

Louisiana Tourism Development Commission
Board of Directors Meeting
Wednesday, May 29, 2024 | 10:00 a.m.
West Baton Rouge Conference Center | Port Allen, LA

Minutes

Call to Order: Interim Chair, Carrie Stansbury, called the meeting to order at 10:16 a.m.

Roll Call

Present: Interim Chair Carrie Stansbury, Al Schof, Brett Bares, Janice Delerno, Thomas Carmody (SOS Nancy Landry), Melissa Dottolo, Bill Stark, Ben Berthelot, Bill Langkopp, Morgan Moss, Stacy Brown
Absent: Lt. Governor Nungesser, Mary Ann Nowlin, Celeste Gomez, Anna Koch Tusa, Greg Domingue, Herman Fuselier, Cassie Condrey, Alice Scarborough
11 members present and a quorum.

Approval of Minutes: Interim Chair Stansbury called for approval of the minutes from the last meeting. Thomas Carmody moved, seconded by Melissa Dottolo. Motion carried and the minutes were approved.

Jeff Harlan, Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Louisiana Office of Tourism (LOT), thanked everyone for attending and presented the organizational chart for LOT.

Lynne Coxwell, Director of Research for LOT, presented 2023 Tourism Stats and Facts. Harlan mentioned that international visitation was significantly up and that domestic visitation was slightly up as well.

Harlan announced that LOT recently went through the RFP process for creative, public relations, digital, and media components. Karron Alford, Director of Special Projects for LOT, discussed the Agencies of Record for FY 25-27. The creative agency is Zehnder Communications. The PR agency is BVK (Birdsall, Voss & Associates). The digital agency is Miles Partnership. The media buyer is Morgan & Co. These agencies will start 7/1/24 and will work closely together.

Harlan mentioned that LOT is now promoting an advertising campaign called My Louisiana. Under the My Louisiana campaign, there are four pillars that will change yearly. This year we are focusing on the Year of Music (YoM) campaign, followed by the Year of Food (YoF) campaign, and then the Year of Outdoor (YoO) campaign.

Harlan explained that in 2022, the Major Events Incentive Fund (MEIF) and the Events Incentive Fund (EIF) were transferred from Louisiana Economic Development (LED) to LOT. A bill was recently passed to transfer the funds back to LED on July 1, 2024. The MEIF will remain in place but the EIF will be abolished.

Harlan discussed The Louisiana Tax Free Shopping Program which has been around since the early 1980's and was administered by the Department of Revenue. This program was directed at international visitors to encourage them to visit the state for tax free shopping. Since the argument was made that the program was ineffective, the Louisiana Tax Free Shopping Program will no longer exist after June 30, 2025.

Thomas Carmody asked for clarification on the MEIF being transferred to LED. Harlan explained that he will know if the bill will be signed at the end of the legislative session. If the bill is signed, Harlan will notify those who have applied for funding. Morgan Moss asked where the eligible events for the MEIF can be found. Harlan responded that the information can be found at Revised Statute 51:1260. Ben Berthelot commended LOT for executing the fund.

Alford presented the 2024 YoM Campaign video and discussed upcoming YoM festival activations.

The LOT Mobile Welcome Center, named Louie, has attended two festivals so far: Atlanta Jazz Festival and Bayou Bon Vivant Cajun Music, Food, & Arts Festival in Norfolk, VA. Louis will be going to the CMA Fest. Berthelot requested to see pictures of Louie. Alford showed pictures of Louie from Atlanta Jazz Festival.

Harlan and Alford discussed YoM buy-in opportunities for partners.

Alford discussed the 2025 YoF campaign. LOT staff are working on the details of the campaign and partners will be invited to join in. The YoF campaign will be unveiled at LTA Summit.

Sharon Calcote, Louisiana Byways Director for LOT, discussed the new Louisiana Birding Website, which can be found at www.birdinglouisiana.com.

Michelle Reed, Executive Staff Officer for LOT, asked for the Louisiana Tourism Development Commission (LTDC) to file a motion for Stansbury, who is currently serving as interim chair of LTDC, to serve as chair of the commission going forward. Janice Delerno moved, seconded by Stacy Brown. Motion carried.

Coxwell announced that the next LTDC meeting will be held August 5, 2024 and a calendar invite will be sent out soon. At that meeting, the commission will vote on the approval of historical markers. LOT has received 38 applications so far. Coxwell will send out the details on the markers prior to the next meeting. Coxwell shared that the program started in the 1950's and that there are currently over 900 historical markers.

Chair Stansbury called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion was seconded by Brown. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 11:06 a.m.