

Louisiana Scenic Byways

Prepared for:

Louisiana Department of Culture,
Recreation and Tourism



The Louisiana Research Team



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Executive Summary

Return on Investment

- The return on investment for Louisiana Scenic Byways is 1.56. That is, for every \$1 spent by the state on scenic byways, at least \$1.56 was returned in federal money along with the secondary impact of this new spending.

Return on Objective

- The Louisiana Scenic Byways program is currently falling short on meeting its objective of program awareness. That is, The Louisiana Scenic Byways are not known or specifically identifiable by the vast majority of Louisiana residents. In a telephone survey of Louisiana residents, only 16.1% of respondents who attempted to identify the scenic byways could correctly name one of the scenic byways.
- Steps toward achieving specific program objectives are currently only partially complete and are not slated for completion until 2010.
- Of those respondents that indicated awareness of the Louisiana scenic byways, more than half (55.9%) indicated they were likely to travel a Louisiana scenic byway within this year.

Conclusions

- The Louisiana Scenic Byway Program is not well known throughout the state. While 45.1% of respondents indicated some awareness of officially designated Louisiana byways, only 16.1% of the respondents who tried to name one of the Louisiana byways could do so correctly. The logo is rarely recognized.
- It is highly possible that Louisiana residents travel and enjoy officially designated Louisiana byways frequently, but are simply unaware of the byway designation.
- Management of individual byways is more often than not carried out by persons with responsibilities over and above byway management. Byway management appears to be somewhat intermittent throughout the state.

Recommendations

- Create a marketing/awareness program to help identify the byways.
- Develop a method of counting recreational travelers to the byways which will provide invaluable information for both byway administrators and for culture and tourism dollar allocations.

Introduction

This report examines the role of the Louisiana Scenic Byway program (LBP) in terms of its contribution to the mission, goals and objectives of the Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation, and Tourism.

The Louisiana Scenic Byways are so designated by the National Scenic Byways Program and are under the direction of the Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation, and Tourism. The National Scenic Byways (NSB) Program was established under the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991, and reauthorized in 1998 under the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century. It was reauthorized again in 2003. Under the program, the U.S. Secretary of Transportation recognizes certain roads as National Scenic Byways or All-American Roads based on their archaeological, cultural, historic, natural, recreational, and scenic qualities. There are 126 such designated Byways in 39 states. The Federal Highway Administration promotes the collection as the America's Byways®.

The mission of the National Byway program is to provide resources to the byway community in creating a unique travel experience and enhanced local quality of life through efforts to preserve, protect, interpret, and promote the intrinsic qualities of designated byways. The mission of the Louisiana Byways Program is to preserve, enhance and promote the Louisiana Byways Program (LBP).

The objective of the Louisiana Byways Program for fiscal year 2005-2006 through 2009-2010 is to increase awareness of the intrinsic cultural, historical, archeological, recreational, natural and scenic resources along Louisiana Byways by increasing the distribution of collateral materials to a minimum of 25,000 people by 2010.

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, expanding economic opportunity and strengthening place. As stated in the strategic plan for fiscal 2005-2006 through 2009-1010, strategies for achieving this goal include:

1. Develop a Corridor Management Plan.
2. Enhance Web site to generate more hits and brochure requests.
3. Obtain National Scenic Byway Designation for qualified Louisiana byways.
4. Create ambassadors programs to educate the Louisiana community about the LBP.
5. Help local byway guardians obtain federal grants.
6. Collaborate with Mississippi River Parkway Commission, a national organization that supports national designation for the entire river road from Minnesota to Louisiana.
7. Develop and implement a comprehensive marketing program targeting the drive market, which might include:
 - Hosting FAM trips
 - Print and electronic media
 - Trade show attendance

- Website upgrade
- New Collateral Materials
- Interactive interpretative centers along the river road.
- Expand distribution network for brochures both in state and nationally.

Methodology

The initial research phase of this project began by reviewing the objectives of the Mississippi River Road Commission and by personally interviewing the Director of the Scenic Byway program, Chuck Morse. Next, the website was thoroughly reviewed for information regarding the Louisiana Scenic Byway Program.

Telephone interviews were then conducted with a representative of each byway to ascertain whether:

- a) their byway has a corridor management plan,
- b) their byway has any method for counting the number of people who travel the byway, and
- c) their byway applied for and/or received federal grant funds

A personal interview was also conducted with a representative of the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development to obtain information about the administration of byway grants received from the federal government.

The Louisiana Research Team also conducted a statewide telephone survey of Louisiana residents that included several questions designed to determine the familiarity with and the use of scenic byways in the state. The survey was conducted by the LSU Public Policy Research Lab during the week of February 20, 2006. The survey was conducted via telephone utilizing random-digit dialing within Louisiana area codes and known exchanges. 916 people responded to the questions regarding Louisiana Scenic Byways. (Appendix A).

A final, follow-up telephone interview was then conducted with Chuck Morse, to determine the current progress of the division, post-Katrina.

Initial Interview with Director

On July 6, 2005, an initial interview was conducted with Chuck Morse, coordinator of the LBP, in his office in the Department of Culture, Recreation, and Tourism. Mr. Morse explained there are three levels of scenic byway designations: State, National, and All-American. He indicated that federal dollars are available in greater amounts each time a scenic byway advances to a higher designation level. The following information resulted from that interview:

- Currently, only 33 states have All American scenic byways. Louisiana has one All American scenic byway – the Creole Nature Trail in southwest Louisiana. Of the 33 states with All American Scenic Byways, the number ranges from one in many states to seven in Colorado. Of the southern states with All American Byways, most have only one.

- The four most active scenic byways are the Creole Nature Trail, Northwest Louisiana Scenic Byway, Colonial Trails Scenic Byway, and the Mississippi River Road Scenic Byway.
- Mr. Morse evaluated the Louisiana Scenic Byway Program since he became director as follows:
 1. the program is somewhat vague
 2. progress by participants is hard to recognize
 3. byways were created by politicians, not all byways really qualify and some may be eliminated
- Mr. Morse indicated that there are “lots of missing pieces” in the Louisiana Scenic Byway program, and that a grant or other money will be needed to “fill in the blanks.” A grant application has been submitted to the federal funding source to do an analysis of the Louisiana Scenic Byway Program. The analysis is to be conducted by a consultant.
- A cursory look at the scenic byway program around the nation shows some states have a vibrant program, while others are more like Louisiana. There is an annual, National Scenic Byway conference.

Website Review

An Internet search was conducted for “Louisiana Scenic Byways” using the Google search engine. The first site listed is the “America’s Byways” site <http://www.byways.org/browse/states/LA/> which lists the following scenic byways:



America's Byways®



Creole Nature Trail

Highlights of this route include four National Wildlife Refuges, salt and freshwater resources, Civil War and archaeological dig sites, and miles of natural beaches, marshlands, and prairie lands, all yielding an abundance of wildlife and scenic appeal.

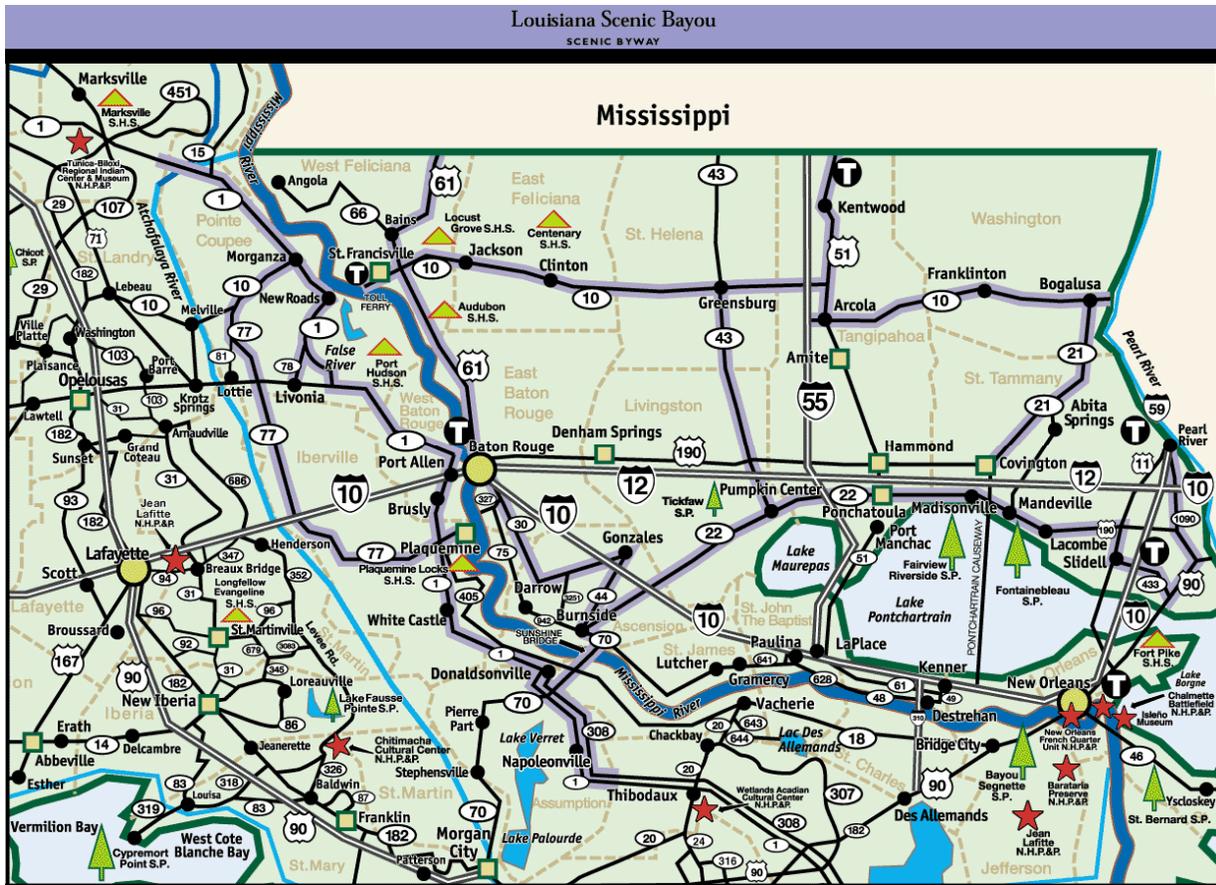
Other Byways in Louisiana

As a service, we strive to include information on all byways or backways in Louisiana on this website. This list may be incomplete or contain byways that overlap.

Attakapas-Coushatta Scenic Byway
Bayou Teche Scenic Byway
Bienville Trace Scenic Byway
Great River Road - Louisiana
Jean Lafitte Scenic Byway
Longleaf Trail Scenic Byway
Louisiana Scenic Bayou Byway
Northwest Louisiana Scenic Byway
Promised Land Scenic Byway
The Real French Destination Scenic Byway
River Road Scenic Byway
San Bernardo Scenic Byway
Toledo Bend Forest Scenic Byway
Tunica Trace Scenic Byway
Wetlands Cultural Trail
Zydeco Cajun Prairie Scenic Byway

The “Explore Louisiana” site comes up as the fourth search result.

<http://www.louisianatravel.com/explorela/outdoors/scenicbyways/bywayinfo.cfm?id=11&imagegroupid=46>



Byways listed in the “Explore Louisiana” site are:

- » **Attakapas-Coushatta Scenic Byway**
- » **Bayou Teche Scenic Byway**
- » **Bienville Trace Scenic Byway**
- » **Northwest Louisiana Scenic Byway**
- » **Creole Nature Trail All-American Road**
- » **Jean Lafitte Scenic Byway**
- » **Kisatchie Scenic Byway**
- » **Wetlands Cultural Trail** – formerly called Lafourche-Terrebonne Scenic Byway
- » **Colonial Trails Scenic Byway** – probably undesignated due to inactivity
- » **San Bernardo Scenic Byway**
- » **Tunica Trace Scenic Byway**
- » **Promised Land Scenic Byway**
- » **The Real French Destination Scenic Byway**
- » **River Road Scenic Byway**
- » **Toledo Bend Forest Scenic Byway**
- » **Zydeco-Cajun Prairie Scenic Byway**

This listing omits the Louisiana Scenic Bayou Byway. This listing includes the Kisatchie Scenic Byway, which is referred to as the Longleaf Trail Scenic Byway in the America's Byways listing for Louisiana.

Content in the "Explore Louisiana" Byway website is, for the most part, very well done. The website contains excellent descriptions of what each byway has to offer. The telephone contact agencies listed at the bottom of each byway description are tedious to navigate in many byway sites because there are a number of contacts, many of which offer little or no assistance about the particular byway.

Review of Website

A cursory review of these websites makes it easy to see why the Louisiana Scenic Byway program is vague and confusing. With different websites posting different listings of which roadways are part of the Louisiana Scenic Byway Program, it is difficult to determine which roads are actually parts of the program.

Recommendations for Website Information Regarding the Louisiana Scenic Byway Program

1. Develop a consistent list of names for the Louisiana Byways in order to help clearly define the Louisiana Scenic Byway Program.
2. Develop a Louisiana Byway website that will be the first result in a web search for Louisiana Byways
3. Limit the telephone contacts at the end of each byway description to only those agencies with helpful information regarding the particular byway.

Interviews with Representatives from Each Byway

Introduction

Telephone interviews proved to be more difficult than expected for several reasons:

1. Personnel at the various agencies have changed frequently over the years and newer staff members did not always know very much about the particular scenic byway in her/his area. Often, these newer staff members would not know where to find information about the byway and did not know whether a corridor management plan had been accomplished or not.
2. Locating the agency to contact was done via the Louisiana Scenic Byway website. Each of the scenic byways was featured along with the names of agencies containing tourist information about the byway. Since many byways traverse more than one parish, there would be contacts listed for each of these parishes. At least half the byways had five or more contact agencies listed. Typically, contact agencies would include convention/tourist/visitors commissions or bureaus. Sometimes a contact list would include a Chamber of Commerce or an Economic Development agency. Frequently, more

than one such contact agency would have to be called before finding an agency that could provide information about the byway in question.

3. During the first few months after hurricanes Katrina and Rita it was impossible to reach many of the contact agencies in South Louisiana.
4. Byway names are not uniform depending on the website listing being viewed. Some byways are omitted from some website listings.

Findings from Telephone Interviews with Byway Representatives

1. Corridor Management Plan

a. Byways with a management plan in place include:

- i. Bayou Teche Scenic Byway
- ii. Creole Nature Trail All American Road
- iii. Jean Lafitte Scenic Byway
- iv. Kisatchie Scenic Byway
- v. Louisiana Scenic Bayou Byway
- vi. Mississippi River Road
- vii. Northwest Louisiana Scenic Byway - formerly called Bienville Trace II Scenic Byway
- viii. Promised Land Scenic Bayou
- ix. The Real French Destination Scenic Byway
- x. Toledo Bend Forest Scenic Byway
- xi. Zydeco-Cajun Prairie Scenic Byway

b. Byways without a corridor management plan in place include:

- i. Attakapas-Coushatta Scenic Byway
- ii. Bienville Trace Scenic Byway - also called North Delta Scenic Byway
- iii. Lafourche-Terrebonne Scenic Byway – also called Wetlands Cultural Scenic Byway
- iv. Tunica Trace Scenic Byway

c. Byway with corridor management plan in process - San Bernardo Scenic Byway

2. Tracking Visitors to the Byway

- a. The only byway currently equipped to track visitors is the Creole Nature Trail which has counters built into various locations along the walking trails.
- b. Contact persons indicate that websites have reduced the number of calls about byways in many parts of the state, making it even more difficult to keep track of

how many people show an interest in the byway program. (See below for website tracking.)

3. Federal Grant Funding for the Byways

- a. Funding is initiated by grants from the Federal Highway Authority and that funding requires matching dollars. Some byway contacts indicated the successful application for federal dollars is essential, but the inability to obtain matching dollars results in forfeiture of federal dollars. Some byway contacts indicated that it is difficult to obtain a proportionate share of matching dollars from parishes included in the byway route.
- b. A schedule of federal grant moneys awarded and used by Louisiana Scenic Byways was supplied by the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development and is included in Appendix B. This schedule shows funding data for projects initiated between 1993 and 2005. The schedule shows the status of the projects as well as the amount of Federal and matching local dollars. Some projects are shown as having been cancelled, usually due to inactivity or to inability to obtain sufficient matching local dollars.

Additional Findings from Telephone Interviews

- c. Personnel managing the byway programs, in many areas, change frequently. If the person responsible for managing the byway program is unavailable at the time of a call, frequently there is no one else available to answer questions about the byway.
- d. Personnel responsible for managing the byway frequently have additional responsibilities over and above managing the byway project. Such personnel give the impression that her/his byway responsibilities are the lesser of the other responsibilities.
- e. Personnel at the contact agencies listed on the website for a particular byway will sometimes refer the caller to another agency for information about the byway.

Interview with a Representative of the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development

Introduction

A phone interview with a representative of the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD) resulted in the most comprehensive information about the Louisiana Byways Program. The DOTD representative provided a schedule of Scenic Byway Program Projects that included dates, types of projects, funding amounts, byway name changes and status of projects.

A copy of DOTD schedule, sorted by year, is attached at Appendix B.

Types of projects funded by federal grants include:

1. Corridor management plans
2. Brochures
3. Kiosks
4. Signs
5. Needs assessments and feasibility studies
6. Turnout preliminary engineering and construction for Creole Nature Trail
7. Travel guides
8. Promotional materials
9. Maps
10. Video
11. Internet website
12. Marketing plan
13. Hospitality training
14. Media kit
15. Trade show exhibit
16. Portals
17. Scenic overlook
18. Birding trail
19. National hurricane museum and science center – Creole Nature Trail

Results of DOTD Representative Interview

The DOTD representative had the following recommendations regarding the Louisiana Scenic Byway Program:

1. Give the byways more interesting names, more meaningful names
2. Un-designate byways that have shown no activity within a specified time period

Survey Results

As a means of measuring the LBP's objective to increase awareness of the intrinsic cultural, historical, archeological, recreational, natural and scenic resources along Louisiana Byways, The Louisiana Research Team conducted a statewide telephone survey of Louisiana residents that included several questions designed to determine the awareness and use of scenic byways in the state. The survey was conducted by the LSU Public Policy Research Lab during the week of February 20, 2006, using random-digit dialing within the known Louisiana area codes and exchanges. There were 916 responses to the questions pertaining to Louisiana Scenic Byways.

Are you aware of any of the officially designated Louisiana Byways?

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	413	45.1%
No	489	53.4%
Don't Know	14	1.5%
Valid Cases	916	100.0%

- 45.1% of respondents indicated some awareness of officially designated Louisiana byways.

Which ones have you heard about? (open-ended)

Response	Number	Valid Percent
Named Highway/Interstate	80	22.7%
Named Parish/City	72	20.4%
Correctly named Byways	57	16.1%
Named		8.5%
Landmark/Destination/POI	30	
Other	40	11.3%
Don't know/Can't recall	74	21.0%
No answer	60	
Total	413	
Valid Cases	353	100.0%

- Only 16.1% of respondents who tried to identify the byways correctly named Louisiana Scenic Byways.
- Some of the respondents who tried to identify the officially designated Louisiana byways could have been using the term “byway” as synonymous with the term “highway,” since 22.7% of the respondents did name highway/interstate numbers rather than byway names.
- 20.4% of respondents described where the byway was located by naming a parish or city. At least 8 respondents named Cameron Parish presumably because of the Creole Nature Trail. It is possible that these people also were aware of the byways program, but did not remember any names of byways. It is also possible that some respondents who named parishes were not thinking of byways, but of destination points of interest.

- 8.5% named Louisiana landmarks and/or points of interest such as the Audubon Golf Trail, Lake Pontchartrain, the swamps, Atchafalaya Basin, New Orleans garden district, various plantations and other points of interest. It is possible that the respondents who named Louisiana points of interest were associating the term “byway” with excursion destination points around the state.
- 21% replied “don’t know” or “don’t remember” when asked to name a byway. It is possible that these respondents were not actually aware of the byway program, but answered “Yes” to the awareness question possibly because they thought they should answer “Yes” and consequently, were not able to name a byway. It is also possible they simply did not remember any byway names.

Responses from those who could name a byway correctly:

Response	Number	Percent
Mississippi River Road Scenic Byway	27	47.4%
Creole Nature Trail All-American Road	18	31.6%
Jean Lafitte Scenic Byway	3	5.3%
Tunica Trace Scenic Byway	3	5.3%
Kisatchie Forest Scenic Byway	2	3.5%
Toledo Bend Scenic Byway	2	3.5%
Bayou Teche Scenic Byway	1	1.8%
Lafourche-Terrebonne	1	1.8%
Valid Cases	57	100.0%

Total does not equal 100% due to rounding.

- The response to this question tests the validity of the response to the awareness question. Just 16.1% of the 353 respondents could correctly name any of the Louisiana scenic byways. However, of this 16.1%, almost half (47.4%) could correctly name the Mississippi River Road. In other words, Mississippi River Road is the most recognized Louisiana Scenic Byway of those correctly named by respondents.
- Regardless of the interpretation of the responses, it is obvious that the Louisiana Scenic Byways are not known by name by the vast majority of Louisiana residents. That is, LBP is not meeting its objective relating to awareness. Future efforts focusing on increasing awareness, along with a consistent naming system may help achieve this objective.

Have you ever traveled any of the scenic byways in Louisiana?

Response	Percentage
Yes	83.8%
No	14.0%
Don't Know	2.2%
Total	100%
Valid Cases	413

- Of those respondents who indicated awareness of the Louisiana scenic byways, a large majority (83.8%) indicated they had, indeed, traveled the scenic byways in Louisiana.

Which byway(s) have you traveled? (open-ended)

Response	Number	Valid Percentage
River Road	25	8.5%
Creole Nature Trail	10	3.4%
Bayou Teche	1	0.3%
Jean Lafitte	1	0.3%
Tunica Trace	1	0.3%
Kisatchie	1	0.3%
Named Highway/Interstate	74	25.1%
Named Parish/City	54	18.3%
Named Landmark/Destination/POI	26	8.8%
Other Responses	39	13.2%
Don't know/Can't recall	63	21.4%
No answer	51	
Total	346	100.0%
Valid Cases	295	

Total does not equal 100% due to rounding.

- Of those respondents who tried to identify the Louisiana Scenic Byway they traveled, 8.5% indicated they had traveled the River Road, 3.4% identified they had traveled the Creole Nature Trail and less than one percent (.3%) indicated they had traveled on the Bayou Teche, Jean Lafitte, Tunica Trace, and Kisatchie byways. As before, the largest percentage of respondents associated the scenic byway with the name of a highway or interstate (25.1%) or with a parish or city (18.3%).

When did you last travel a Louisiana scenic byway?

Response	Percentage
Last Year	68.5%
1 to 2 years	10.7%
3 to 5 years	11.8%
Do not remember	9.0%
Total	100%
Valid Cases	346

- Of those respondents that indicated they had traveled a Louisiana scenic byway, more than two-thirds (68.5%) stated they had done so in the last year.

When are you likely to travel a Louisiana scenic byway in the future?

Response	Percentage
This year	55.9%
In 1 to 2 years	8.2%
3 to 5 years	.7%
Not Sure	20.3%
Not Planning to do that	4.8%
No answer	9.9%
Total	100%
Valid Cases	413

Total does not equal 100% due to rounding.

- Of those respondents that indicated awareness of the Louisiana scenic byways, more than half (55.9%) indicated they were likely to travel a Louisiana scenic byway within this year.

Have you ever seen the Louisiana Scenic Byway logo?

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	239	57.9%
No	141	34.1%
Don't Know	33	8.0%
Total	413	100%
Valid Cases	413	

- Of those respondents that indicated awareness of the Louisiana scenic byways, 57.9% indicated they had seen the Louisiana Scenic Byway logo.

Can you tell me what the logo is? (open-ended)

Response	Percentage
Animal/birds/nature	7.5%
Symbols/shapes/colors	11.8%
Automobile	37.3%
Other	7.1%
I don't know/can't remember	36.3%
Total	100.0%
Valid Cases	212

- While many said they had seen the logo, only about a third (37.3 %) of those who tried to identify it could do so correctly as an antique car.
- 7.5% of those who attempted to identify the logo incorrectly believed it to be an animal, bird or symbol of nature, and 11.8% identified it by a symbol, shape or color.



- Regardless of the interpretation of the responses, it is obvious that the Louisiana Scenic Byways are not known or specifically identifiable by the vast majority of Louisiana residents. That is, LBP is not meeting its objective relating to awareness. Future efforts focusing on increasing awareness, along with a consistent naming system may help them achieve this objective.

Return on Investment

Total Economic Impact by LBP (A)	\$391,326
Average Annual Operating Budget of Scenic Byways 2003-2006, including MRRC (B)	\$216,509
Matching Funds (C)	\$34,000
Return on Operating Budget (A/(B+C))	1.56

The average annual budget of the Louisiana Scenic Byways program from 2003-2006 is \$82,480 which primarily covers salary, benefits, and operating expenses of the department. The average annual budget from 2003–2006 for MRR, one of the scenic byways, is \$134,029. One federal grant has been awarded to the Byways program in 2006 to be used to evaluate the state byways program and the northern portion of the Mississippi River Road Corridor. This grant will be carried out by a private consultant. The grant amount is \$170,000 with a state match requirement of \$34,000 (20%). An additional federal grant has been awarded for the Creole Nature Trail (\$25,000 seed grant). This grant requires a similar 20% match; however, the state is not the source of the funding for this match

Note: Damage to byways from Hurricane Rita has caused federal dollars in some instances to be diverted from funded enhancement projects to recovery projects. [See first two federal grants listed in Appendix B, SB-LA00(007) and SB-LA01(001)]. These flexed dollars are not new dollars coming into the Louisiana economy and are not included in the ROI.

Because the LBP has been funded by the state and is willing to invest an additional \$34,000, it has been able to attract \$195,000 from the federal government. Applying a government output multiplier of 2.0068 to the federal funds of \$195,000 equals \$391,326 which provides a return on investment of 1.56. This is a very conservative return on investment figure for the Scenic Byways because it does not take into account any spending along the byways that may occur by out of state visitors. However, it shows that for every \$1 spent by the state on scenic byways, at least \$1.56 was returned in federal money along with the secondary impact of this new spending.

Return on Objectives

The objective of the Louisiana Byways Program for fiscal year 2005-2006 through 2009-2010 is to increase awareness of the intrinsic cultural, historical, archeological, recreational, natural and scenic resources along Louisiana Byways by increasing the distribution of collateral materials to a minimum of 25,000 people by 2010.

Steps toward achieving objectives have been identified by the division as stated below. Progress toward each is noted.

- *Develop a Corridor Management Plan* – The development of a corridor management plan for all of the Louisiana scenic byways, is estimated to be 50% complete. Some of the byway plans are complete (for all or part of the byway) and others are in different stages of

completion. With the \$170,000 federal grant, the plan will be completed for all byways by December 2006, according to Chuck Morse.

- *Enhance Web site to generate more hits and brochure requests* – There is a contract in place to develop the website for the LBP along with other divisions in CRT. Specific recommendations for the website, as well as the naming consistency, as discussed above, should be included in this initiative.
- *Obtain National Scenic Byway Designation for qualified Louisiana byways* - The completion of the corridor management plan is the first step in achieving this status. While some byways currently have management plans in place others do not, as indicated above.
- *Create ambassadors programs to educate the Louisiana community about the LBP* – Three meetings have been held in the last three months in three regions of the state.
- *Help local byway guardians obtain federal grants* – LBP officials have been on the road to encourage agencies to apply. A total of 13 grant applications are being considered in August 2006. According to Chuck Morse, the success rate is approximately 60% for these grant applications.
- *Collaborate with Mississippi River Parkway Commission (MRPC), a national organization that supports national designation for the entire river road from Minnesota to Louisiana* – According to Chuck Morse, LBP and MRPC have created a great partnership. As a result of this partnership, the MRPC has agreed to hold its board meeting in Louisiana in June 2006. A special session on achieving national scenic byway designation will be held in order to educate Louisiana, and others, on how to achieve this status.
- *Develop and implement a comprehensive marketing program targeting the drive market, which might include:*
 - *Hosting FAM trips*
 - *Print and electronic media*
 - *Trade show attendance*
 - *Website upgrade*
 - *New Collateral Materials*
 - *Interactive interpretative centers along the river road.*

These steps have not been completed. State budget constraints have limited the funds available to the coordinating office for the LBP. Further, Hurricane Katrina destroyed some of the sites featured in the previously designed brochures and itineraries, making collateral materials obsolete. Redesigning such materials requires time and money and is included in future plans. The website is under development by Netcom and the interpretive centers are in plans to be completed by 2008. However, while FAM trips have not occurred, partnerships are being explored to link the byways with state parks and historic sites. In addition, byways are being featured as part of the “One Tank Trips” program sponsored by WWL television.

Awareness of the LBP by Louisiana residents is limited. Just 16.1% of those telephone survey respondents attempted to name a scenic byway could do so correctly. Since awareness of the LBP is the objective of this program, it can further be said that the five-year objective to increase awareness of the LBP is most appropriate.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

The Louisiana Scenic Byway Program is not well known throughout the state. While the River Road was the most frequently named officially designated Louisiana byway, even it was only correctly identified by name by a small percentage of the statewide telephone survey respondents. It is highly possible that Louisiana residents travel and enjoy officially designated Louisiana byways frequently, but are simply unaware of the byway designation.

Management of individual byways is more often than not carried out by persons with responsibilities over and above byway management. Byway management appears to be somewhat intermittent throughout the state.

Recommendations

Creation of a marketing/awareness program to help identify the byways is essential. Key elements to such a program include a consistent system for naming the byways and insuring that the official LBP website comes up first on an Internet search. As revised brochures and itineraries are widely distributed, a consistent brand will increase awareness. As people call in to ask for information about byways, someone familiar with specific information on each byway should be available to respond to that call.

A key component of evaluating the byways program is to accurately measure the use of the byways by Louisiana as well as non-Louisiana travelers for purposes of recreation. Developing a method of counting recreational travelers to the byways would provide invaluable information for both byway administrators and for culture and tourism dollar allocations. A method of counting byway travelers could include survey instruments at designated points of interest along the byways for travelers to complete.

APPENDIX A

Q: Q10

T: 5 5

Please answer the following questions about the Louisiana scenic byway programs:

Are you aware of any of the officially designated Louisiana Scenic Byways?

1. Yes
2. No
8. Don't Know
9. Refused

I:

NUM 1 9 2 0 24 45

IF (ANS <>1) SKP Q18

Q: Q11

T: 5 5

Which ones have you heard about?

[OPEN ENDED]

I:

OPN

Q: Q12

T: 5 5

Have you ever traveled any of the scenic byways in Louisiana?

1. Yes
2. No
8. Don't Know
9. Refused

I:

NUM 1 9 2 0 24 45

IF (ANS <> 1) SKP Q15

Q: Q13

T: 5 5

Which byway(s) have you traveled?

[OPEN ENDED]

I:

OPN

Q: Q14

T: 5 5

When did you last travel a Louisiana scenic byway?

1. LAST YEAR
 2. 1 TO 2 YEARS
 3. 3 TO 5 YEARS
 8. DO NOT REMEMBER
 9. Refused
- I:
NUM 1 9 2 0 24 45
Q: Q15
T: 5 5

When are you likely to travel a Louisiana scenic byway in the future?

1. THIS YEAR
 2. IN 1 TO 2 YEARS
 3. 3 TO 5 YEARS
 4. NOT SURE
 5. NOT PLANNING TO DO THAT
 8. Don't Know
 9. Refused
- I:
NUM 1 9 2 0 24 45
Q: Q16
T: 5 5

Have you ever seen the Louisiana Scenic Byway logo?

1. Yes
 2. No
 8. Don't Know
 9. Refused
- I:
NUM 1 9 2 0 24 45
IF (ANS <> 1) SKP Q18
Q: Q17
T: 5 5

Can you tell me what it is?

[OPEN ENDED]

I:

APPENDIX B