**Louisiana Travel Promotion Association**

**Annual Membership Meeting & Luncheon**

## Natchitoches Events Center

### January 26, 2017

## Minutes

Announcer Jeff Blackwell welcomed members and guests to the LTPA Annual Membership Meeting & Luncheon asking them to be seated for a special presentation by the Northwestern State University drumline.

Pastor Doug de Graffenried of First University Methodist Church of Natchitoches blessed the food; lunch was served.

Host of the events, Arlene Gould, Executive Director of the Natchitoches Area CVB, welcomed attendees and thanked her area partners for a wonderful event the previous night. She recognized local elected officials and state legislators in attendance including Senators Eric LaFleur and Gerald Long and Representatives Terry Brown and Kenny Cox.

Past Presidents of LTPA in attendance were recognized and thanked for their service. They included Marion Fox (1978-79, 2013-14); Gerald Breaux (1986); Preston Friedley (1988); Shelley Johnson (1993, 2005-07); Carrie Stansbury (2003-04); Stu Barash (2004-05); Stacy Brown (2007-08); Celeste Gomez (2008-09); Alana Cooper (2010-11); Fran Thibodeaux (2011-13); and Linda Curtis-Sparks (2015).

Event sponsor, Hoffman Media’s Ray Reed, addressed the group. He was thanked for his continued support of LTPA and Louisiana tourism.

Chairman of the Board, Phil Frost, stepped to the podium to call the Annual Business Meeting to order and asked for a motion to accept minutes from the previous meeting.

## Action #1: Kerry Andersen moved to accept minutes from the 2016 Annual Meeting at L’Auberge Casino Resort in Lake Charles. Marc Becker seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Per LTPA bylaws, a nominating committee developed a slate of officers and directors, which was mailed to the membership in December and would be presented for approval today. Officers included Chairman Mark Romig, New Orleans Tourism Marketing Corporation; Vice Chair Travis Napper, Ruston Lincoln CVB; Secretary Janice Delerno Verges, The Stockade Bed & Breakfast; Treasurer Ben Berthelot, Lafayette Convention & Visitors Commission; and Immediate Past Chair Phil Frost, Baton Rouge Zoo. Directors included Rebecca Blankenbaker, Cane River National Heritage Area; Dickie Brennan, Dickie Brennan & Company; Alana Cooper, Monroe-West Monroe CVB; John Crook, Vernon Parish Tourist Commission; Brandy Evans, Shreveport-Bossier Convention & Tourist Bureau; Marion Fox, Jeff Davis Parish Tourist Commission; Eric Hoffman, Hoffman Media, LLC; Ralph Ney, Marriott Hotel Baton Rouge; Donna O’Daniels, St. Tammany Parish Tourist Commission; Lynette Tanner, Frogmore Cotton Plantation & Gins (2nd term); and Denise Thevenot, Louisiana Tax Free Shopping (2nd term).

**Action #2:** Peggy Benoit **moved to accept the 2017 slate of officers and directors as presented.** Andy LeBouef seconded the motion. Motion passed.

## Returning Directors serving on the Board were Kerry Andersen, Pinnacle Entertainment (L’Auberge); Marc Becker, New Orleans Hotel Collection; Peggy Benoit, Carmel Inn & Suites Thibodaux; Melissa Cloutier, J. Bennett Recruiting; Kyle Edmiston, Louisiana Office of Tourism; Kevin Kelly, Houmas House Plantation & Gardens and Andy LeBouef, Mardi Gras World.

## Newly elected Chairman Mark Romig stepped to the podium to recognize those directors rotating off the board this year and present them with tokens of appreciation. They included Stacy Brown,Shreveport-Bossier CTB; Sandra Davis, Konriko/Conrad Rice Mill; Jim Caldwell, Kisatchie National Forest; Linda Curtis-Sparks, Sabine Parish Tourist Commission; Shelley Johnson, Lake Charles-Southwest Louisiana CVB; James Ramsaur, Lincoln Parish Park; Alice Scarborough, Kent Plantation House;and Vito Zuppardo, Miles.

Before the business meeting closed, Chairman Romig recognized Co-Executive Director Darienne Mobley for her leadership over the past 10 years, which included accomplishing 40% membership growth post-Katrina, tripling participation in marketing programs, launching the Louisiana Tourism Leadership Academy, securing LTPA’s financial footing, creating several niche marketing campaigns, and more. As previously announced, LTPA had created a new management structure with Jill Kidder as President and CEO and Darienne Mobley as consultant.

**Action #3:** Shelley Johnson **moved to adjourn the business meeting.** Travis Napper seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Assistant Secretary Kyle Edmiston stepped to the podium to speak on behalf of the Louisiana Office of Tourism. The state again had record visitation in 2016, protected the tourism budget and welcomed two direct international flights to Louisiana. He shared a video on the Louisiana Ambassador program and encouraged everyone to become a member of Bayou Krewe and share their experiences using #Only Louisiana. He shared his gratitude to Darienne Mobley and introduced Jill Kidder.

LTPA President & CEO Jill Kidder thanked Kyle and members of the Board of Directors, past and present, for their faith in her. Looking to the future of LTPA she assured them that best efforts would be made by her and the LTPA staff in marketing, advocating and educating on behalf of its members.

The 2016 Louisiana Tourism Leadership Academy Class was congratulated on their graduation. Students crossed the stage to receive their plaques from the President & CEO and Chairman of the Board, including: Tracy Browning, Ascension Parish Tourist Commission; Timothy Bush, Bayou Lafourche Area CVB; Marcilla Cook, Vernon Parish Tourist Commission; Christina Cooper, St. Tammany Parish Tourist Commission;Zachary Ebarb, Visit Baton Rouge; Jean-Paul Gisclair, New Orleans Tourism Marketing Corporation; Jesse Guidry, Lafayette CVC; Zeb Mayhew III, Oak Alley Plantation; Morgan Moss, The Myrtles Plantation; Christy Naquin, Bayou Country Children's Museum; Emily Fenet Parker, L'Auberge Casino Resort Lake Charles; Joey Pierce, Houma Area CVB; Amanda Quimby, Ruston Lincoln CVB; Megan Ryburn, River Parishes Tourist Commission; Connie Boudreaux Silva, Louisiana Office of Tourism;Sheila Snow, Monroe-West Monroe CVB; Marie Stagg, Nottoway Plantation; Erica Telsee, Shreveport-Bossier CTB; Gloria Thompson, Living the Dream Charters;Kelli West, Alexandria/Pineville Area CVB;Zane Wilson, Renaissance Publishing, LLC; and Eric Zartler, Lake Charles Southwest Louisiana CVB.

The 2017 Louisiana Tourism Leadership Academy Class was introduced and asked to please stand in their places. They included Alvon Brumfield, Louisiana Renaissance Festival; Angie Manning, Lake Charles Southwest Louisiana CVB; Barry Landry, Louisiana Office of Tourism; Brittany Gilbert, Renaissance Publishing; Jessica Ragusa, Office of the Lieutenant Governor; Joshua McNemar, Office of the Lieutenant Governor; Katherine Johnson, Natchitoches Parish Tourist Commission; Kaylie LeBlanc, Lafayette CVC; Kellie Walters, Bayou Lafourche Area CVB; Kimberly Caldarera, Isle of Capri; Madeline, Louisiana Travel Promotion Association; Mallory Asp, Mardi Gras World; Marica Mackenroth Brewster, Tomahawk Tourism Marketing; Megan Gavlick, L'Auberge Casino Resort Lake Charles; Rebecca Blankenbaker, Cane River National Heritage Area; Ryan Cockran, Communify; Shanna Landry, Lake Charles Southwest Louisiana CVB; Stella Thornton, Louisiana Tax Free Shopping Commission, Timika Spurlock, Sheraton New Orleans; and Zondra Jones, St. Tammany Parish Tourist Commission.

Louey Awards Sponsor from Madden Media, Danah Heye, addressed the group and thanked everyone for the opportunity to be a part of the awards program recognizing excellence in the industry. The actual awards were crafted by Louisiana’s own Wortman Pottery. Louey Awards were presented to: Outstanding CVB/Tourist Commission of the Year with a budget up to $499,999- Natchitoches Parish Convention & Visitors Bureau; Outstanding CVB/Tourist Commission of the Year with a budget $500,000 to $999,999- Sabine Parish Tourist Commission; Outstanding CVB/Tourist Commission of the Year with a budget up $1 million and above- Visit Baton Rouge; Tourism Campaign/Promotion of the Year- Eat Here Cenla (Alexandria/Pineville CVB); Festival/Event of the Year- Alex Winter Fete (Alexandria/Pineville Area CVB); Attraction of the Year- McIlhenny Company (Tabasco); Accommodation of the Year, Full-Service Lodging- DoubleTree by Hilton Lafayette; Accommodation of the Year, Limited-Service Lodging- Comfort Suites Natchitoches; Accommodation of the Year, Bed & Breakfast- A Chateau on the Bayou (Raceland); Restaurateur of the Year- Charlie Goodson (Charlie G’s and Social Southern Table & Bar, Lafayette); Campground/RV Park of the Year- Lakeview Lodge (Ferriday); Major Event of the Year- U.S. Travel’s 2016 IPW (New Orleans CVB); Victor Profis Travel Media Award- Michael Stafford (Garden & Gun Magazine); Rising Star of the Year- Jonathan “J.T.” Taylor (Livingston Parish CVB); and the Will Mangham Tourism Lifetime Achievement Award- Michael Valentino (Basin St. Station, Valentino Hotels). Two final awards were given to the Governmental Friend of Tourism in the House, The Honorable Representative Helena Moreno; and the Governmental Friend of Tourism in the Senate, The Honorable Senator Eric LaFleur.

Sponsors of the events, Hoffman Media, Miles Media, Madden Media, the Natchitoches Area CVB and all the Natchitoches tourism partners, were thanked again for hosting the event as the event concluded. Everyone was reminded to collect the beautiful coffee table books at their seats and to check at registration for any silent auction items they may have won.