**Louisiana Tourism Development Commission**

**Board of Directors Meeting**

**Monday, August 5, 2024 | 10:00 a.m.**

**Baton Rouge Marriott | Baton Rouge, LA**

**Minutes**

Call to Order: Chair, Carrie Stansbury, called the meeting to order at 10:07 a.m.

Roll Call:

Present: Chair Carrie Stansbury, Al Schof, Brett Bares, Janice Delerno, Thomas Carmody (SOS Nancy Landry), Melissa Dottolo, Bill Stark, Ben Berthelot, Bill Langkopp, Morgan Moss, Herman Fuselier, Greg Domingue

Absent: Lt. Governor Nungesser, Mary Ann Nowlin, Celeste Gomez, Anna Koch Tusa, Cassie Condrey, Alice Scarborough, Stacy Brown

12 members present and a quorum.

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

Lynne Coxwell, Director of Research for Louisiana Office of Tourism (LOT), discussed the historical marker applications that will be voted on. Coxwell mentioned that each entity pays for and maintains their own marker. Doug Bourgeois, Assistant Secretary of LOT, discussed the history of the historical markers. In the past, the historical markers were part of the Office of Cultural Development, in the division of Historical Preservation, and then were moved to the LOT. There are approximately 850 markers across the state. Coxwell stated that she normally receives about 30 applications each year. Bill Langkopp moved to approve the applications for the historical markers. The motion was seconded by Ben Berthelot. Vote carried and the historical marker applications were approved. It was recommended by Berthelot to add to the agenda to vote on moving the historical markers back to the Office of Cultural Development. Brett Bares made a motion to move, and this was seconded by Herman Fuselier. Bares made a motion to move to vote on removing the historical markers from LOT. This was seconded by Al Schof. Motion carried.

Jeff Harlan, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the LOT, presented a budget update for LOT. Harlan stated that each year the LOT goes through a budgeting process in which the Revenue Estimating Committee (REC), a body of four individuals, estimate the sales and tax collections for the following year. Based upon that forecast, the LOT builds a budget. Last May, the REC’s forecast for LOT was $33.7M. LOT received an additional $125,000 in general fund dollars to support the 250th anniversary of the Civil Code of Louisiana.

Bourgeois stated that we are looking forward to another good year. Last year Louisiana had 43M visitors resulting in $18B in visitor spending. Bourgeois mentioned that LOT is working hard to return to 2019 numbers.

Coxwell compared research numbers from fiscal year 2023 and fiscal year 2024. Bourgeois mentioned that our biggest increase has been in international visitation. Coxwell encouraged everyone to visit the Explore Louisiana Industry portal, which is accessible at <https://www.explorelouisiana.com/industry>, to review research stats.

Bourgeois discussed the recent and upcoming music festival activations, which have been part of the Year of Music Campaign. Louie, the mobile welcome center, has traveled to some of these activations and has been a big hit. Bourgeois discussed how LOT has partnered with Zachary Richard, who is well known in France and in French speaking Canada. Zachary will be doing a tour of cities in France, promoting Louisiana music and promoting visitation to Louisiana. A video, featuring Zachary Richard, was shown to the group. Bourgeois also discussed LOT’s presence at CMA Fest and partnering with Lainey Wilson.

Bourgeois mentioned that LOT has received several grants for international and domestic marketing. He stated that the Lieutenant Governor has really challenged LOT to look at the movie industry and at film makers. Research shows that people often want to travel to a destination in which they have seen in a movie. The Louisiana Department of Economic Development has partnered with LOT to provide staff and funding. Currently, there are several films being produced in Louisiana. Bourgeois discussed the importance of getting filmmakers to Louisiana.

Bourgeois announced that LOT will be participating in the 2025 Tournament of Roses Parade and showed the group a rendering of the float design. The theme for the parade is “Best Day Ever”. Thomas Carmody asked how much is spent on building the float and Bourgeois stated that it is normally 250K – 300K. Our float will represent a “Louisiana Saturday Night”. Herman Fuselier made recommendations on which instruments should be represented on the float.

Bourgeois mentioned that LOT will not be participating in the Macy’s Day Parade.

Bourgeois discussed National Gumbo Day, which will be held in October, as the kick-off to the 2025 Year of Food Campaign. LOT has partnered with top chefs from Louisiana and will be using top food influencers. The Lieutenant Governor will unveil the 2025 Year of Food Campaign at Summit.

Bourgeois announced that with Super Bowl coming up, LOT will be working with the City of New Orleans and the Super Bowl host committee to see what can be done to increase the visibility of all of Louisiana.

Bourgeois discussed the 2025 Mardi Gras Campaign.

Bill Langkopp mentioned the Tax Free Shopping Program and Bourgeois discussed the pros and cons of the program, which had recently been abolished.

Ben Berthelot called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion was seconded by Schof. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m.