

Louisiana's Economic Outlook for Tourism is Sunny Indeed

By: Louisiana Lt. Governor Billy Nungesser

Louisiana is a state like no other. A place known for togetherness, celebration, and happiness. We call it “*joie de vivre*” – joy of life. It’s a joy you’ll find when you two-step to Cajun music, try your first bite of crawfish, or go to one of our many fairs and festivals. However, things came to a screeching halt in early 2020. In response to the dramatic effects of COVID-19, and now the 2020 hurricane season, we have launched the Sunshine Plan to recover the Louisiana travel industry.



Each year, tourism makes a huge impact on our state. In 2019, we welcomed 53.2 million visitors who spent \$18.9 billion while they were here, generating \$1.9 billion in state and local tax revenue. That translates to \$1,100 in annual tax savings for every household in the state. Tourism also supported 242,200 jobs in 2019. The effects of COVID-19 on the tourism industry were devastating. That’s why a strong plan for recovery and support for our local partners is essential.

As part of this plan, we have provided funds to CVBs and Tourist Commissions in a variety of ways to ensure they could promote and advertise their parishes and regions, as well as amplify the statewide advertising efforts of Louisiana. Keeping the state top-of-mind as travel confidence resumes will be critical. These funds have been able to assist in that effort and will continue to do so.

In May, we offered \$3,000 advertising grants to our partners and local Tourist Commissions. Over **\$300,000 of funding** was invested in local advertising through this program. In November, another grant offered funding to promote Eat/Shop Local efforts as well as holiday events. **Over \$150,000 was invested in advertising** by our tourism partners. December 1, we launched the Sunshine Grant Phase 1. This grant provided nearly **\$450,000 in funding** for CVB and Tourist Commissions to buy into co-op advertising programs offered by the Louisiana Office of Tourism, including in-state and regional advertising, the annual visitors guide, and more. Finally, we have rolled out the Sunshine Grant Phase 2, providing **\$3 million in funding** for advertising reimbursements to partners and Louisiana CVBs and Tourist Commissions.

In total, we have provided CVBs and Tourist Commissions with nearly \$4 million in grant funding in the last seven months across the state.

Combined, these grants are providing substantial funding through flat rate and tiered grant programs that will help our partners keep their message in front of potential visitors even during these uncertain times. While the COVID-19 situation continues to evolve across the world, our competitor destinations are advertising for the future, and we must do the same. Now more than ever it’s important to promote our state as a premier travel destination and share the unique stories that will inspire visitors to visit every corner of Louisiana. We are dedicated to helping our partners achieve that goal.

Louisiana is no stranger to challenges. We've faced disasters in the past, both natural and man-made. But each time, we have been able to come back stronger than before. Together, we are **Louisiana Strong** and will again return bigger and better.

To read the Sunshine Plan, visit LouisianaSunshinePlan.com.