

State and Local Government in Louisiana: An Overview 2012-2016 Term

CHAPTER 2 — STATE GOVERNMENT FUNCTIONS

Part I. Culture, Recreation and Tourism

Responsibility for preserving, cultivating, and interpreting Louisiana's cultural and natural heritage lies primarily with the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism (CRT). In addition, the department has an obligation to promote aspects of Louisiana's unique heritage in order to attract visitors to the state. Most of the programmatic activity of the department is executed through one of its five offices: the office of tourism, the office of cultural development, the office of the state museum, the office of the state library, and the office of state parks. In the language of the Revised Statutes,

The department shall be responsible for the development, maintenance, and operation of library, park, recreation, museum, and other cultural facilities; the statewide development and implementation of cultural, recreational, and tourism programs; and planning for the future leisure needs of the people. (R.S. 36:201(B))

In meeting these responsibilities, the department contributes to the quality of life of Louisiana citizens both directly, by providing recreational and educational opportunities, and indirectly, by contributing to the economic health of the state through income generated by the tourism industry.

Tourism

The Louisiana tourism industry suffered a tremendous blow in the fall of 2005 due to the devastation caused by hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Many state parks, historical sites, museums, libraries, and welcome centers were severely damaged by the storms. The state was also hit by the national recession in 2009 resulting in a loss in both spending and visitation. In addition, in the spring of 2010, the BP oil spill had a detrimental impact on the state's tourism. Although tourism has suffered during these tumultuous times, the office of tourism has worked to expedite Louisiana's return to worldwide preeminence as a top tourist and cultural destination.

The office of tourism is responsible for providing for the design, plan, development, and implementation of the promotion of Louisiana's history, culture, art, folklife, recreational, and leisure opportunities, natural and scenic resources, transportation, cuisine, attractions, accommodations, and events. It also is responsible for encouraging and assisting local government and private sector development for the promotion of tourism. The office partners with tourism professionals and industry stakeholders in private and public sectors in order to conduct an ongoing promotional campaign of information, advertising, and publicity to create and sustain a positive image and understanding of Louisiana.

Marketing

The mission of this division is to provide advertising, promotion, development, and publicity for the assets of the state; to design, produce, and distribute materials in all media; and to reach as many potential tourists as possible.

- Development and Sales

This section merges traditional on-the-ground marketing efforts with statewide, regional, national, and international travel and tourism industry trade, tour operators, wholesalers, and suppliers. The sales team works closely with Louisiana tourism industry partners and organizes and implements an aggressive schedule of tourism sales missions, sponsors premier special events, and attends numerous trade shows to promote Louisiana as a top tourism destination. The tourism development team works closely with Louisiana tourism industry partners and other community-based organizations to develop high quality and authentic tourism products for the sales team to promote. Projects include designation and promotion of Louisiana Scenic Byways, development of themed driving, biking, birding and other trails, coordination of efforts of the Atchafalaya National Heritage Area, and conducting several tourism industry outreach programs.

- Coordinated Marketing

This section is charged with creating and implementing a unified marketing plan and advertising campaign for CRT agencies to brand the department and to leverage state dollar investment in media buys, print projects, and special promotions. It provides guidance to strengthen the department's marketing brand by providing strategic direction for the creation, management, and distribution of marketing and advertising initiatives throughout CRT. In addition, it is responsible for establishing promotional and advertising programs for both print and electronic collaterals such as ad materials, Internet/web pages, and special promotions.

- Consumer Information Services

The research, distribution, and inquiry sections are part of the marketing division. Distribution sees that the mail is processed for all program areas as well as servicing the material and supply needs of the network of welcome centers. The research section oversees all contracted research and generates its own data on advertising effectiveness, cost per inquiry, conversion rates, and other data vital to overall advertising and marketing effectiveness. The inquiry section fields calls from consumers who plan to arrive in our state within the next few weeks and prepares fulfillment packets for immediate response to their needs.

The office of tourism is developing a presence in the social media space, using tools such as Facebook, Twitter, and a Louisiana Travel Blog. In addition, the office launched a new marketing campaign called "Louisiana: Pick Your Passion" which is aimed at luring visitors back after the BP oil spill caused the cancellation of a large percentage of trips to the state.

Welcome Centers

Louisiana's welcome centers, located along major highways entering the state, provide safe, friendly environments for visitors to find information about area attractions. They also seek to

encourage visitors to spend more time in the state. Recently completed or ongoing projects include:

- I-10/Slidell Welcome Center - A new CRT building was completed in June 2009. Because the federal government requires rest stations to keep truck parking and accessibility up to date, the office of tourism used the order to upgrade as an opportunity to remodel the entire facility.
- I-55/Kentwood Welcome Center - In September 2011, the La. Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD) commenced work on ramps, parking, additional restroom buildings, a vending area, storage, and extensive landscaping. Funding was made available through federal stimulus funds.
- I-10/East Vinton Welcome Center - This is the last of the original generation of interstate welcome center buildings. A capitol outlay request for a new center was approved in 2007-2008. Design development under this request has been completed but construction documents are not yet developed because of DOTD budgeting delays/issues. Currently in talks with DOTD to begin construction in 2013.

Administration

- Louisiana Tourism Development Commission

Within CRT, this state agency serves as an advisor to the assistant secretary of the office of tourism and the secretary of the department on matters related to the development and implementation of programs to promote tourism and the historical, cultural, recreational, and scenic legacy of the state. (R.S. 51:1256-1257) There are 21 members of the commission who have the following responsibilities:

- (1) Reviewing and advising with regard to the major types of promotion and advertising contracts, prior to their approval.
- (2) Aiding in the formulation of the master plan for tourism development.

- Louisiana Tourism Promotion District

The Louisiana Tourism Promotion District is a special taxing district whose boundaries are coterminous with the state. The purpose of the district is to provide funds to assist the state in the promotion of tourism. The district does this by levying and collecting a sales and use tax limited to three one hundredths of one percent. Specifically, these funds can be used by CRT for the promotion of the state's tourism industry through the purchase of media advertisements, provided that any funds used by the department for the purchase of in-state media advertisements shall not exceed 10% percent of all funds used and such expenditures are consistent with the office of tourism's strategic plan for marketing. (R.S. 51:1282-1287).

- Encore Louisiana Commission

Within the office of the lieutenant governor, this 11-member commission supports the development of infrastructure and programs that enhance quality of life for persons age 50 and above, in order to retain and attract residents in this demographic and yield positive economic outcomes. Among other things, the commission is responsible for the following:

- (1) Formulating a strategic plan for the attraction and retention of persons 50 years old and above.
- (2) Monitoring and evaluating guidelines for a designation program that recognizes Louisiana assets and developments attractive to residents and tourists 50 years old and above.
- (3) Approving a marketing or communication strategy to promote Louisiana as a location or destination for residents and tourists 50 years old and above.
- (4) Researching and developing programs designed to assist state government, local governments, private sector entities, and nonprofit entities in developing Louisiana as a destination for residents and tourists 50 years old and above. (R.S. 51:1317-1319)

The Encore Awards program is a competitive grant program created to identify, support, and promote best practice models for attracting and accommodating people 50 and above. Applications are open to any civic entity, municipality, public or private business, academic institution, or not-for-profit that meets specified requirements.

Louisiana Bicentennial Commission

In 2010, the legislature created the Louisiana Bicentennial Commission. The commission consists of 12 members and serves to plan and develop activities appropriate to commemorate the bicentennial of Louisiana's statehood. These activities include a limited number of projects to be undertaken by the state seeking to harmonize and balance the important goals of ceremony and celebration with the equally important goals of scholarship and education.

BP Oil Spill - Tourism Funding

In response to the damage suffered by Louisiana's tourism industry as a result of the BP oil spill, BP announced in the fall of 2010 that it would provide funding in the amount of \$30 million to help the industry get back on its feet. The \$30 million will be provided to CRT and will be invested in a Louisiana campaign (including nature based tourism), a coastal tourism response, a Greater New Orleans response, and tourism events.

Tourists Attractions

- Louisiana Scenic Byways

The Louisiana Scenic Byways are so designated by the National Scenic Byways Program. The goal of the Louisiana Byways Program is to brand Louisiana Scenic Byways as a premier traveling experience, highlighting their intrinsic cultural, historical, archeological, recreational, natural, and scenic resources, thus building awareness and expanding economic opportunity. Some of the most popular activities along the byways include hiking, camping, picnicking, biking, fishing, photographing scenery, viewing historic sites, and of course scenic driving.

- Atchafalaya National Heritage Area

The Atchafalaya National Heritage Area celebrates and preserves the heritage and culture of 14 parishes in south central Louisiana. The area is among the most culturally rich and

ecologically varied regions in the United States and is home to the widely recognized Cajun culture as well as a diverse population of European, African, Caribbean, and Native-American descent. The Atchafalaya Trace Commission, managing entity of the Atchafalaya National Heritage Area, is charged with planning and managing the area so that communities can save important cultural and natural resources, enhance the positive benefits of tourism, and create a sustainable, healthy economy.

The Atchafalaya National Heritage Area Development Zone (ATHADZ) is a tax credit program intended to boost economic development within the area. The program provides state income tax credits to small businesses (fewer than 20 employees) that meet specified criteria and make use of the natural, cultural, and historic assets of the area.

- America's Wetland Birding Trail

The America's Wetland Birding Trail is the final leg of birding trails in states bordering the Gulf of Mexico, linking Texas and Mississippi. Traveling along the trail visitors will explore some of Louisiana's most productive natural places and be exposed to some of the best birding in the country. In addition to exceptional birds and other wildlife, the birding trail also exposes visitors to some of the state's unique history and culture. The America's Wetland Birding Trail has expanded into four corridors: Great Gulf Coast, Mississippi River, Red River, and Zachary Taylor Parkway.

- Audubon Golf Trail

The Audubon Golf Trail was created under the tourism umbrella of the office of the lieutenant governor for the purpose of stimulating economic development, enhancing tourism, attracting new residents and retirees to the state, and elevating the quality of life experience in the state. Named for naturalist/artist John James Audubon, all courses on the trail are members of the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary for golf courses, a program dedicated to protecting the environment and preserving the natural heritage of the game of golf. The trail features 12 courses by designers including Hal Sutton, David Toms, and Pete Dye.

- African American Heritage Trail

The African American Heritage Trail leads visitors in the footsteps of celebrated and everyday African Americans who helped shape the state of Louisiana. Plantations, universities, churches, and art museums showcase all facets of African American contributions, from academic to artistic. Stretching from New Orleans to Shreveport the trail offers a triumphant immersion into the state's rich black history and culture. One of the more than 30 stops on the trail is the nation's oldest surviving black community — Tremé, a New Orleans' neighborhood where generations of the city's musicians grew up and learned to play.

- Louisiana Culinary Trails

The Louisiana Culinary Trails program promotes Louisiana's food and travel to culinary tourists. Seven culinary trails, known as Creole Fusion, Capital Cuisine, Bayou Bounty, Seafood Sensation, Prairie Home Cooking, Delta Delights, and Red River Riches, feature nationally renowned and locally loved restaurants and food markets that highlight Louisiana's unique flavor. Their offerings reflect the tastes of their regions and range from

fried seafood and po-boys to gourmet meals and upscale desserts.

- Local Tourism

State law also provides for the creation of parish tourist commissions to promote tourism within their respective parishes. (R.S. 33:4754 et seq.) Often known as convention and visitors bureaus, tourist commissions generally have two revenue sources which support their promotional activities. First, each is authorized to levy a hotel occupancy tax. The maximum rate for this tax is set independently for each parish but in most cases is three or four percent of the amount charged for the room. Many tourist commissions also receive a rebate of the portion of the state sales tax which is collected from the hotels in their respective jurisdictions.

Cultural Development

Like other states in the nation, Louisiana is the product of migration, conflict, cultural exchange, and societal evolution through time. The past is reflected most notably in the rich array of art, buildings, archaeological sites, historic landscapes, and traditional cultural properties that are a shared inheritance for all the people of the state. The office of cultural development performs the functions of the state relating to the arts, historical and archaeological preservation, crafts, humanities, cultural heritages and traditions, and related cultural programs and activities. Three divisions comprise the office: the division of the arts, the division of historic preservation, and the division of archaeology.

Arts

The division of the arts, in cooperation with the Louisiana State Arts Council, is the catalyst for participation, education, development, and promotion of excellence in the arts. It is the responsibility of the division to support established arts institutions, nurture both emerging arts organizations and our overall cultural economy, assist individual artists, encourage the expansion of audiences, and stimulate public participation in the arts in Louisiana.

Arts Programs

- Stabilization Program

The Stabilization Program seeks to support nonprofit 501(c)3 arts organizations that help to create, present, and preserve the various unique arts resources that make up Louisiana. The program provides grants to arts organizations that have made an impact locally, statewide, regionally, nationally, or internationally. The goals of the program include strengthening the infrastructure of the arts industry, celebrating Louisiana's diverse artistic tapestry, and increasing in-state purchasing of Louisiana cultural products and services by Louisiana residents and businesses.

- Decentralized Arts Funding Program

The Decentralized Arts Funding Program is administered in cooperation with local arts agencies throughout the state. The program makes the arts available in all areas of the state by giving people in each parish the opportunity to develop arts programs that meet their local needs. Using the latest census figures for parish populations, the program allocated approximately fifty cents for each resident of the parish. These funds will be granted to

applicant organizations in the parish which received the allocation. Applicants compete only against other organizations and individuals within their parish.

- Percent for the Art Program

The Louisiana Percent for Art Program places public artwork in and around state buildings. The legislation governing the program specifies that if construction or renovation of a state building equals or exceeds \$2 million, one percent of the expenditure shall be for works of art by artists and craftsmen for the building and its grounds. The overall goals of the program include creating a world-class collection of public art for Louisiana citizens and creating economic opportunities for Louisiana artists. Louisiana is one of 27 states with Percent for Art legislation guiding the inclusion of works of art in new public construction.

- Louisiana Folklife Program

The Louisiana Folklife Program is designed to identify, document, conserve, and present the folk cultural resources of Louisiana. Folklife includes living traditions learned informally over time within ethnic, regional, occupational, and family groups. The program initiates projects, collaborates with other organizations, provides technical assistance for planning and funding folklife projects, and manages the division of the arts folklife grants with the goal of serving the greater folklife community of Louisiana.

- Arts in Education

Imagination, Creativity and Innovation (ICI) Initiative supports schools with a mission of nurturing creativity in every learner through an integrated arts education. Participating schools are receiving support to integrate the arts into curriculum including a two-week artist residency which places a professional theater artist in the classroom to demonstrate teaching opportunities by integrating theater with English language arts.

Historic Preservation

Louisiana has one of the most diverse cultural heritages of any state in the nation. Conserving the objects, sites, buildings, and districts that represent that heritage is of great importance to the future of our state. Preservation is essentially carried on through a blending of efforts by major players at the national, state, and local levels.

Division of Historic Preservation

The division of historic preservation serves as the staff of the appointed state historic preservation officer for federal programs that pertain to historic buildings, structures, and places as such appointment is required by the National Historic Preservation Act. The division also implements state historic preservation policy. More specifically, the responsibilities of the division include the following:

- Nominating Louisiana properties to the National Register of Historic Places.
- Developing a comprehensive statewide historic preservation plan.
- Reviewing applications for federal and state historic preservation tax credit and tax incentive programs.

- Administering the main street program and the certified local government program.
- Administering the federal historic American buildings survey program.
- Reviewing federal projects and federally assisted or licensed projects for their impact upon historic buildings and places.
- Implementing a program of activities that will make information about the historic resources of the state available to the public.
- Providing for the management of all Federal Historic Preservation Fund monies and state funds allocated for historic preservation grants.

National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the Nation's historic places worthy of preservation. Authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Park Service's National Register of Historic Places is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archeological resources. It is a great honor for a property to be listed on the prestigious National Register of Historic Places. This status can be very useful in helping to save historic buildings and sites because people typically hold Register properties in high regard and think twice about insensitive alteration and demolition. The National Register recognizes five basic types of historic properties:

- Historic buildings such as plantation houses, courthouses, or log cabins.
- Historic structures such as old bridges, lighthouses, or forts.
- Historic districts such as old residential or commercial neighborhoods.
- Historic sites such as battlefields or Indian mounds.
- Historic objects such as old steamboats or fire engines.

Generally, properties are not placed on the Register if they are less than 50 years old; if the period of their historical significance is less than 50 years old; or if they have been significantly altered.

Main Street Program

The division of historic preservation operates the very successful Main Street program as this program has been developed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The goals of this program are to rehabilitate the historic buildings in the downtown areas of small towns and to reestablish downtown as an economically viable part of the community. The program attempts to achieve these goals through comprehensive consideration of planning and ordinance review, manager and volunteer training and development, economic development, landscape planning, commercial rehabilitation, building design, real estate development, tourism, and marketing.

The division estimates that since 1984, more than 35 communities have been active in revitalizing historic downtown areas and neighborhood commercial districts. Investments, including private rehabilitation and public improvements, exceed \$400 million dollars and nearly \$94 have been generated locally for every one dollar invested by the state. In addition, more than 9,100 new jobs have been created by more than 2,000 new businesses.

Louisiana Main to Main is an annual statewide initiative designed to foster economic development and stimulate cultural tourism throughout the state of Louisiana. Throughout the month of November, residents and visitors are encouraged to take road trips from one Main Street community to the next to experience the rich and diverse culture of Louisiana.

Tax Incentives

The Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives program is the largest, most successful, and most cost-effective federal community revitalization program. The division of historic preservation administers the federal rehabilitation tax credit in conjunction with the National Park Service and the Internal Revenue Service and also administers two state tax credits in conjunction with the Louisiana Department of Revenue. The purpose of tax credits is to encourage the preservation of historic buildings through incentives to support rehabilitation of historic buildings. Since the inception of the federal rehabilitation tax credit, Louisiana has been a leader in certified tax credit projects, generating over \$2 billion in private reinvestment in Louisiana communities. The state commercial tax credit has leveraged more than \$350 million in private reinvestment in downtown development districts and cultural districts.

Tax Abatements

The Restoration Tax Abatement, or RTA, program provides five-year property tax abatement for the expansion, restoration, improvement, and development of existing commercial structures and owner-occupied residences. The program can be used in combination with the federal historic preservation tax program, resulting in even more substantial savings. The tax abatement program is available for buildings individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places or buildings that are considered historic components of Register districts. It is also available for existing buildings in downtown or economic development districts.

Section 106

The staff of the division of historic preservation reviews assorted projects in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. The federal law mandates that all endeavors or undertakings that involve federal funds, licenses, permits, or property be reviewed for potential effects on cultural resources. If a project is determined to have an adverse impact on such cultural resources, the division staff consults with the appropriate federal agency and other interested groups to develop and approach that avoids, minimizes, or mitigates the impact.

Local Preservation

Local governments are authorized to establish historic preservation districts. After appropriate study by a committee created for that purpose and after review by any planning or zoning commission, the local governing authority may create a district and establish the regulations which apply within the district. The governing authority is required to create a commission to review all proposed construction, renovation, and demolition work within the district. Generally, unless otherwise provided by the local ordinance, construction, renovation, and demolition of private property within the district is prohibited unless the historic preservation district commission grants a certificate of appropriateness.

Certified Local Government Program

The Certified Local Government (CLG) Program is an initiative of the National Park Service and was developed to assist municipalities in protecting their historic resources. CLG designation is intended to encourage communities to establish historic preservation programs at the local level. The program aims to foster neighborhood pride, to survey and inventory local historic properties, and to assist property owners in preserving their community's heritage.

Cultural Districts

Any municipal or parish government in Louisiana may designate a specific geographic area and apply for that area to become a cultural district. The primary goal of the Cultural Districts Program is to revitalize communities and contribute to the lives and livelihoods of the citizens by creating locally driven hubs of cultural activity. The program provides two primary incentives for communities to create or rebuild cultural destinations:

- Renovations to historic structures within the district may be eligible for state historic tax credits.
- Sales of original, one-of-a-kind works of art are exempt from local and state sales tax.

French Heritage

- Council for the Development of French in Louisiana

The Council for the Development of French in Louisiana (CODOFIL), a 50 member organization appointed by the governor, is empowered to do any and all things necessary to accomplish the development, utilization, and preservation of the French language as found in the state of Louisiana for the cultural, economic, and tourist benefit of the state. CODOFIL offers Louisiana's citizens, whether they be of French ancestry or not, the opportunity either to learn French or to enhance and utilize the French they already know; and to explore, understand and support Cajun, Creole, and Francophone heritage in Louisiana for the cultural and economic benefit of all its citizens.

- La. French Language Services Program

The La. French Language Services Program provides state government services in the French language to French-speaking citizens and visitors in order to sustain La.'s historic French cultural heritage and to promote an increase in tourism and greater investment in the state from Francophone countries. Requires CRT to develop program guidelines addressing such issues as prioritizing service areas with greater numbers of French-speaking citizens or visitors and services related to health, safety, compliance with regulations, or complexity of processes.

Archeology

The challenges to archaeological conservation in Louisiana are vast and complex. Many of Louisiana's archaeological sites are threatened by an ever-growing population needing land for homes and businesses, the increased use of land-leveling and drainage techniques by agricultural interests, the rapid erosion of the state's coast, and oil and natural gas exploration.

Division of Archeology

The division of archaeology is leading the effort in addressing threats to the state's archaeological sites. The division operates under three mandates: the National Historic Preservation Act, the state Archaeological Resources Act, and the state Unmarked Burial Sites Act. The division's responsibilities relate to recording, protecting, and distributing information about the state's archaeological resources. Duties of the division include the following:

- Promulgating rules and regulations concerning the recovery and study of archaeological remains.
- Maintaining the state archaeological site files, which include site records, field notes, maps, photographs, and reports.
- Functioning as legal custodian for the state's archaeological artifacts and objects.
- Implementing activities that will make available to the public information about the historic and prehistoric resources of the state.
- Serving as the archaeological advisory source for all state agencies by assisting them in evaluating any potential impact of their projects on archaeological resources.
- Administering those portions of the National Historic Preservation Act relative to archaeology. (R.S. 41:1603 et seq.)

Regional and Station Archaeologists

The division manages five regional archaeologists as follows: Louisiana State University, University of Louisiana–Monroe, University of Louisiana at Lafayette, Northwestern State University, and University of New Orleans. The division also manages a station archaeologist at Poverty Point State Historic Site.

Regional Archaeologists are available to meet with landowners who have sites on their property and to talk to educators, school groups, and other organizations about Louisiana's prehistoric and historic archaeology. The station archaeologist promotes research, preservation, and interpretation of archaeological remains at the Poverty Point State Historic Site.

Archaeological Resources

The Louisiana Archaeological Survey and Antiquities Commission is an 11 member commission that was established in 1974 to promote the goals and objectives of CRT and to act in an advisory capacity to the department and its secretary in their administration of the Archeological Resources Act (R.S. 41:1603 et seq.) and in matters relating to antiquities, archaeology, and other cultural resources.

The division of archaeology offers several databases to help with archaeological research and Section 106 investigative projects.

- Louisiana Radiocarbon Database is a searchable database of radiocarbon dates obtained for archaeological sites in Louisiana that have been reported to the division.

- Louisiana Cultural Resource Management Bibliography includes abstracts and bibliographic information for the library of cultural resource management reports housed in the division.
- Louisiana Cultural Resources Map is the division's online GIS system showing both standing structures and archaeological sites.

Cemeteries

The Louisiana Unmarked Human Burial Sites Preservation Act (R.S 8:671-681) identifies the division of archaeology as the agency responsible for abandoned cemeteries and unmarked human burials in Louisiana, and establishes processes for protecting and, when necessary, excavating cemeteries and burials when they are encountered.

The Louisiana Historic Cemetery Preservation Act (R.S 25:931-943) identifies the division of archaeology as the agency responsible for permitting any activities at an abandoned cemetery that could potentially disturb the graves, tombs, headstones, fencing, or other elements of the cemetery.

Ancient Mounds Heritage Area and Trail

Native Americans have lived in what is now Louisiana for at least 12,000 years. A durable reflection of prehistoric Native American societies is the public architecture that remains—the earthen mounds that provided the focus for social, political, and religious life. In 1997, the Ancient Mounds Heritage Area and Trail was established to make an inventory of earthworks in northeast Louisiana. The long-term goal was to create a self-guided mounds trail on which visitors would be directed to historic markers that would describe the earthworks visible from the highway at those locations. The trail promotes 39 well-preserved and visible mound sites, emphasizing the interaction of history, ecology, and culture during the past 5,000 years, and providing unique educational and tourism experiences.

World Heritage Site Designation

The Poverty Point State Historic Site represents the climax of archaic mound building. Constructed between 1600 and 1300 B.C., the site contains six concentric earthen rings, a 650-yard central plaza, and the third largest mound in the United States. A staggering quantity of dart points, drills, jasper beads, and other objects have been recovered from the site.

The U.S. Department of Interior announced in Summer 2011 that the earthworks of Poverty Point would be considered as one of the United States' nominations for the United Nations' World Heritage List. The list, administered by the U.N.'s Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, recognizes cultural and natural sites of universal importance. The U.S. nominations will likely be formally nominated to the UNESCO World Heritage Committee in 2013, for possible inclusion on the World Heritage List in 2014.

Museums

Louisiana treasures its long history and values the ongoing contributions of many of its talented citizens. The result is an abundance of museums that preserve and celebrate the unique aspects of Louisiana's remarkable people.

Many of the state's museums feature famous (and sometimes infamous) figures from Louisiana

history—from notorious pirate and smuggler Jean Lafitte to colorful politicians, war heroes, and celebrities. Other museums, such as the Eddie G. Robinson Museum, focus entirely on the lives of ordinary individuals who made extraordinary contributions to the state and country. The office of the state museum and the division of museums within the Dept. of State exhibit some of the state's most valued assets and help to bring Louisiana's incredibly rich history to life to visitors from all around the world.

Louisiana State Museum

The office of the state museum operates and maintains the Louisiana State Museum (LSM), including all buildings, collections, and exhibitions of the Louisiana State Museum complex in New Orleans, and other museums under its jurisdiction. (R.S. 36:208(C)) Currently the following properties constitute the state museum complex: the Cabildo, the Presbytere, the Arsenal, the Old U.S. Mint, Madame John's Legacy, and the 1850 House, all of which are located in the New Orleans French Quarter and are designated as national historic landmarks. Additional properties under the jurisdiction of the office of state museum include: Louisiana State Museum Collections Storage Facility in New Orleans, the Creole House and Jackson House in New Orleans, the Lower Pontalba Building in New Orleans, the Wedell-Williams Aviation Museum and the Cypress Sawmill Museum in Patterson, the Old Courthouse Museum in Natchitoches, the E. D. White Historic Site in Thibodeaux, the Louisiana Political Museum and Hall of Fame in Winnfield, and the Capitol Park Complex in Baton Rouge. The artifacts held by the state museum are a vast and varied collection of documents, art objects, furnishings, and textiles dating back to Louisiana's colonial days and reflecting the rich cultural heritage embodied within our state.

Ongoing and future projects of the Louisiana State Museum include:

- Completion of the Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame Museum in Natchitoches. The new museum will feature 3 different exhibits: The Hall of Fame, Sports Paradise, and Northwest Louisiana history. The Hall of Fame exhibit will feature a video introduction by the Louisiana sportswriters and artifacts from new inductees. Visitors to the Sports Paradise will experience the different seasons of Louisiana and the sporting activities that go with each. The Northwest Louisiana history exhibit focuses on the rich Spanish and French Creole heritage, plantation culture, notable women, and living traditions. The museum is scheduled to open in Fall 2012.
- Opening of the Bicentennial exhibition in Baton Rouge celebrating 200 years of Louisiana's statehood. The large exhibition is a selection of up to one hundred artifacts from the LSM collection that both individually and collectively illustrate the state's rich history over the past 200 years. LSM curators will make artifact selections from the following collections: decorative arts, science and technology, jazz and Louisiana music, Mardi Gras and costumes, visual arts, and maps and manuscripts.
- Opening of a permanent exhibit at the Old U.S. Mint exhibit entitled "Jazz and Louisiana Music". This permanent exhibit, scheduled to open in the Fall of 2014, will feature some of the over 4,000 historic artifacts and more than 15,000 photographic images that make up the LSM's jazz and Louisiana music collections.
- In October 2010, LSM opened an exhibit entitled "Living with Hurricanes: Katrina & Beyond". The exhibit, located in the Presbytere on Jackson Square, chronicles the effects of the storm, levee failures, and the recovery efforts of Louisiana residents. The exhibit

stretches across four galleries, each telling one aspect of the story using artifacts and rich media – sound, video, and computer graphics. Artifacts in the galleries include music legend Fats Domino's baby grand piano found in his flooded Ninth Ward house, a Coast Guard rescue basket and seats from the heavily damaged Louisiana Superdome where thousands of people sought refuge and rescue. The objects serve as touchstones in recalling the days after the storm.

Museums – Department of State

The division of museums within the Dept. of State operates and maintains the following museums: Chennault Aviation and Military Museum in Monroe, Delta Music Museum in Ferriday, Eddie G. Robinson Museum in Grambling, Germantown Colony Museum in Minden, Jean Lafitte Marine Fisheries Museum in Lafitte, Louisiana Military Hall of Fame and Museum in Abbeville, Louisiana Military Museum in Ruston, Louisiana State Cotton Museum in Lake Providence, Louisiana State Exhibit Museum in Shreveport, Louisiana State Oil and Gas Museum in Oil City, Louisiana's Old State Capitol in Baton Rouge, Mansfield Female College Museum in Mansfield, Old Arsenal Museum Adjacent to the State Capitol in Baton Rouge, Shreveport Water Works Museum in Shreveport, Spring Street Historical Museum in Shreveport, and Tioga Heritage Park and Museum in Pineville. The department is currently developing the Garyville Timbermill Museum in Garyville.

The division has launched the Heroes and Heritage Trail as a way to promote the museums in the absence of tourism marketing funds. The trail is a series of destinations throughout Louisiana each telling a compelling story through historic artifacts. The trail winds its way from Lafitte to Oil City. The route ties together local museums that were largely hidden for many years.

National World War II Museum

Louisiana is home to the National World War II Museum, formerly known as the National D-Day Museum. The museum is located in the central business district of New Orleans and focuses on the contribution made by the United States to victory by the Allies in World War II, and the Battle of Normandy in particular. It has been designated by the U.S. Congress as country's official World War II Museum. The museum holds a wide display of military uniforms, weaponry, medals, artwork and personal items of the war including photos, correspondence and mementos.

Libraries

State Library

The State Library of Louisiana offers a comprehensive collection of almost 1 million items, including books, magazines, reference materials, maps, government publications, audiovisual materials, DVDs, CDs, and more. The state library provides planning, coordination, and leadership to and for the various local, regional, and school libraries around the state so as to provide every citizen with access to free, high quality library service. Consultants from the state library visit each library system regularly and routinely advise directors, staff, and trustees on programs, new services, construction, administration, and management of libraries, including legal and ethical issues.

The staff at the state library provide research assistance to state employees, agencies, and the

general public. The Recorder of Documents administers the Louisiana State Documents Depository Program. Through this program, state government documents are made available to the public. In addition, the state library provides a state-of-the-art automated interlibrary loan system. If the library does not have a particular item that a user needs, it can borrow that item from other libraries. The Interlibrary Loan program allows patrons access to library collections from all over the world.

The state library also offers services directly to Louisiana's blind, visually impaired, physically disabled and reading disabled citizens. The Talking Books and Braille Library Services for the Blind and Physically Handicapped provide recorded books and playback machines, Braille and large print books, special Louisiana materials, recorded magazines, and other accessible materials. The growing collection encompasses both fiction and nonfiction, with books for children, teenagers, and adults.

Literacy

Through the years, the state library has contributed to literacy in Louisiana by purchasing and circulating appropriate materials to public libraries and other literacy providers. The Louisiana Center for the Book stimulates public interest in reading, literacy, and libraries through a variety of programs and public events, including the statewide summer reading program and the annual Louisiana Book Festival. The Louisiana Book Festival encourages Louisianians of all ages to read more adventurously and regularly by offering opportunities to interact with authors from across the state, region, and nation, as well as from other parts of the world who have contributed to the literary heritage of our state.

Louisiana Collection

The Louisiana Collection is the state library's center for all things Louisiana; this includes history, culture, biography, and statistics. The staff performs in-person, telephone, mail, and email reference and referral services on Louisiana-related subjects and assists researchers using the collection.

Louisiana Gumbo Project

The "Louisiana Gumbo Project: a Recipe for Empowerment" is a digital collection comprising materials about Louisiana's history, culture, places, and people. This project provides free access to Louisiana's unique historical treasures. Louisiana Gumbo was made possible by a \$470,000 National Leadership Grant for Libraries that was awarded to the state library along with the state museum and the Historic New Orleans Collection. It provides digital resources to K-12 students and educators, as well as for researchers, writers, and genealogists.

Local Libraries

In addition to the state library, any city or parish is authorized to establish and operate a public library. In creating a library, a local governing authority is required to create a governing board which is responsible for adopting rules and regulations governing the library and for employing a librarian and other employees. If approved by the voters, the parish or municipality may levy taxes for construction, maintenance, and support of the library. (R.S. 25:211 et seq.) The state library administers state and federal grants for local libraries.

Recreation

State Parks

The unique natural and historical features of Louisiana's state parks system hold great potential for visitors of all ages to learn about and appreciate Louisiana's unusual environment and rich cultural heritage. The office of state parks serves the citizens of Louisiana and visitors by preserving and interpreting natural areas of unique or exceptional scenic value, planning, developing and operating sites that provide outdoor recreation opportunities in natural surroundings, preserving and interpreting historical and scientific sites of statewide importance, and administering intergovernmental programs related to outdoor recreation and trails. The office operates three classes of facilities: state parks, state historic sites, and state preservation areas.

- "State preservation areas" are those areas of exceptional scenic value which because of their unique characteristics should be preserved for current and future enjoyment.
- "State historic sites" are those areas which when evaluated on a statewide basis possess historical, cultural, or memorial significance. The principal function of a commemorative area is to preserve and maintain a specific historical, cultural, or memorial theme.
- "State parks" are natural areas which, when evaluated on a statewide basis, possess outstanding potential for recreation utilization. The natural area must possess outstanding scenic and natural qualities to provide a recreation opportunity of high quality in a natural setting.

Louisiana State Parks / Historic Sites		
State Parks		
Bayou Segnette	Cypremort Point	St. Bernard
Lake Bruin	North Toledo Bend	Hodges Gardens
Bogue Chitto	Fairview-Riverside	Sam Houston Jones
Lake Claiborne	Palmetto Island	Jimmie Davis
Chemin-A-Hunt	Fontainebleau	South Toledo Bend
Lake D'Arbonne	Poverty Point Reservoir	Lake Bistineau
Chicot	Grand Isle	Tickfaw
		Lake Fausse Pointe
State Historic Sites		
Audubon	Fort Pike	Poverty Point
Mansfield	Plaquemine Lock	Locust Grove
Centenary	Fort St. Jean Baptiste	Rebel
Marksville	Port Hudson	Longfellow-Evangeline
Fort Jesup	Forts Randolph & Buhlow	Rosedown Plantation
Los Adaes	Otis House at Fairview-Riverside	Winter Quarters

In addition to these general definitions, the Revised Statutes set forth size and other criteria which an area must meet in order to be taken into the state parks system. As of late 2011, the office is operating 22 state parks and 18 state historic sites. The Louisiana State Arboretum is the only state preservation area. Several of the state's historic sites and preservation areas have been placed on the National Register of Historic Places or designated as National Historic Landmarks.

Ongoing Initiatives

- Designation of Poverty Point State Historic Site in northeast Louisiana as a World Heritage Site. The U.S. Department of Interior announced in Summer 2011 that the earthworks of Poverty Point would be considered as one of the United States' nominations for the United Nations' World Heritage List. The list, administered by the U.N.'s Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, recognizes cultural and natural sites of universal importance.
- Continue to seek funding for the maintenance and operation of facilities in the state parks system and the completion of expansion and improvement projects, including statewide electrical, water, and sewer utility upgrades as well as erosion prevention measures.
- Continue the recovery of the New Orleans City Park as it sustained extensive damage in aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. At 1,300 acres, the park is one of the largest urban parks in the country. The park was placed in CRT in 2006, and the department began to partially subsidize the park's operations. The nonprofit City Park Association operates the park and continues to work with local businesses and organizations to expedite the recovery of the park.

Local Recreation

The office of state parks does not operate playgrounds, ball fields, or similar recreation facilities. Responsibility for these is left to local governments. State law authorizes and provides for creation of local recreation districts and many municipalities and parishes have taken advantage of this authority.

Land and Water Conservation Fund

The Land and Water Conservation Fund Act provides federal financial assistance for the acquisition and/or development of public outdoor recreational land and facilities. The office of state parks is designated as the state liaison agency for the administration of the federal program through the U.S. Department of Interior. This program has existed since 1964 to provide matching funds for local recreation projects.

Recreational Trails Program

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) is a Federal-aid assistance program that provides funds to states to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both nonmotorized and motorized recreational trail uses. RTP is an assistance program of the Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration. RTP funds come from the Federal Highway Trust Fund. Federal transportation funds benefit recreation including hiking, bicycling, in-line skating, cross-country skiing, off-road motorcycling, and all-terrain vehicle riding.

Outdoors Outreach

Louisiana Outdoors Outreach Program (LOOP) was created by the office of state parks to provide educational, recreational, and related outdoor programs, activities, and services to underserved and at-risk youth. Through a comprehensive organizational model, the goal is to enhance self-esteem, exercise the mind and body, and develop the many characteristics necessary for good citizenship. The program addresses the state's third to twelfth grade students, emphasizing environmental education, outdoor skills, and soft skills which include teamwork, problem solving, and conflict resolution. Programs are available in Baton Rouge and New Orleans.

Bike Louisiana

CRT publishes a list of bike routes throughout the state as an aid to local and visiting bicyclists. Many routes provided are on regular state and local roads. The department does not warrant the safety or suitability of the routes. Bikers may choose from lightly traveled, paved rural roads to challenging mountain-biking trails to easy, leisurely paths through Louisiana's state parks.

Louisiana Paddle

CRT publishes a list of trails and paddling areas as an aid to local and visiting paddlers. Many routes provided are also used by motorized vessels. The department does not warrant the safety or suitability of the routes. The state's many rivers, bayous, lakes, and other waterways provide almost countless opportunities for pleasant paddling.