request from Capt. Ray Gaines, a gentleman who represented a club of retired military people who had a desire to put their recreational vehicles, meaning travel trailers, motor homes, etc., on barges and see the Mississippi River by water. He had spent about two years trying to convince a barge line or towing company to put together a cruise but they indicated the idea was against Coast Guard regulations and wouldn't do it. He wandered in my office one day, and made his request. I said, "Oh! I can do that!" And we have been committed to the idea since.

I was president of Compass Marine Inc., a Louisiana-based towing company located in Algiers. At that time, I was not in the passenger vessel business at all. For that first tour, I rented oil field barges to cruise up the Mississippi to St. Charles, Missouri, just above St. Louis. We took about 87 RVs up river, and brought another 93 back down. It was so successful that we decided to produce specially designed barges with full campground hookups, concrete decks and safety features. We worked with our local Congressman, Billy Tauzin, to secure Coast Guard certification.

We formed RV River Charters in 1990 to serve as booking agent and to put together the tours. On each flotilla, we push the barges with a 90 ft. by 30 ft., 1500-horsepower push boat. On the front of the barges a remote control bowboat helps to steer. **Safety is, of course, our utmost concern.** We can't afford to bump a bridge, or anything big with this kind of cargo. We make stops on the cruise. For instance, a trip heading west from New Orleans into the Louisiana Bayou country cruises over night and makes its first stop at Houma. In the morning "Black Guidry," a wonderful, wonderful attraction, comes out in the swamp to a boat, picks the people up, brings them breakfast, takes them into the swamp to see the wildlife.

The people, coming from all over, thoroughly enjoy experiencing our scenery, our culture, our food, our fantastic hospitality. **Louisiana opens its heart to these tourists.** The RV'ers become a part of the scene; they go back excited and thrilled. I am proud to say that we have many visitors who have made as many as four and five of these tours with us.

This is a good market. We tallied up the retail value of just the motor homes, not the occupants, not the outfitting, but just the motor homes on a typical cruise, and it was somewhere between \$12.5 and 13 million dollars worth of motor homes on the decks of these barges.

Through Ray Gaines contacts in the RV travel industry, we were able to make contact with two large caravan companies. These arrange RV tours on highways. Our barges were a natural extension for their customers, primarily retirees who travel together on structured vacations to various locations. We now **work with many caravan companies and clubs** to schedule cruises in Louisiana and the Tennessee River Valley. Our cruising campground provides a unique addition to the travel industry. The response from caravan companies, RV clubs, and individual RV owners has been great. We now have six barges, allowing us to cruise in two

different locations simultaneously. Our latest addition is a Party Barge, a 40x80 foot barge-based building with sliding glass windows. It has laundry facilities, showers, a large kitchen, TV and VCR-equipped recreation room and upstairs observation deck.

We've been able to give people the opportunity to experience Louisiana in a unique way in the bayous. And once the people have gotten a taste of it, they want more. When they get off the barges, they backtrack through the bayou country to visit some more. We're also very proud of the fact that we made the *Today* show, and that publicity has helped us all through the country. We're drawing people from all over the United States, from Canada, and many repeats. Our plans for the future are to venture into new waterways and offer additional places to visit.

SPRUCING UP FOR VISITORS: ENFORCING LITTER LAWS

by

Constable Dale G. Nix

Mooringsport

Sprucing up for tourism by fighting litter is a big job in the state of Louisiana, especially in a 50-75 mile radius of Shreveport. Litter includes trash, garage sale signs, business signs, real estate signs, and, worst of all, political signs placed by those that help make or enforce our laws.

Soon after I was elected to the office of constable, the Caddo Parish Police Jury asked the constables to help the fight against litter and issued ticket books to the constables that wanted them. In my area, we have a large landfill operated by the parish. No one used covered trucks to keep the load of trash from falling or prevent trash from flying out.

I did a little research. I found a good litter law to rely on: R.S. 32:289 — Section A says basically that no person, firm, or corporation shall intentionally dump, leave, or deposit any glass or metallic objects, or any trash, refuse, or garbage on any private property without the owner's permission, or on any highway or roadside park, or on any lands adjacent thereto. Section B of this law says that no person, firm, or corporation shall operate any truck or other vehicle on any highway in such a manner or condition that the contents can blow or fall out of the vehicle, or that mud from the vehicle's tires can fall upon the roadway.

With this statute in hand, I put lights, siren, and a sign on my vehicle and went to work.

I thought that perhaps some people don't know that they are violating the law. For 10 days I stopped garbage waste trucks, parish trucks, pickups, any vehicles in violation, and gave them a verbal warning. At the end of 10 days, I gave the first citation to the Parish Police Jury. The next day, all parish trucks had chicken wire stretched over their loads. I had made my point.

On another occasion, I received a complaint that someone had left several bags of garbage on the ground by a bin at the entrance to the landfill instead of depositing it in the container. I searched through the bags, and I found a name. I called the party and asked him to meet me at the landfill. He was a good customer of mine, and also my state senator!

In the last couple of years, state legislation was passed to give the Justice of the Peace Court jurisdiction over litter violations. Caddo Parish Commission then passed ordinances giving the Justice of the Peace Court permission to levy fines of \$100-700 for littering in Caddo Parish. A bill was introduced in the last session of the Legislature giving constables the authority to write a litter ticket anywhere in the parish but it did not get out of the Senate.

If you have a litter problem, involve your constable. If he doesn't want to become involved, remember him at election time. **The laws are there to fight litter.** In fact, in civil district court, the third littering offense is punishable by a fine of \$2,000 and revocation of the driver's license!

In my 17 years as constable, I have used up several citation books for litter violations, and I have had many individuals pick up their own bags of garbage to involve them in keeping our highways and byways clean and litter free. People have not been educated about littering. Involve school children. On several occasions, I worked with the Mooringsport Homemakers Club, providing traffic control while they picked up litter along their adopted highway.

Get involved in your own area. Louisiana is too beautiful to be littered.

A WISE MOVE: GIVING BACK TO YOUR COMMUNITY

by

Anne Fitzgerald
Loyd Hall Plantation
Cheneyville

As a member of a very small rural community — actually, we are nestled between two rural communities: Cheneyville has 750 population, and Lecompte has 1,700 population and each has one stoplight — I had given little thought to tourism. Often we think that the world of tourism involves the grand and wonderful and spectacular, such as Disneyworld. But I discovered that **what we take for granted in our own backyard is that very thing that makes us interesting to tourists.**

Tourists come in all sizes, all shapes, from all cultures, speaking different languages, but they all have one thing in common: they want to interact with people and learn more about them. A perfect example, is a group from France that was with us at Loyd Hall on Saturday evening. The questions that these French visitors had for us were: "Do your grown children have problems finding jobs?" "What about the tax situation here?" "What about the economy?"

I learned that there is no quick way to success. However, my experience is proof that if you **research the industry, identify the available support resources, refine your particular project, develop a marketing strategy for your particular niche in this industry, and avail yourself of every opportunity to interact with your local CVBs, your tourist commissions, LTPA, with the Office of Tourism, if you understand that you must always sell your state first, your particular area secondly, and then your particular property, and if you also understand the importance of everyone in your area working together, you too can be successfully involved in tourism.**

Your area must want to be involved. One of our small communities has made the decision that they don't want to change; that they don't want strangers coming into their community; they're not ready to give up the type of life that they know. The average age of the residents in that little community is about 78, so change would be difficult for them. We have to put aside the tourism plans we have for this area until the residents want them.

But here's our story: We live in Loyd Hall Plantation, an early 1800 antebellum home complete with ghosts and spirits at which we offer accommodations and tours. We also farm cotton and corn, raise a few cattle, and my husband practices veterinary medicine.

As the last of our daughters left for college, I realized that I did not want to go back to work in a hospital laboratory, and my friend, marketing director at Hotel Bentley in Alexandria, helped me assess the tourism alternative. We saw that central Louisiana will never be a primary destination. A primary destination for Louisiana is New Orleans or Lafayette, or neighboring Natchez, Mississippi. We **positioned ourselves as a strong secondary market for individual travelers as well as group tours.** We tell people, "We're on your way to or from somewhere (a primary destination), stop and visit with us." We then had to pull together some attractions that we could use as points of interest to make individuals and groups want to stop and hopefully spend the night, or at least, a large part of the day.

We had to identify those entities in the community that really wanted tourism, and work

together with them. Initially, we had Hotel Bentley which is not only a hotel but it is, of itself, an attraction; Kent House plantation in Alexandria is a house museum, and our own Loyd Hall. We were delighted that Loyd Hall and Kent House were both older properties, but each has a particular flavor, offering a difference of cultures to visitors.

We targeted the motorcoach and tour bus business in our marketing strategy because it allowed us a degree of control to prevent complete disruption of our family life. Remember, Loyd Hall is also our home. This choice was neither easy nor painless. When you make that commitment, you must be prepared to produce a product, even when you don't feel like it. The attraction comes first.

The motorcoach market to a rural, secondary area is about a three-to-five year sell. We began entering this market in 1986 and our first real year was 1991. Only this year (1993), we now have a full color, glossy brochure, our own membership in NTA, and some name recognition in the industry, both domestically and internationally.

As we've developed our particular product, we have reached the point that we have been able to give back to our community in a variety of ways. We are, for instance, able to suggest to tour operators new and different local attractions. I think it's very important to participate enthusiastically in cross-selling, not just in your area but throughout the state and adjoining ones.

We're making inroads in educating our local people that tourism is indeed a viable part of the economic development of our area. Our Chamber of Commerce now totally endorses the concept that tourism is part of economic development. Our local people are learning about the benefits they reap from those tax dollars that the tourists spend.

In 1993, at Loyd Hall we will have approximately 300 motorcoaches that will visit with us — half of those are international, primarily coming from France. As a result of Pow-Wow that was held in New Orleans this year, we're now seeing visitors from the Italian and German markets.

We would not be where we are right now in our development were it not for the opportunities offered from our membership in LTPA, the services provided by the Office of Tourism, and certainly assistance from our local Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Extension Service. It's really important that we all work together. The ultimate goal for all of us is to collectively move forward and with the maximum use of our dollars, of our resources, and our manpower. The result is a win-win situation for each individual property, for our community, and for our state.

READY, WILLING AND ABLE: VOLUNTEERISM GETS RESULTS

by

Sue and Harry Hebert
Iberville Parish
City of Plaquemine

We are volunteers at the grass roots level. Projects which can make a difference in the quality of life, projects of community value, are our goal. We look at different programs, do family vision planning, and take action. As volunteers, we try to get community leaders to invest time and money in viable community projects. Sometimes it takes years.

Our experience all began with construction. We were building a new house and I had to go downtown to pick up someone. I saw a three-story house with porches all around for sale. The cypress and gingerbread construction was wonderful. I went home and said, "Harry, forget the new house, we have got to have that one." Then once we got the old house, we did not know what to do with it. The house began our economic development/tourism adventure.

One of the most valuable lessons we learned from our house is to **look at all people as individuals who are products of their heritage**. While learning the history of the house, we learned local history, and realized that we can share our history with our own community and our visitors.

We had our first opportunity to share that history and the house during the World's Fair in 1983-84 when we responded to a state call for additional tourist attractions. Besides providing housing for World's Fair visitors, we developed a visitors' tour of Iberville Parish. We called it Tout de Suite, which means hurry up or in a hurry, because we had little time to prepare it.

Our process was simple: we drove around and took a serious look at every facet of life from housing to health care, from job opportunities to recreation. Knowing the people of the area is one half the battle to improving the town. From this, we were able to pick out points of interest for our tour. We took advantage of training that was offered for anyone providing tourism development information during the fair. That experience is another lesson we learned: **take advantage of educational conferences, seminars, and workshops**.

We also learned: **if you want to volunteer, be ready, willing, and able to spend some money — even some of your own**. Sometimes you can get help from grants, or from offers for free or reduced rate services.

Back in 1985, we began talking about Plaquemine's need for a Main Street Program. In fact, our house's location led people to ask us what we were going to do about the "ugly downtown"! It took us from '86 to '92 to really get the program off the ground. In its first year, the Main Street Facade Improvement Program administered by the Main Street Historic District Commission became a big success. In addition, many homes in the district have been restored or refurbished by individuals. Most of this effort was voluntary — Sue served as a volunteer manager — until we realized that several groups were all trying to improve our community on a shoestring. A cooperative agreement was signed in 1992 between the Chamber of Commerce, the Main Street Program, the Economic Development Office, and the Tourist Commission so that all four are under one umbrella with an overall paid director, a combined office, and a

\$90,000 budget. In a year or two, we can report to you on this cooperative development.

But, we know cooperation can help. We received an award from the National Main Street Center to cover a half of the \$5,000 cost of having our downtown assessed. The award through the Edward D. Jones & Co. Downtown Revitalization Contest was awarded because of cooperation. Volunteers from a couple of these local offices read about it and reported into the main office. Their interest led us to enter the contest. Soon our downtown will be assessed and we will be given a road map for revitalization. Things can happen when someone gets out there and really works.

Let me show you what we have already done. Historical preservation that began with our home led to the development of the Plaquemine Historic District, the Plaquemine Main Street Program, and even listing some local properties in the National Register of Historic Places. Together our community has developed support for the Dorceyville School and Church of 1868. With the help of the Delta Service Corps, we have volunteers keeping the Plaquemine Lock facility open.

The tourism that began with the 1984 World Exposition and the Iberville Tout de Suite was expanded by the development of two heritage festivals: the 1987 Iberville Heritage Festival at Plaquemine Lock and Nottoway Plantation, and the 1992 Bayou Goula Heritage Festival. Many local businesses and individuals have participated in the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service hospitality training program in conjunction with these programs.

We organized the Iberville Parish Tourist Commission Open House in 1990, are involved in the Louisiana Scenic Byways Program, and the Promotion and Preservation of Iberville Inc. In fact, we believe that preservation should be our main job. By promoting and preserving our culture and heritage, we network for community support of projects that will make our area a better place to live and work.

**THE SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA ZYDECO MUSIC FESTIVAL:
THE PERFORMING ARTS AND TOURISM**

by
Wilbert Guillory
Festival Director

You have to know each other to make something happen. And you have to utilize what you have. The Zydeco Festival held annually in Plaisance, Louisiana, was established to promote African-American Creole culture and artists but in the process it has helped many others. The non-profit groups in the area raise funds, all the hotels, bed and breakfast inns, and the cabins at Chicot State Park are filled, and business in surrounding communities is increased during the festival.

Our culture was in danger of being lost. The music comes from the harvest of snap beans. During the day, the entire community harvests the beans; at night, accompanied by music from the accordion and frotoir (metal washboard), everyone snaps them for canning. All work together. Zydeco music is a snapping type of music, sort of a combination of reggae, spirituals, jazz, rhythm and blues.

The Southern Development Foundation, a non-profit organization to help families in the community, promotes this annual event. We wanted to bring together all kinds of people to share a good time in the creole tradition.

The first year (1982) Clifton Chenier, King of Zydeco, performed and we drew about 600 people. Our second year, we drew 4,000 people; and this year the crowd increased to 20,000. To get ready, we **utilize the community**. When we started, we needed to clear a big field — to get the lawn in shape and clear the goats on it. We rotated pastures and distributed some of the goats to area farmers. Some of the goats were slaughtered to help prepare a meal for all of the festival workers and special guests as well as create a market to sell goats' meat and milk products. Today, many people take part because it is a family event. When you feel kinship, you don't mind spending a little time or money to help the community.

We encourage people to bring picnics to the festival because we promote family events. Only non-profit groups sell goods or food at the festival because they give back to their communities through their programs. Individual arts and crafts vendors from all over take part as well. This festival is recognized throughout the U.S. as a multicultural event, attracting visitors from many states and countries including France, England, and Germany.

The purpose of the festival has been accomplished—sharing our culture and taking care of our families. Together we can make it happen. You can do this too.