

GATOR GRAM

SUMMER 2015

LAKE CHARLES/SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU



LAKE CHARLES SULPHUR WESTLAKE DEQUINCY VINTON IOWA

Acadian Awakening Music Fest

The Acadian Awakening Music Fest will take place Friday-Saturday, Oct. 2-3, at the Lake Charles Civic Center and Sunday, Oct. 4, at the Cajun French Music Association building. Lake Charles will serve as the opening ceremonies for the event which spans many destinations throughout South Louisiana, Oct. 3-12. Marking the 250th Anniversary of the deportation of the Acadian people, this festival is a celebration our unique culture, music & traditions.



Jo-El Sonnier



Rusty Metoyer & Zydeco Krush



Sweet Crude

Friday, October 2

- “Against the Tide” movie night at the Rosa Hart Theatre

Saturday, October 3

- Historical presentation and discussion: “The Birth of the Cajun Culture” by Warren Perrin
- Family Displays and Genealogical Library Research Labs & Historical Exhibits
- CFMA Youth Band will play along with Lesa Cormier & the Sundown Playboys
- Learn How to Cajun Dance
- Opening Ceremonies
- French Immersion Performances
- *Ave Maris Stella* by Barbe Choir
- Art & Local Food Vendor Booths Open
- Sweet Crude
A youthful mixture of French and English lyrics, tribal drums and traditional Cajun instrumentation
- Rusty Metoyer & Zydeco Krush
Toe-tapping dancing music for the crowds to enjoy
- Jo-EL Sonnier GRAMMY Winner
Enjoy Southwest Louisiana’s celebrated star as he plays traditional, original Cajun music

Sunday, October 4

- French Mass & Cajun Dance
Cajun French Music Association Building

For a complete schedule of events, log onto www.visitlakecharles.org/GRA or visit www.louisiane-acadie.com.



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LATER GATOR

A message from our executive director

The bureau recently concluded a Perception Study that outlines travel market research specific to Southwest Louisiana including residents, visitors, community leaders and the hospitality community. The study outlined the strengths and opportunities for growth as we move into the future with economic development and new residents. The study points to the area being a true leisure destination with a good mix of business and pleasure with the average leisure trip being over three days. The bureau is currently working to develop a comprehensive strategic marketing plan with Berkeley Young of Young Strategies.

With social media and online research being tremendous influences on travel, the bureau asked Dave Serino, founder and strategist of TwoSix Digital, to perform a social media and website analysis for the CVB. Dave recently met with staff and delivered an analysis on all the bureau's social media channels and website with suggestions to optimize the visitor experience. The online social media strategy will work in tandem with the Perception Study in order to maximize the efficiency of attracting visitors to Southwest Louisiana.

Looking to recent victories in sports, in a unanimous vote, the Louisiana High School Athletic Association (LHSAA) agreed to award the Louisiana High School State Baseball Championships to the Sulphur area for another two years. This will be the third time that all seven classes will be competing in one location to earn championship titles. Additionally, LHSAA voted to continue the Top 28 Boys Basketball State Championship at the Burton Complex in Lake Charles for two more years.

Sulphur Parks & Recreation along with the Lake Charles/Southwest Louisiana Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) presented the sole bid for the baseball tournaments being held May 12-15, 2016 and May 11-14, 2017. The Calcasieu Parish Police Jury, Burton Complex and the CVB presented the bid for the basketball championships being held March 7-13, 2016 and March 6-12, 2017.

We are looking forward to working with partners in tourism across the board during this exciting time of growth and development in Southwest Louisiana.

Shelley Johnson, CDME, LCTP
Executive Director

THE BUREAU STAFF

Shelley Johnson, CDME, LCTP
Executive Director

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Oliver G. "Rick" Richard, III
Arts & Humanities of Southwest Louisiana

Louisiana Sets Record-Setting Year Attracting 28.7 Million Visitors



Lt. Gov. Jay Dardenne visited Lake Charles during National Tourism Week, May 7, as part of a statewide expedition in a mini coach wrapped in Louisiana Travel's latest tourism marketing campaign and statistics. He was greeted by Gumbaux Gator; Michael K. Dees, CVB Board Member; Sam Wilkinson, CVB Board Member; Rick Richard, CVB Board Member; Shelley Johnson, CVB Executive Director of the CVB; Nic Hunter, President of the Calcasieu Parish Police Jury; Kyle Edmiston, Assistant Secretary for the Louisiana Office of Tourism; the Buccaneers of Lake Charles and other members of the hospitality community.

Staff Announcement



Elizabeth Eustis, a graduate from McNeese State University with a bachelor's degree in Mass Communications and Master's of Science in Instructional Technology, was recently promoted from Public Relations Manager to Digital Media Manager. Elizabeth previously worked as Admissions Counselor and Marketing Specialist at McNeese State University, and prior to that as Development Director for Holy Family Catholic School and also as a reporter for KLAX-TV in Alexandria.

PRESS ROOM

Social Media Training August 27



Sheila Scarborough, co-founder of Tourism Currents, specializes in social media for the tourism industry. She is a winner of Austin American-Statesman Texas Social Media and Clarion communications awards and she trains and speaks regularly about social media to a variety of audiences including public relations and marketing professionals, tourism and economic development experts.

Sheila will present a hands-on, common sense approach to incorporating social media into marketing and business plans. She will outline best practices and give concrete examples of reputation management and interacting with clients through social media channels for businesses in the hospitality industry.

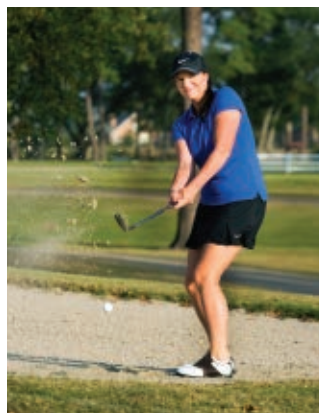
The event will take place from 2-4 p.m. at the SEED Center. For details, check www.visitlakecharles.org/SocialStrategies.

Connecting with Communicators



The communications department attends various conferences that offer opportunities to meet one-on-one with journalists and network with travel media to pitch story ideas. In August, Megan Hartman will attend Travel Media Showcase where she'll meet with travel writers in pre-set one-on-one appointments to share details on Southwest Louisiana to gain editorial coverage. In October, Anne Klenke and Capt. Sammie Faulk will attend the Southeastern Outdoor Press Association to engage with outdoor journalists on the region's outdoor adventures. Also in October, Shelley Johnson and Megan will attend the annual Society of American Travel Writers convention and sponsor the media marketplace. The CVB will be hosting the Society of American Travel Writers' Freelance Council conference during Mardi Gras in February 2016.

Golf Media Tour



Gaming and golfing has never been better in Lake Charles! With the recent opening of The Country Club at the Golden Nugget, there has been quite a buzz in the golf writer community. As a resort destination, Southwest Louisiana now has two casino golf courses located next door to each other with L'Auberge Casino Resort's Contraband Bayou Golf Club. Golf writers will be invited to play in Southwest Louisiana as part of a

golf media press tour September 21-25. Besides the casino courses, they'll also experience Mallard Cove Golf Course, Gray Plantation and the National Golf Club of Louisiana in Westlake.

Cajun Food and Culture



The CVB will be hosting a group of food and travel writers July 23-26 to experience Southwest Louisiana's regional cuisine, local music and festive atmosphere at the Marshland Festival. From elbows on the table Cajun fare, to seeing how

cracklins are made, the journalists will be exposed to the culture and rich food history of the area on their media tour. In between meals they will sample boudin along the Southwest Louisiana Boudin Trail.

DE GUMBEAUX POT

Annual Tourism Awards Luncheon

Kyle Edmiston, Assistant Secretary for the Louisiana Office of Tourism, visited Lake Charles in May and was the guest speaker at the CVB's annual tourism awards luncheon. He discussed how Calcasieu Parish was booming and the travel and tourism industry is a tremendous economic driver, bringing \$11.2 billion to the state of Louisiana last year. The CVB honored community partners who made significant contributions to the local tourism industry.

2015 PARTNERS IN TOURISM



Chef Lyle Broussard,
L'Auberge Casino Resort



Mike Cironi and Jason Oertling,
St. Louis Showcase of Soccer



The Ad & Press Club,
represented by Pam McGough



Cynthia and Larry Eagle,
The Lost Hollows



Pat Credeur,
Louisiana Rural Water Association



Cathie Miller Schreve,
The Mardi Gras Museum



Katie Harrington,
Mardi Gras of Southwest Louisiana



A.C. Bourdier,
Historic District Tour Guide



Sheriff Ron Johnson,
Cameron Parish Sheriff's Office



Karen Hackett,
Hackett's Cajun Kitchen



Roger Fontenot,
L'Auberge Casino Resort



Harold Guillory,
Louisiana Zydeco TV Show and Website



Harold McReynolds,
Tournament of the Stars
(represented by Karen Hardy and Don Piper)



Jacques Brown and Jackie Brown,
representing the late Faye Blackwell, KZWA



Joe Toups,
Past Lake Charles Civic Center Director



Victor Monsour Jr.,
Local Photographer

2015 TOURISM LIFETIME TOURISM AWARD

2015 SALES PARTNER IN TOURISM AWARD



Tracy French,
Holiday Inn Express and Best Western Plus in Sulphur

2015 MEDIA PARTNER IN TOURISM



Thrive Magazine, represented by
Katie McDaniel Stevenson

2015 PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD



Sissy Sims, representing
the late James Mayo

2015 VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR



Otis Boudreaux

2015 HOSPITALITY ARTS TOURISM "HAT" AWARD



Kathleen Kaufman and Beth Frasier,
representing the late Denver Kaufman

2015 RHEA BARNES TRAVEL INDUSTRY AWARD



The Myers and King Family,
representing the late Marty Myers

2015 TOURISM LEADERSHIP AWARD



Kyle Edmiston, *Assistant Secretary of Tourism under the Lt. Gov's Office of Culture, Recreation and Tourism*

2015 SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA PARTNER OF THE YEAR



LHSAA Top 28 Basketball Championships Local Organizing Committee: Burton Complex Staff
represented by Jason Barnes, Jared LeBleu and Emily Porche



Members of the LHSAA Top 28 Basketball Championships Local Organizing Committee include: Dane Bolin, Al Purdy, Percy Brown, Jimmy Anderson, Mona Miller, Blaine Royer, Craig Carnahan, Aaron McDonald, Jamey Rasberry, Damian Juneau, Bill Hambor, Tom Hoefer, McNeese Athletics

Not Pictured: 2015 Partner in Tourism – Adrian Moreno, *West Cal Arena & Events Center*

SALES TALES

Mayflower Tours' Successful Series



Mayflower Tours enjoyed the Cameron Prairie National Wildlife Refuge and are looking forward to bringing more group tours next year to Southwest Louisiana.

From January through May 2015, Mayflower Tours brought more than 1,000 mid-westerners to visit the Southwest Louisiana area via motor coach as part of their Value Series Tour. These group visitors got to experience many aspects of our destination, including casinos, the Creole Nature Trail All-American Road, the Charpentier Historic District, and the Mardi Gras Museum of Imperial Calcasieu (complete with King Cake tastings!). Attendees also got their fill of our scrumptious Cajun and Creole cuisine at a number of local restaurants. This tour has been so well received by Mayflower's clients that a New Orleans/Lake Charles/Memphis tour will be added to Mayflower Tours' regular programming in 2016!

Louisiana Rural Water Association Convention



The Louisiana Rural Water Association will hold their annual Training & Technical Conference July 13-16 at the Lake Charles Civic Center. The bureau is excited to host the conference in Lake Charles for the third year in a row, as well as showcase the area to the 1,000+ participants expected to attend. Attendees will participate in water and wastewater certification review courses, technical classes and surveyors classes.



Sales and Media in Baton Rouge



Photo Credit: Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism

The CVB continues the tradition of hitting the pavement in the state's capitol city to promote meeting facilities and travel experiences in Southwest Louisiana. The CVB sales and communication teams, along with local hotel associates, will be in Baton Rouge for a sales and media mission August 31 through September 4.

Sales calls will be scheduled along with media appointments in Baton Rouge, New Orleans and surrounding areas. A client reception will be held at L'Auberge Casino Resort in Baton Rouge on September 3 where attendees will be able to become better acquainted with the tourism and meeting options in Southwest Louisiana.

SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA SPOTLIGHT

NOW OPEN! Creole Nature Trail Adventure Point



The latest attraction along the Creole Nature Trail All-American Road is the Creole Nature Trail Adventure Point. Located in Sulphur at 2740 Ruth Street off Exit 20, Adventure Point is a fun, free and educational launch pad for your next Creole Nature Trail adventure.

Learn about the alligators, birds and other wildlife you may see along the marshes, coastal prairies and bayous along the trail. Here the shore birds and waterfowl as you “follow the road” through the various exhibits in the center. Practice your crab netting skills while you attempt to catch blue crabs! Smell the spices and herbs used in the regional Cajun and Creole cuisine throughout Southwest Louisiana. Try your hand at cranking the boudin stuffer as you find information about the Southwest Louisiana Boudin Trail.

Get up close and personal with a dolphin, flounder and other marine species at the Gulf of Mexico interpretive station. Whether you prefer Zydeco or Cajun, play musical instruments on the stage and pretend you are a music legend playing to your fans!

There are perfect photo opportunities outside on the Gumbeaux Too shrimp boat and inside at the duck hunting exhibit, too! Professional adventure guides are on hand seven days a week to help identify area assets such as the best place to spot alligators, view migrating songbirds or enjoy the natural beauty and culture of our area. Learn more at www.VisitLakeCharles.org/AdventurePoint.

EVENT CALENDAR

For a complete schedule of events, log onto www.visitlakecharles.org.

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|-------------|----|--|--------|--|---------------|---|
| JULY | 16 | Liquid Society Party by the Pool: Andy Frasco Concert L'Auberge Casino Resort/Lake Charles | 25 | NAMI of SWLA 2nd Annual Family Fun Day Ponderosa Park/Westlake | 4, 11, 18, 25 | Cash & Carry Farmers Market Cash & Carry Building/Lake Charles |
| NOW -30 | | Jasmine Delafosse & Sheron Gabriel Exhibit Black Heritage Gallery/Lake Charles | 17-19 | Cajun French Music & Food Festival Burton Complex/Lake Charles | 5, 12, 19, 26 | Lake Area Runners: Group Run Botsky's/Lake Charles |
| NOW -8/15 | | Clyde Butcher: America the Beautiful Exhibit 1911 Historic City Hall/Lake Charles | 18 | Charlestown Farmers Market 1911 Historic City Hall/Lake Charles | 6, 13, 20, 27 | Charlestown Farmers Market University Park Rec Center/Lake Charles |
| NOW -8/15 | | Pat Sewell Exhibition 1911 Historic City Hall/Lake Charles | 18 | 20th Anniversary Celebration Isle of Capri Casino | 6 | Liquid Society Party by the Pool: Blues Traveler Concert L'Auberge Casino Resort/Lake Charles |
| NOW -9/12 | | Shout Sister Shout: The Boswell Sister Exhibit 1911 Historic City Hall/Lake Charles | 18 | Ad & Press Club presents: Gridiron Lake Charles Civic Center | 7-8 | Midnight Fantasies Car & Truck Show Burton Complex/Lake Charles |
| NOW -9/30 | | Color of Sunshine Exhibit by Pat Craft Gallery by the Lake/Lake Charles | 18 | Pat Benatar & Neil Giraldo Concert Golden Nugget Lake Charles | 7-8 | Gordie Brown Show Golden Nugget Lake Charles |
| NOW -9/30 | | Patriotic Gratitude Show Gallery by the Lake/Lake Charles | 18 | Riding the Rails: Summer Art Program DeQuincy Railroad Museum | 7-9 | Tournament of the Stars, Basketball Tournament Various Facilities |
| NOW -8/15 | | Works of Men Exhibit Henning Cultural Center/Sulphur | 18-20 | Chew's Multicultural Hair Affair Lake Charles Civic Center | 7, 14, 21 | Summer Film Series Imperial Calcasieu Museum/Lake Charles |
| 16, 23, 30 | | Charlestown Farmers Market University Park Rec Center/Lake Charles | 19-20 | ACTS Theatre Auditions: Guys and Dolls ACTS Theatre/Lake Charles | 8 | Riding the Rails: Summer Art Program DeQuincy Railroad Museum |
| 13-16 | | Louisiana Rural Water Association Conference Lake Charles Civic Center | 20-24 | Shakespeare Summer Theatre Workshop The Children's Theatre/Lake Charles | 8 | Sasol's Second Saturday Science Show The Children's Museum/Lake Charles |
| 13-17 | | Branch Out Summer Art Camp Session 2 Imperial Calcasieu Museum/Lake Charles | 20-24 | Branch Out Summer Art Camp Session 3 Imperial Calcasieu Museum/Lake Charles | 8 | Second Saturdays in Sulphur Art Camp Henning Cultural Center & Brimstone Museum/Sulphur |
| 15, 22, 29 | | Lake Area Runners: Group Run Botsky's/Lake Charles | 21, 28 | Cash & Carry Farmers Market Cash & Carry Building/Lake Charles | 13 | American Cancer Society Breakfast West-Cal Arena & Events Center/Sulphur |
| 16, 23, 30 | | Summer Film Series Imperial Calcasieu Museum/Lake Charles | 23 | Liquid Society Party by the Pool: Candlebox Concert L'Auberge Casino Resort/Lake Charles | 14-16 | Jurassic Quest Dinosaur Adventure Lake Charles Civic Center |
| 16 | | Clyde Butcher Book Signing and Lecture 1911 Historic City Hall/Lake Charles | 24 | Tanya Tucker Concert Golden Nugget Lake Charles | 15, 22, 29 | Charlestown Farmers Market 1911 Historic City Hall/Lake Charles |
| 16 | | Beginning Genealogy Workshop #2 Carnegie Memorial Library/Lake Charles | 24-25 | Marshland Festival Lake Charles Civic Center | 15 | Arts & Crabs Fest Burton Complex/Lake Charles |
| | | | 24-26 | Jehovah's Witnesses Convention Burton Complex/Lake Charles | 15 | Creedence Clearwater Revisited Concert Golden Nugget Lake Charles |

AUGUST

| | |
|-----|---|
| 1 | Mad Hot Ballroom, SWLA Celebrity Dancing Competition L'Auberge Casino Resort/Lake Charles |
| 1 | Black Rodeo Lake Charles Civic Center |
| 1 | CyPhaKids The Children's Museum/Lake Charles |
| 1 | Cajun Dance featuring: Lolo Boudoin & The Lakeview Playboys Cajun French Music Association Building |
| 1-2 | World Series of Team Roping West-Cal Arena & Events Center/Sulphur |
| 4 | National Night Out Family Event West-Cal Arena & Events Center/Sulphur |



LAKE CHARLES
SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA
CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

LAKE CHARLES | SULPHUR | WESTLAKE
DEQUINCY | VINTON | IOWA

1-800-456-SWLA | www.VisitLakeCharles.org
1205 N. Lakeshore Drive | Lake Charles, LA 70601

MISSION

To provide leadership in initiating and coordinating the worldwide marketing of Calcasieu Parish as a highly desirable leisure and convention destination; to solicit and service convention and other group-related business; and to engage in visitor promotions which generate overnight stays in Southwest Louisiana.

VISION

To enhance and develop the economic fabric of the parish.

PRESORTED
STANDARD
US POSTAGE
PAID
Lake Charles, LA
Permit No. 215

Event Calendar Continued...

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|----------|---|------------------|--|----------|--|----------|--|
| 15 | Kids Choice Art Projects The Children's Museum/Lake Charles | 30 | McNeese State Women's Soccer vs. Jackson State McNeese State University, Cowgirl Field | 6 | Hank Williams, Jr. Concert Golden Nugget Lake Charles | 17-10/31 | Boyd Cruise & Angela Gregory Exhibit Imperial Calcasieu Museum/Lake Charles |
| 15 | Garth Guy Concert Isle of Capri Casino & Hotel/Westlake | 30 | Sax in the City: Dinner & Concert Chateau du Calcasieu/Lake Charles | 7 | BooZoo's Labor Day Festival Lake Charles Civic Center | 18 | McNeese State Women's Soccer vs. Southeastern McNeese State University, Cowgirl Field |
| 20 | Beginning Genealogy Workshop #3 Carnegie Memorial Library/Lake Charles | SEPTEMBER | | 7 | Labor Day Workshop The Children's Museum/Lake Charles | 18-20 | St. Theresa Bon Ton Festival St. Theresa Catholic Church/Sulphur |
| 21 | McNeese State University Band Fundraiser Burton Complex/Lake Charles | 1 | Tidbits of History Carnegie Memorial Library/Lake Charles | 12 | McNeese State Football vs. University of the Incarnate Word Cowboy Stadium/Lake Charles | 19 | La Ville Uni Picnic Ponderosa Park/Westlake |
| 21-22 | Cameron Fishing Festival Cameron Jetty Pavilion | 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 | Cash & Carry Farmers Market Cash & Carry Building/Lake Charles | 12 | Sasol's Second Saturday Science Show The Children's Museum/Lake Charles | 19 | Running for Opportunities: CARC's 5K Run Lake Charles Civic Center |
| 22 | Louisiana Team Roping Association West-Cal Arena & Events Center/Sulphur | 1- | Stitch: A Fiber Art Show Henning Cultural Center/Sulphur | 12 | Boudin Wars: Food Competition & Festival Heritage Square/Sulphur | 19 | Crossfit Competition Burton Complex/Lake Charles |
| 22 | KC & The Sunshine Band Concert Delta Downs Racetrack Casino Hotel Vinton | 10/10 | Adventure in the Arts Exhibit 1911 Historic City Hall/Lake Charles | 12 | Cajun Dance featuring: Carl Hollier & The Crowley Playboys Cajun French Music Association Building | 22 | McNeese State Volleyball vs. Jackson State McNeese State University, Memorial Gym Lake Charles |
| 22 | Gulf Coast Rollergirls Roller Derby West-Cal Arena & Events Center/Sulphur | 1- | Edward Koren: The Capricious Line Exhibit 1911 Historic City Hall/Lake Charles | 12 | Stars and Stripes in the Park Classic Car Show Heritage Square/Sulphur | 25 | Gallery Promenade Various Locations/Lake Charles |
| 27-10/10 | Stitch: A Fiber Art Show Henning Cultural Center/Sulphur | 10/24 | Lake Area Runners: Group Run Botsky's/Lake Charles | 12 | McNeese State Volleyball vs. Prairie View McNeese State University, Memorial Gym | 25-10/30 | Artisans' Gallery Art Exhibition 1911 Historic City Hall/Lake Charles |
| 28-10/24 | Adventure in the Arts Exhibit 1911 Historic City Hall/Lake Charles | 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 | Charlestown Farmers Market University Park Rec Center/Lake Charles | 15 | Hobo Hotel for Cats Fundraiser Burton Complex/Lake Charles | 26 | McNeese State Football vs. Mississippi College Cowboy Stadium/Lake Charles |
| 28-10/24 | Edward Koren: The Capricious Line Exhibit 1911 Historic City Hall/Lake Charles | 3, 10, 17, 24 | McNeese State Women's Soccer vs. Louisiana - Lafayette McNeese State University, Cowgirl Field | 15 | Celebrity Mystery Theater L'Auberge Casino Resort, Jack Daniels Bar & Grill | 26 | Gulf Coast Rollergirls Roller Derby West-Cal Arena & Events Center/Sulphur |
| 29 | Children's Museum Fundraiser: Imagination Celebration Lake Charles Civic Center, Coliseum | 4 | Jehovah's Witnesses Convention Burton Complex/Lake Charles | 17 | Delta Waterfowl Banquet Burton Complex/Lake Charles | 26-28 | McNeese Dugout Club Softball Tourney Pattison Park/Sulphur |
| 29 | Rod Stewart Tribute Concert Isle of Capri Casino & Hotel/Westlake | 4-6 | Nonsense A-men Lake Charles Little Theatre | 17 | George Rodrigue Student Art Contest: 2015 Winners Exhibit Imperial Calcasieu Museum/Lake Charles | 27 | Calca Chew Food Festival St. Margaret Catholic Church Lake Charles |
| 29-30 | Gun & Knife Show Lake Charles Civic Center | 4-6 | CyPhaKids The Children's Museum/Lake Charles | 17 | | 27 | Sax in the City: Dinner & Concert Chateau du Calcasieu/Lake Charles |
| | | 5 | Charlestown Farmers Market 1911 Historic City Hall/Lake Charles | 17-10/31 | | | |