

THE NEW ORLEANS ADVOCATE

‘A major economic development opportunity:’ Luxury river cruise line to dock ship at former Gretna ferry terminal

BY RAMON ANTONIO VARGAS | RVARGAS@THEADVOCATE.COM

June 24, 2016; 11:33 a.m.

0 Comments

A luxury cruise line that recently opened its headquarters on the West Bank of Jefferson Parish soon will begin offering journeys up the Mississippi River from a terminal in Gretna, officials announced Friday.

The voyages are expected to create dozens of jobs locally while helping pay to restart regular ferry service between Gretna and New Orleans, officials said.

In addition, a high-end tourism company handling the cruise line’s marketing, sales and reservations is leaving the West Coast and moving to Jefferson. Officials said it was another sign of the New Orleans region’s sustained popularity as a travel destination.

Offering five- to 10-day cruises on the Mississippi, Ohio, Tennessee, Cumberland and Red rivers, with stops at major cities along the way, French America Line established its headquarters at the Jefferson Economic Development Commission’s **Business Innovation Center** in Avondale earlier this year.

The line plans to share office space for a time with its marketing and sales affiliate, Uncommon Journeys, which is relocating from Alameda, California, after a quarter-century in business.

The 150-passenger riverboat **Louisiane** will have more than 60 crew members when it begins cruises in early October, according to officials. It will be based at the downtown Gretna ferry landing that has been underused since regular service across the river to New Orleans was halted a few years ago.

French America Line and Uncommon Journeys said the *Louisiane*’s arrival and the corporate relocation will provide 30 new land-based jobs and generate an annual payroll of more than \$2 million, benefiting a mix of seasonal, hourly and salaried employees.

A cut of the money generated by French America Line’s operations will be earmarked for the eventual development of a new ferry connecting Gretna and New Orleans, officials said.

French America Line’s founder, Christopher Kyte, said he is committed to purchasing everything needed to support his firm locally, from “groceries to flowers to fuel,” all of which was factored into the \$58 million economic impact that officials predict for the new company.

THE ADVOCATE

Bonjour, Mes Amis! French America Line moves headquarters to Jefferson, makes Gretna home port for passenger boat

ADVOCATE STAFF REPORT

June 24, 2016; 11:33 a.m.

[0 Comments](#)

The French America Line announced Thursday the company will establish new headquarters in Jefferson Parish and the former ferry terminal in Gretna will serve as the home port for the company's 150-passenger vessel *Louisiane*.

The company will create 94 direct jobs with the project, with 64 of those aboard the *Louisiane* and 30 shoreside positions for both French America Line and Uncommon Journeys, a cruise and luxury train travel company. The companies will have an estimated annual payroll of \$2.1 million that includes a mix of seasonal, hourly wage employees and permanent salaried employees.

Louisiana's economic development department estimates the project will result in 47 indirect jobs.

French America began operating earlier this year out of the Jefferson Parish Economic Development Commission's Business Innovation Center in the Churchill Technology & Business Park. The company cited increased interest in New Orleans as a travel destination as the reason for relocating Uncommon Journeys headquarters from Oakland, California, to Jefferson. Uncommon Journeys will share office space with French America Line in the JEDCO Business Innovation Center during the startup phase.

French America Line offers five-to-10- day cruises on the Mississippi, Ohio, Tennessee, Cumberland and Red Rivers, with stops at major U.S. cities along the way. The boutique riverboat will offer 75 suites and staterooms, two restaurants, three lounges, a full-service spa and nightly entertainment.

Inaugural sailings of the *Louisiane* will begin in September.

French America bought the boat, formerly the Columbia Queen that sailed Oregon's Columbia River, in 2015. The luxury riverboat is currently en route from Oregon to Gretna via the Panama Canal on a journey that will take four weeks. In mid-July, the Louisiane will arrive at the Gretna Ferry Landing, which will be rebranded by French America Line in the coming months. The terminal has been underutilized since the halt of regular ferry service to Gretna in 2013. Once in Jefferson Parish, the Louisiane will be refurbished by Bollinger Quick Repair based out of Harvey.

Biz French America Line NEW ORLEANS Opens Corporate HQ In Jefferson Parish

By 6-24-16

AVONDALE, LA – In front of the Gretna City Hall today, just steps away from where thousands of passengers will embark for multi-night voyages up the Mississippi River over the next year, French America Line Chairman Christopher Kyte joined with the leadership of the Jefferson Parish Economic Development Commission (JEDCO), Louisiana Economic Development (LED), and officials such as Gretna Mayor Belinda



Constant, former Jefferson Parish President John Young, and the Gretna City Council to inaugurate operations for the French America Line in Jefferson Parish.

The French America Line, which offers premium tours along America's waterways, announced the establishment of its corporate headquarters on the West Bank of Jefferson Parish, and the creation of dozens of jobs in Louisiana. FAL

operations began out of JEDCO's Business Innovation Center in the Churchill Technology & Business Park earlier this year. Additionally, the City of Gretna's ferry terminal will become the home port for FAL's deluxe 150-passenger vessel, the *Louisiane*.

Marketing, sales, and reservations of French America Line's riverboat cruises will be provided by affiliate, Uncommon Journeys, which specializes in high-end travel and tours throughout North America. The increased interest in New Orleans as a travel destination drove the decision to relocate the Uncommon Journeys headquarters from Oakland, CA, to Jefferson, LA. Uncommon Journeys will share office space with FAL in the JEDCO Business Innovation Center during the startup phase.

French America Line and Uncommon Journeys anticipate the creation of 30 new jobs shore-side here in Jefferson Parish, with an additional of 50 crew and personnel employed on the *Louisiane*. French America Line invested over \$7.5 million into the community with an estimated economic impact of \$58 million. French America Line offers five-to-ten-day cruises on the Mississippi, Ohio, Tennessee, Cumberland, and Red Rivers with stops at major U.S. cities along the way.

The Louisiane--formerly the Columbia Queen that sailed Oregon's Columbia River--was purchased by French America Line owners Christopher Kyte, Ken Grigsby, Kevin Griffin, and Christopher Tidmore in 2015 with the intention of relocating it to Jefferson Parish.

The luxury riverboat is currently en route from Oregon to Gretna via the Panama Canal on a journey that will take a total of four weeks. In August, the Louisiane will arrive at the Gretna Ferry Landing-- which will be rebranded by French America Line in the coming months. The terminal has been underutilized since the halt of regular ferry service to Gretna in 2013. Once in Jefferson Parish, the Louisiane will be refurbished by Bollinger Quick Repair based out of Harvey.

"The arrival of French America Line and the 'Louisiane' in Jefferson Parish this summer is a fulfillment of a three-year project to restore the region as a headquarters for a proudly American owned riverboat company operating deluxe voyages on America's Waterways," said Christopher Kyte, French America Line Chairman. "We are also delighted to be creating local jobs in Jefferson Parish along with the significant impact of local purchasing, everything from groceries to flowers to fuel. We are hugely grateful to the far-sighted leadership at JEDCO, the Mayor Belinda Constant and City Council of Gretna, and former President John Young--without any of whom this project would not have happened."

Former Jefferson Parish President John Young added, "When Christopher Kyte and Christopher Tidmore came to me over two years ago with the idea of home-porting the former Columbia Queen in Jefferson Parish, my Administration eagerly embraced the possibility. It had been a crucial priority throughout my years as Parish President to make the world aware of Jefferson's natural and cultural resources, and, in doing so, draw tourists to our parish. Embarking passengers in Historic Downtown Gretna upon our greatest natural resource, the Mississippi River, is a fulfillment of that economic vision."

A portion of the revenue generated from French America Line's operations will be exclusively reserved for the restoration of permanent water transit-ferry service between the Downtown Gretna and New Orleans' Canal Street. "This is a major economic development opportunity for the City of Gretna," said Gretna Mayor Belinda Constant. "This project will bring quality jobs with benefits to our residents, and complements our vision to continue making Gretna a destination within the Greater New Orleans Region. Additionally, the project will support our recently released Gretna Downtown 2020 plan and serve as a driver for promoting our riverfront and future water-transit options."

"We are excited to welcome French America Line and Uncommon Journeys to Jefferson Parish," said Jerry Bologna, JEDCO President & CEO. "Not only will French America Line bring the Gretna Ferry Landing back into use, but they will also hire and purchase supplies and commodities locally. We look forward to the increase in tourism this company will bring to the West Bank along with the direct and indirect impact French America Line will have on our community. JEDCO will remain a long-term partner to aid French America Line in its future successes." JEDCO provided site selection and incentive assistance to the company while also interfacing with the City of Gretna to reach an agreement on the use of the dormant ferry terminal. JEDCO and Louisiana Economic Development also financed a portion of the project to aid in the vessel's relocation from Oregon to Gretna.

"French America Line's decision to locate in Jefferson Parish speaks volumes to our talented workforce, excellent infrastructure, and quality business climate," noted Jefferson Parish President Michael S. Yenni. "This project marks a unique opportunity for Jefferson Parish to showcase its offerings to the rest of the world."

As individuals travel to Jefferson Parish to embark on these riverboat tours, they will experience southern hospitality in quality hotels, excellent food in world-class restaurants, and a creative culture that can only be found in our community. We appreciate French America Line's investment in our community and look forward to watching the company grow and thrive in Jefferson Parish."

"The Mississippi River has long been a source of inspiration for artists, writers, and many more, and it is a vital part of our state's culture and history," said Gov. John Bel Edwards on Friday. "Today, it continues to inspire countless travelers from around the nation and across the globe, who take in our breathtaking landscape and rich culture while supporting our tourism industry and creating great opportunities for our people. We encourage everyone to visit our great state and share in its beauty, and we welcome French America Line and their mission to help us tell Louisiana's story."

Christopher Tidmore added, "Telling that story is the reason why we renamed the riverboat 'Louisiane.' Our region not only provided America with its singular indigenous music and literature, but quite literally, the Louisiana Purchase 'made' America. From the early French explorers to Louis & Clark, from Andrew Jackson to Louis Armstrong, our expert historians will tell the tale of America through the lens of Louisiana, and our included excursions will provide a beautiful and singular vision of the importance of the ports along the Mississippi that created the modern US."

The purchase and refurbish of the Louisiane was funded by the Greater Nevada Credit Union utilizing the USDA Business and Industry a guaranteed loan program. "We are so excited to be a part of this venture" said Jeremy Gilpin, VP of Business services at the credit union. He went on "this project is a job creator and will be a huge boost to the local tourist economy. Greater Nevada Credit Union is so excited to be able to provide the financing here in partnership with the good folks at USDA Rural Development in Louisiana."

Inaugural sailings of the Louisiane begin in September.

New Orleans CITY BUSINESS

Luxury river cruise line chooses Gretna for headquarters, homeport

By: Lance Traweek, Managing Editor June 24, 2016 0

GRETNA—French America Line, a startup river cruise company, has chosen Gretna’s ferry landing as the homeport for its 150-passenger vessel, with inaugural sailings of the riverboat, named *Louisiane*, beginning in September.

A portion of revenue will go toward the restoration of the ferry service between Gretna and New Orleans, officials said at a news conference Friday. The regular ferry service was halted in 2013.

The deal will create 94 direct jobs on the West Bank, 64 positions will be available aboard the riverboat and 30 new jobs will be added on shore. It’s estimated that the annual payroll will total about \$2.1 million.

Christopher Kyte, founder of French America Line, said the riverboat plans to purchase locally – “everything from groceries, fuel to flowers.”

French America Lines has invested \$7.5 million in the project. The luxury riverboat offers five- to 10-day cruises on the Mississippi, Ohio, Tennessee, Cumberland and Red Rivers. It will stop at major U.S. cities while in transit. The boat includes 75 suites and staterooms, two restaurants, three lounges, a full-service spa and entertainment, according to the press release.

Jerry Bologna, president and CEO of the Jefferson Parish Economic Development Commission, said he looks forward to the increase in tourism the company will bring to the parish. The announcement has been in the works for nine months.

The *Louisiane*, which was previously named the *Columbia Queen*, was bought by French America Line in 2015. The riverboat is currently on its way from Oregon to Gretna through the Panama Canal, which will take about four weeks. In mid-July, the boat will dock at the Gretna Ferry Landing, which the company is in the process of rebranding. The boat will be refurbished by Harvey-based Bollinger Quick Repair. Transdev will provide berthing space for the venture.

French America Line began operations earlier this year out of JEDCO’s Business Innovation Center in the Churchill Technology & Business Park. Marketing, reservations and sales of the cruises will be provided by Uncommon Journeys, an affiliate of the company. The two will share office space at the center until the startup phase is complete.

Gretna Mayor Belinda Constant said the project supports the city’s newly released Downtown 2020 plan.



Luxury riverboat cruise line coming to Jefferson Parish

Friday, June 24th 2016, 1:28 pm CDT

Written by: FOX8Live.com Staff

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Source: French America Line

GRETNA, LA (WVUE) -

Gretna and state officials Friday joined French America Lines to announce that a luxury cruise ship will soon operate from the Gretna Ferry Terminal.



The start-up riverboat cruise line, which offers premium tours along America's waterways, announced the establishment of its corporate headquarters on the West Bank of Jefferson Parish.

A 150 passenger vessel recently renamed the "Louisiane" is making its way to Gretna from Oregon in what's expected to be a four week journey.

Reservations of French America Line's riverboat cruises will be provided by affiliate, Uncommon Journeys, which specializes in high-end travel and tours throughout North America.

French America Line offers five-to-ten-day cruises on the Mississippi, Ohio, Tennessee, Cumberland, and Red Rivers with stops at major U.S. cities along the way. The boutique riverboat will offer 75 suites and staterooms, two restaurants, three lounges, a full-service spa and nightly entertainment.

French America Line and Uncommon Journeys anticipate the creation of 94 direct jobs within the community; 64 positions will be created aboard the Louisiane and 30 new jobs will be added shore-side.

The first trip from Gretna will be October 1, and will be a round trip to Minneapolis.



River cruise line picks Gretna for home port



By [Katherine Sayre, NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune](#)

Email the author | [Follow on Twitter](#)

on June 24, 2016 at 10:57 AM, updated June 24, 2016 at 2:15 PM

New cruise company French America Line has picked Gretna's ferry landing as the homeport for its 150-passenger riverboat *Louisiane* under a deal that steers money toward restoring ferry service between Gretna and New Orleans.

French America Line will also put its corporate headquarters on the West Bank of Jefferson Parish. The company's move will create 94 jobs with a \$7.5 million investment. Company representatives and officials with Jefferson Parish, the state, and the Regional Transit Authority announced the deal Friday (June 24) in Gretna.

"This project will allow us to put Gretna at the forefront for opportunities of tourism, downtown development -- but most of all, solidifying a funding source dedicated to water transit for the city of Gretna," said Gretna Mayor Belinda Constant.

The *Louisiane* will arrive in mid-July at the Gretna ferry landing, which has been used sparingly since regular ferry service between Gretna and the Canal Street terminal ended in 2013.

A \$50 per-passenger fee on the *Louisiane* will be steered into a City of Gretna fund for operating expenses at the ferry terminal and to reimburse the city for improvements to the facility, said Justin Augustine, vice president of Transdev, the Regional Transit Authority's private operator. Remaining funds will be saved for one day restoring ferry service between Gretna and the Canal Street landing in New Orleans, which ended in 2013.

The prospect of bringing back the ferry depends on how successful French America is at bringing in passengers. French America Line plans to offer five- to 10-day cruises on the Mississippi, Ohio, Tennessee, Cumberland and Red rivers. The first sailings are scheduled to begin in August.

The company's founder Christopher Kyte said French America has committed to hiring and buying supplies locally. "I believe we will have a huge impact in the local area," Kyte said.

Formerly the *Columbia Queen* that sailed Oregon's Columbia River, French America Line purchased the *Louisiane* in 2015. The riverboat is currently en route from Oregon to Gretna via the Panama Canal on a journey that will take four weeks. Once in Jefferson Parish, the *Louisiane* will be refurbished by Bollinger Quick Repair in Harvey.

The company got a \$4.9 million loan to renovate the vessel and start service through a U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development business and industry program. The Jefferson Parish Economic Development Commission provided financing to cover some of the costs of relocating the vessel.

According to the company, 64 jobs will be created aboard the Louisiane and 30 will be added on shore. The cruise line will have an estimated annual payroll of \$2.1 million, which will include a mix of seasonal, hourly wage and permanent salaried employees.

The Louisiane features 75 suites and staterooms, two restaurants, three lounges, a full-service spa and nightly entertainment.

French America Line began operations out of JEDCO's Business Innovation Center in the Churchill Technology & Business Park earlier this year. Reservations, sales, and marketing for Louisiane cruises will be handled by Uncommon Journeys, an affiliate of French America Line. The two will share office space at Churchill as the business is being started.

Updated at 1:36 p.m. to include comments from officials involved and more details on the deal.



Gretna lands river cruise line

Plans to bring back ferry service

UPDATED 3:56 PM CDT Jun 24, 2016



GRETNA, La. —River cruising is one of the hottest tickets in tourism, and Friday the city of Gretna announced, it is cashing in. Local and state leaders said they have sealed a deal with French America Lines, a startup riverboat cruise line, to make the Gretna ferry terminal its newest luxury liner's home port.

The 150-passanger vessel, the *Louisiane*, is on its way to Gretna from Oregon where it previously sailed as the *Columbia Queen* before it was purchase by French America Line in 2015. The deal brings 94 direct jobs to the

community, with 64 positions on board the *Louisiane* and another 30 new jobs added on shore. The economic impact of the new business is estimated at \$58 million -- enough money, city leaders said, to bring back ferry service from the Gretna terminal to Jackson Avenue in New Orleans.

“We were able to do something that's never been done before and that's to privatize a ferry operation,” Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development Secretary Shawn Wilson said at the announcement.

The date when that service will resume has not been set, but Gretna Mayor Belinda Constant said the realization of a river commute is part of the bigger plan to put the river to work for Gretna.

“It wouldn't just be a barge river, but it would be a river that we would be able to use for social reasons and a way of life,” Constant said. “I think we're approaching this part of the story.”

In September, the *Louisiane* will set sail on its first river cruise from the Gretna port. According to French America Line and its operational affiliate, Uncommon Journeys, the boutique riverboat will include 75 suites and staterooms, two restaurants, three lounges, a full-service spa and nightly entertainment.



Gretna will be home to new riverboat cruise line

Posted 9:07 PM, June 24, 2016, by [WGNO Web Desk](#)



Photo Courtesy French America Line

GRETNA, La. (WGNO) – A riverboat cruise line is coming Gretna.

Officials announced Friday that the startup riverboat cruise line, which offers premium tours along America's waterways, will create 94 direct jobs, 64 aboard the riverboat and 30 at its new headquarters on the West Bank of Jefferson Parish.

The ferry terminal in Gretna will be the home port for French America Line's deluxe 150-passenger vessel, the *Louisiane*.

The *Louisiane*, formerly the *Columbia Queen* that sailed Oregon's Columbia River, was purchased by French America Line in 2015. The luxury riverboat is currently en route from Oregon to Gretna via the Panama Canal on a journey that will take a total of four weeks.



Photo Courtesy French America Line

In mid-July, the *Louisiane* will arrive at the Gretna Ferry Landing, which will be rebranded by French America Line in the coming months. The terminal has been underutilized since the halt of regular ferry service to Gretna in 2013. Once in Jefferson Parish, the *Louisiane* will be refurbished by Bollinger Quick Repair based out of Harvey.

A portion of the revenue generated from French America Line's operations will be exclusively reserved for the future development of a permanent water transit service connection between the City of Gretna and New Orleans.

French America Line offers five-to-ten-day cruises on the Mississippi, Ohio, Tennessee, Cumberland, and Red Rivers with stops at major U.S. cities along the way.

The boutique riverboat will offer 75 suites and staterooms, two restaurants, three lounges, a full-service spa and nightly entertainment.

Inaugural sailings of the *Louisiane* will begin in September 2016.



Posted: Friday, 24 June 2016 2:35PM

Luxury riverboat to cruise from Gretna

David Blake Reporting

City leaders in Gretna are excited about the announcement of a new luxury riverboat coming to town.



'The Louisiane' used to be the Columbia Queen in Oregon. It's going to be docked at the Gretna ferry terminal and will create a nearly a hundred new jobs.

The French America Line and Uncommon Journeys are also moving their company headquarters to Gretna.

Jedco CEO Jerry Bologna says it means jobs and much more.

"Really, about a 7-and-a-half million dollar investment here locally and about a 58 million dollar economic impact," said Bologna.

They've been working on this deal for close to a year and now it's all come together.

"This cruise line will be offering a number of different itineraries up and down the Mississippi River and other waterways."

Some of the stops along the way will include Memphis, Vicksburg and St. Louis. The vessel has 75 suites and staterooms, two restaurants, a spa and nightly entertainment with 5 to 10 day cruises.

It's currently enroute to Gretna from the Columbia River in Oregon, coming up through the Panama Canal, and should be at it's new home by August.

After refurbishment, inaugural sailings of 'The Louisiane' will begin in September.

The Louisiane previously was known as the Columbia Queen and sailed Oregon's Columbia River. Using \$7.5 million in startup funding derived from personal resources, an investment capital package and government loans, KYTE and French America Line co-owners Ken Grigsby, Kevin Griffin and Christopher Tidmore purchased the Columbia Queen last year with plans to rename it and move it to Gretna.

French America Line said it chose Gretna for the ship's home port after consulting with Mayor Belinda Constant, former Parish President John Young and the Jefferson Economic Development Commission during a process that began three years ago.

The commission loaned money to move the Louisiane from Oregon to Gretna and helped hammer out the agreement to put the dormant terminal back into commerce.

The Louisiane's journey from Oregon to the West Bank via the Panama Canal will take about four weeks and conclude in early August, officials said. The ship then will undergo millions of dollars' worth of refurbishments at Bollinger Quick Repair in Harvey before it begins offering cruises.

Officials described the Louisiane as a "boutique riverboat" that will feature opulent suites and staterooms, two restaurants, three lounges, a full spa and nightly entertainment.

Gov. John Bel Edwards, Parish President Mike Yenni, Jefferson Economic Development Commission head Jerry Bologna, Constant and Young all spoke optimistically Friday about how French America Line and Uncommon Journeys could positively affect various sectors of the local economy.

"This is a major economic development opportunity," Constant said.



MEDIA ADVISORY
June 23, 2016

JEDCO & City of Gretna to make major economic development announcement tomorrow morning

Join the Jefferson Parish Economic Development Commission (JEDCO) and the City of Gretna for a major economic development announcement regarding the entry of a new corporate headquarters into the community.

WHEN:

TOMORROW
Friday, June 24th
9:50 AM

WHERE:

Memorial Square (in front of Gretna City Hall)
740 2nd Street
Gretna, LA 70053

WHO:

Jerry Bologna, JEDCO President & CEO
Mayor Belinda Constant, City of Gretna
Justin T. Augustine III, RTA General Manager, TransDev Vice President
Secretary Shawn Wilson, Louisiana Department of Transportation & Development
President Michael S. Yenni, Jefferson Parish
Additional speakers to be announced at press conference

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PRESS RELEASE
June 24, 2016

Luxury riverboat cruise line announces operations in Jefferson Parish *Gretna Ferry Landing to become home port*

GRETNA, La -- [The Jefferson Parish Economic Development Commission](#) (JEDCO), in partnership with the [City of Gretna](#) and [Louisiana Economic Development](#), welcomed French America Line to Jefferson Parish on Friday. The startup riverboat cruise line, which offers premium tours along America's waterways, announced the establishment of its corporate headquarters on the West Bank of Jefferson Parish. Operations began out of JEDCO's Business Innovation Center in the Churchill Technology & Business Park earlier this year. Additionally, the City of Gretna's ferry terminal will become the home port for French America Line's deluxe 150-passenger vessel, the *Louisiane*.

Marketing, sales, and reservations of French America Line's riverboat cruises will be provided by affiliate, Uncommon Journeys, which specializes in high-end travel and tours throughout North America. The increased interest in New Orleans as a travel destination drove the decision to relocate the Uncommon Journeys headquarters from Oakland, CA to Jefferson. Uncommon Journeys will share office space with French America Line in the JEDCO Business Innovation Center during the startup phase.

[French America Line](#) and [Uncommon Journeys](#) anticipate the creation of 94 direct jobs within the community; 64 positions will be created aboard the *Louisiane* and 30 new jobs will be added shore-side. The company will have an estimated annual payroll of \$2.1 million, which will include a mix of seasonal, hourly wage employees and permanent salaried employees. French America Line invested over \$7.5 million into the community with an estimated economic impact of \$58 million. French America Line offers five-to-ten-day cruises on the Mississippi, Ohio, Tennessee, Cumberland, and Red Rivers with stops at major U.S. cities along the way. The boutique riverboat will offer 75 suites and staterooms, two restaurants, three lounges, a full-service spa and nightly entertainment.

The *Louisiane*, formerly the *Columbia Queen* that sailed Oregon's Columbia River, was purchased by French America Line in 2015. The luxury riverboat is currently en route from Oregon to Gretna via the Panama Canal on a journey that will take a total of four weeks. In mid-July, the *Louisiane* will arrive at the Gretna Ferry Landing, which will be rebranded by French America Line in the coming months. The terminal has been underutilized since the halt of regular ferry service to Gretna in 2013. Once in Jefferson Parish, the *Louisiane* will be refurbished by Bollinger Quick Repair based out of Harvey.

"The arrival of French America Line and the *Louisiane* in Jefferson Parish this summer is a fulfillment of a three-year project to restore the region as a headquarters for a proudly American owned riverboat company operating deluxe voyages on America's Waterways," says Christopher Kyte, French America Line Founder. "We are also delighted to be creating local jobs in Jefferson Parish along with the significant impact of local purchasing, everything from groceries to flowers to fuel. We are hugely grateful to the far-sighted leadership at JEDCO and the City of Gretna, without whom this project would not have happened."

A portion of the revenue generated from French America Line's operations will be exclusively reserved for the future development of a permanent water transit service connection between the City of Gretna and New Orleans. Working with regional transportation officials, the launch of French America Line places the City of Gretna in a much stronger position to move towards resuming water transit services for the community. This economic development opportunity creates synergy between Downtown Gretna and the Gretna Ferry Landing, aiding in the city's long-term goal to develop the area into a vibrant destination and a viable transportation hub.

"This is a major economic development opportunity for the City of Gretna," said Gretna Mayor Belinda Constant. "This project will bring quality jobs with benefits to our residents, and complements our vision to continue making Gretna a destination within the Greater New Orleans Region. Additionally, the project will support our recently released Gretna Downtown 2020 plan and serve as a driver for promoting our riverfront and future water-transit options."

JEDCO played a vital role in attracting French America Line and Uncommon Journeys to the West Bank of Jefferson Parish. In partnership with Louisiana Economic Development, the local economic development organization provided site

selection and incentive assistance to the company while also interfacing with the City of Gretna to reach an agreement on the use of the dormant ferry terminal. JEDCO also financed a portion of the project to aid in the vessel's relocation from Oregon to the City of Gretna.

"We are excited to welcome French America Line and Uncommon Journeys to Jefferson Parish," says Jerry Bologna, JEDCO President & CEO. "Not only will French America Line bring the Gretna Ferry Landing back into use, but they will also hire and purchase supplies and commodities locally. We look forward to the increase in tourism this company will bring to the West Bank along with the direct and indirect impact French America Line will have on our community. JEDCO will remain a long-term partner to aid French America Line in its future successes."

"French America Line's decision to locate in Jefferson Parish speaks volumes to our talented workforce, excellent infrastructure, and quality business climate," says Jefferson Parish President Michael S. Yenni. "This project marks a unique opportunity for Jefferson Parish to showcase its offerings to the rest of the world. As individuals travel to Jefferson Parish to embark on these riverboat tours, they will experience southern hospitality in quality hotels, excellent food in world-class restaurants, and a creative culture that can only be found in our community. We appreciate French America Line's investment in our community and look forward to watching the company grow and thrive in Jefferson Parish."

Justin T. Augustine, III, Vice President of TransDev added, "Transdev is very excited to partner with the City of Gretna, Louisiana Department of Transportation & Development (LADOTD) and French America Lines (FAL) to provide berthing space for this exciting venture. This economic opportunity represents the first step towards future ferry operations from the City of Gretna to the City of New Orleans. I would like to thank all parties for their steadfast determination to get this deal done, another step toward Regionalization."

Governor John Bel Edwards highlighted the announcement, saying "The Mississippi River has long been a source of inspiration for artists, writers, and many more, and it is a vital part of state's culture and history. Today, it continues to inspire countless travelers from around the nation and across the globe, who take in our breathtaking landscape and rich culture while supporting our tourism industry and creating great opportunities for our people. We encourage everyone to visit our great state and share in its beauty, and we welcome French America Line and their mission to help us tell Louisiana's story."

Inaugural sailings of the *Louisiane* will begin in September 2016.

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About French America Line: French America Line was created to bring a fresh and refined ambiance to cruising America's waterways. Elegant yet casual, American yet with a decidedly French flair, the company is the vision of leaders in the travel industry who have worked tirelessly to bring their ideas to fruition. Today they are proud to present French America Line to the world of cruising.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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THE ADVOCATE

Four area manufacturers receive Louisiana economic development Lantern Awards

ADVOCATE STAFF REPORT

June 8, 2016; 3:15 p.m.

[0 Comments](#)

Four companies in the Baton Rouge, New Orleans and Lafayette areas are regional winners of the 2016 Lantern Award from Louisiana's economic development department.

"The Lantern Awards are a valuable recognition of what our leading manufacturers are pursuing to advance company success and the success of the Louisiana manufacturing sector," Louisiana Economic Development Secretary Don Pierson said.

One winner is chosen every year from each of Louisiana's eight regional planning and development districts, based on the contributions of the manufacturers to their communities, including investments in employment growth and facility expansion.

The 2016 Lantern Award winners are:

METHANEX USA LLC, GEISMAR: Methanex in recent years relocated two methanol plants from its production site in Punta Arenas, Chile, to Geismar. Methanex produced methanol from its Geismar 1 plant in January 2015 followed by production from Geismar 2 in December.

BOSCOLI FOODS INC., KENNER: Founded in 1992, the company manufactures Italian gourmet foods. Those include Italian olive salad as a condiment on sandwiches and topping on Italian salads, a product that was expanded to include jalapeno olive salad, kalamata olive salad, extra virgin olive oil, balsamic vinegar, dirty martini juice, stuffed olives, giardiniera, sun-dried tomatoes, a variety of pickled vegetables and capers.

FALCON RICE MILL, CROWLEY: The maker of Cajun Country Rice was founded in 1942. Edward and Evelyn Falcon would purchase rough rice from area farmers in the fall. It was cleaned, treated and resold for seed for spring planting. A milling operation was installed in 1950, selling rice under the names Ed's, Randy's and Falcon. Later, other brands were developed to include the Cajun Country brand of long, medium, whole-grain brown, jasmine and popcorn rice.

CONRAD INDUSTRIES INC., MORGAN CITY: Conrad Shipyard specializes in the construction, conversion and repair of marine vessels for commercial and government customers and fabricates modular components for offshore oil and gas drilling rigs and floating production, storage and offloading vessels. The publicly traded company operates five shipyards in south Louisiana and Texas.

Lantern Award winners in the other regions of the state are Howell Industries Inc., Sulphur; UPS Midstream Services, Trout; B. Viz Design, St. Joseph; and Magnolia Steel of Natchitoches Inc.

As part of the Lantern Awards ceremony, the Louisiana Quality Foundation recognized Louisiana Performance Excellence Award winners: the Louisiana Organ Procurement Agency in Metairie, Jefferson Business & Career Solutions Centers in Gretna and MMR Group Inc. of Baton Rouge.



Boscoli Foods Wins 2016 Lantern Award

By 6-9-16

Boscoli Foods' President John Occhipinti being presented with the highly prestigious Lantern Award at a special reception at the Governor's Mansion in Baton Rouge Tuesday evening.

KENNER, LA – For many local residents, using Boscoli Foods Italian Olive Salad has become a culinary



tradition. The company, which manufactures a variety of Italian gourmet foods in Jefferson Parish, focuses on using quality goods in its products to ensure customer satisfaction. Company reps said this dedication to excellence has allowed Boscoli to become a household staple in the region while also ensuring its advancement into other markets across the country and internationally. They said Boscoli Foods is a leader in its industry, a quality that helped the company to

earn a special distinction for Louisiana manufacturers: a 2016 Louisiana Lantern Award.

Don Pierson, Louisiana Economic Development (LED) Secretary, presented Boscoli Foods with the highly prestigious award at a special reception at the Governor's Mansion in Baton Rouge Tuesday, June 7, 2016.

The Louisiana Lantern Awards provide an opportunity for the State to celebrate manufacturers from across Louisiana. The winning companies for each district showcase a contribution to the Louisiana economy and to their local communities through employee growth, increase in revenue, facility expansion, and community engagement.

The Jefferson Parish Economic Development Commission (JEDCO) nominated Boscoli Foods for the District 1 award this year. The gourmet food producer was selected from the Greater New Orleans region to receive the highly-coveted State award.

Founded in 1992, this iconic Jefferson Parish company came from humble beginnings. Boscoli Foods started out as a small mom and pop shop with products made from traditional family recipes passed down from generation to generation. In the beginning, the family mixed and bottled each of the products by hand in a 750-square-foot space.

Twenty-four years later, Boscoli has experienced exponential growth. Boscoli regularly produces 17 different products out of its 6,500-square-foot automated manufacturing facility in the City of Kenner. These products are stocked on shelves in all 50 states as well as in Mexico and U.S. military bases overseas. As the family-owned company continues to grow, so does its vision for the future. In addition to expanding into new markets, Boscoli is focused on enhancing its product line as well. This year, the company introduced new products, such as the Infused Dirty Martini Juice, into the market.

In recent years, Boscoli has experienced high growth in sales and an increase in employees. In just the last three years, Boscoli revenues have grown by over 10%. In order to meet capacity of its sustained growth, Boscoli Foods plans to add an 8,500-square-foot warehouse and additional office space to its existing manufacturing and bottling plant.

JEDCO reps said not only does the manufacturer provide a continual boost to the Jefferson parish economy, but Boscoli Foods is also heavily involved in improving the community. Boscoli donates time and resources to numerous charities and organizations, including the National Kidney Foundation, American Lung Association, Kenner Food Bank, Wally Pontiff Jr. Foundation, and many others.

"Boscoli Foods is incredibly deserving of the 2016 Louisiana Lantern Award," says JEDCO President & CEO Jerry Bologna. "The company demonstrates all of the qualities of a successful manufacturer. It is clear that the family behind Boscoli Foods takes great pride in producing the highest quality products while also bringing our regional traditions to a national and international audience. We are proud of the company's growth over the years and the innovative spirit that has allowed it to provide new offerings to loyal customers. We look forward to watching the company grow and find success in Jefferson Parish moving forward."

"We are honored to have a company as dynamic, innovative, and successful as Boscoli Foods based out of Jefferson Parish," says Parish President Michael S. Yenni. "This unique business embodies the true spirit of Jefferson Parish and the City of Kenner through hard work, a focus on excellence and community engagement. We thank Boscoli for choosing to grow in our community and we look forward to supporting that growth for many years to come. I am thrilled to offer my congratulations to the entire Boscoli Foods team."

President John Occhipinti accepted the award on behalf of Boscoli Foods on Tuesday. He was presented with a custom-built, hand-crafted copper Lantern donated by Bevolo Gas & Electric Lights of New Orleans. The lanterns have become an internationally recognized trademark of New Orleans. Bevolo is the oldest and largest copper gas lantern manufacturer in the U.S. and the second-oldest in the world.



JEDCO

Jefferson Parish Economic Development Commission

PRESS RELEASE
June 8, 2016

Boscoli Foods wins 2016 Louisiana Lantern Award

(KENNER, La) -- For many local residents, using [Boscoli Foods](#) Italian Olive Salad has become a culinary tradition. The company, which manufactures a variety of Italian, gourmet foods in Jefferson Parish, focuses on using quality goods in its products to ensure customer satisfaction. This dedication to excellence has allowed Boscoli to become a household staple in the region while also ensuring its advancement into other markets across the country and internationally. Boscoli Foods is a leader in its industry, a quality that helped the company to earn a special distinction for Louisiana manufacturers: a 2016 Louisiana Lantern Award.



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###

About JEDCO: The [Jefferson Parish Economic Development Commission](#) (JEDCO) is the economic development organization for the parish with the main objective of attracting, growing, and creating new business in the area. JEDCO's mission is to proactively influence the economy through the retention and creation of quality jobs, entrepreneurship, and investment in Jefferson Parish. Located in the growing [Churchill Technology & Business Park](#), JEDCO is home to a [business incubator](#) for early-stage ventures and it also operates a state-of-the-art [Conference Center](#).

For more information, visit www.jedco.org and follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Vimeo](#), and [LinkedIn](#).

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\$17M grant sought to make over Jefferson Highway

[Jefferson Highway Improvement Plans](#) Jefferson Parish is seeking a \$17 million federal grant to make improvements to Jefferson Highway.

Print Email



By Littice Bacon-Blood, NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune

[Email the author](#) | [Follow on Twitter](#)

on June 22, 2016 at 9:00 AM, updated June 22, 2016 at 10:04 AM

Jefferson Parish, in partnership with JEDCO and Ochsner Health System, has applied for a \$17.8 million federal grant to make-over the Jefferson Highway thoroughfare, including adding a new transit bus station with revised bus routes and improved sidewalks to make the area more pedestrian friendly.

Parish officials say the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery grant would be used to connect New Orleans and [Jefferson Parish](#) bus lines and connect disadvantage residents to employment opportunities.



Hope is that eight-acre Jefferson Plaza site will be cornerstone of Jefferson Highway redevelopment

"Currently, transit riders along the Jefferson Highway corridor in the vicinity of Ochsner face many obstacles to travel. None of the routes for JeT and RTA line up so that riders can transfer without

crossing major intersections or walking more than a few blocks along a corridor that is not pedestrian friendly," said Sharon Leader, the parish's transit director. "The transfer facility on Jefferson Highway would bring three routes into one area so that riders could easily transfer to other buses that give the riders a greatly improved variety and depth of options for travel."

The improvements are part of an ongoing effort to revitalize the Old Jefferson area and is in conjunction with Ochsner's recently announced plans to develop a \$62 million medical plaza on the

site of the former Jefferson Plaza shopping center, which is less than a mile from Ochsner's main hospital on Jefferson Highway.

The rehab hospital and outpatient clinic is part of a \$360 million, three-year Ochsner expansion plan currently underway.

"In 2015, people from all 50 states and more than 80 countries traveled to Ochsner to receive life-saving healthcare services. Ochsner supports this TIGER grant application because this federal transportation investment would help Jefferson Highway become a healthcare corridor to better serve our patients, our employees and our neighbors, " said Warner Thomas, president and chief executive officer of Ochsner Health System.

Parish officials expect a decision on the grant application by this fall. The project, totaling \$22.3 million, includes nearly \$5 million in local matching funds. The proposed expenditures include:

- \$2.8 million for four new green-technology buses. The revised routes would connect Kenner and New Orleans Central Business District with "with the expanding employment and medical treatment opportunities at the Ochsner Medical Center complex."
- \$1.7 million to upgrade the existing bus and demand response vehicle maintenance facility.
- \$1.1 million for a new public transportation hub and transfer station at Ochsner Medical Center. (Ochsner would pay for this facility if the parish is awarded the grant.)
- \$2.5 million for pathway connection improvements.
- \$14.9 million for Jefferson Highway transportation infrastructure improvements, such as pedestrian and bike path improvements, as well as traffic flow.

THE NEW ORLEANS ADVOCATE

Jefferson Parish seeking federal grant to upgrade Jefferson Highway transit

BY CHAD CALDER | CICALDER@THEADVOCATE.COM

June 16, 2016; 8:39 p.m.

[1 Comments](#)

Jefferson Parish is seeking a federal grant to help fund a \$22.3 million project it hopes will transform Jefferson Highway into a high-level public transit corridor that complements Ochsner Health System's planned \$360 million expansion along the highway and better connects Jefferson residents with neighboring New Orleans.

Jefferson Transit also plans to revise its routes to better connect Jefferson Parish and Kenner with New Orleans' Central Business District so as to expand access to jobs and medical care for residents who depend on public transportation.

Parish Transit Director Sharon Leader said Jefferson Transit's routes in the corridor don't line up with New Orleans RTA lines, forcing riders to cross major intersections or walk several blocks along a corridor that is not pedestrian-friendly to get from one bus line to another.

"The transfer facility on Jefferson Highway would bring three routes into one area so that riders could easily transfer to other buses that give the riders a greatly improved variety and depth of options for travel," she said in a statement.

Ochsner has three campuses in that section of Jefferson Highway and has **announced plans for major upgrades** in the coming years.

On the north and south campuses, the company plans to add six floors to its main hospital tower, double the size of the Gayle & Tom Benson Cancer Center and build an outpatient diagnostic imaging center.

At the nearby site of the former Jefferson Plaza shopping center, Ochsner will build a five-story, \$56 million inpatient rehabilitation hospital and a \$6 million outpatient clinic for physical and occupational therapy. That site will have retail space as well.

"Ochsner supports this TIGER grant application because this federal transportation investment would help Jefferson Highway become a health care corridor to better serve our patients, our employees and our neighbors," said Warner Thomas, Ochsner's president and chief executive officer.

Thomas also noted Ochsner treated people from all 50 states and more than 80 countries last year.

Ochsner and the parish would match the TIGER grant with \$4.5 million in local funds from three sources: \$220,000 from the parish's general fund, \$750,000 in land to be donated by Ochsner for the transit station and \$3.5 million through an economic development district **created by the parish earlier this year** around the Ochsner campuses.

Economic development districts divert additional sales tax revenue created by a project back into public infrastructure improvements within the district through bonds.

“Leveraging these local dollars for a \$17 million federal grant will go a long way toward relieving traffic congestion, beautifying the corridor and improving quality of life in the neighborhoods,” Parish Councilman Paul Johnston said.

Jerry Bologna, president and CEO of the Jefferson Parish Economic Development Commission, said the grant application is part of a larger effort to redevelop the entire Jefferson Highway corridor into a mixed-use, walkable community.

Last year, Ochsner Health System and JEDCO worked with the Urban Land Institute to figure out ways to stimulate economic development in the corridor, promote local and regional connectivity, and “brand” the corridor. The goal is to create a “town center” concept with destination health care at its core, Bologna said.

Follow Chad Calder on Twitter, [**@Chad_Calder**](#).

Biz JEDCO Releases NEW ORLEANS 2015 Annual Report

By 6-2-16

AVONDALE, LA – The Jefferson Parish Economic Development Commission (JEDCO) released its 2015 Annual Report.

Paul Rivera, 2015 JEDCO Chairman said:

“It was an honor to serve as the Chairman of the JEDCO Board of Commissioners in 2015. JEDCO has



served the Jefferson Parish business community since 1987 and each year, the organization sets the bar a little bit higher, achieving new successes and milestones. 2015 was no different; what a year to be a part of this organization! You may notice a common theme within the pages of this Annual Report. In 2015, JEDCO rebranded and developed a new logo

to represent the group moving forward. The new look and feel has been widely accepted and celebrated within our community.

“Last year also marked an opportunity to re-envision the future of Jefferson Parish. JEDCO revisited the Jefferson EDGE 2020, the Parish's long term economic development strategic plan. With the help of business leaders, stakeholders, and elected officials from all over Jefferson Parish, JEDCO updated the plan and identified new action items to propel the community into the future.

“In 2015, JEDCO achieved reaccreditation through the International Economic Development Council. This prestigious recognition highlights JEDCO's role as an influencer in Jefferson Parish and the international economic development community. It is a testament to the JEDCO staff, which works diligently to enhance the economic climate on a regular basis.

“JEDCO's reaccreditation also speaks to our community partnerships. We pride ourselves on our collaboration with elected officials, parish departments, and the business and civic organizations that represent the companies and residents located in Jefferson Parish. With strong community partners, like the Jefferson Chamber, we are able to effect change in our community and develop a stronger, more creative action plan to help Jefferson Parish become the preferred destination for all businesses.

“As JEDCO moves into the future, I can assure you that it will remain dedicated to our businesses and the community that supports them. We look forward to continued momentum, prosperity, and success in Jefferson Parish.”

[Read JEDCO's 2015 Annual Report here](#)



Dear JEDCO Supporters,

It was an honor to serve as the Chairman of the JEDCO Board of Commissioners in 2015. JEDCO has served the Jefferson Parish business community since 1987 and each year, the organization sets the bar a little bit higher, achieving new successes and milestones. 2015 was no different; what a year to be a part of this organization! You may notice a common theme within the pages of this Annual Report. In 2015, JEDCO rebranded and developed a new logo to represent the group moving forward. The new look and feel has been widely accepted and celebrated within our community.

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more creative action plan to help Jefferson Parish become the preferred destination for all businesses.

As JEDCO moves into the future, I can assure you that it will remain dedicated to our businesses and the community that supports them. We look forward to continued momentum, prosperity, and success in Jefferson Parish.

The 2015 Annual Report can be found at JEDCO.org. Click [here](#) to read the full PDF version of the report.

Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,



Paul Rivera
2015 JEDCO Chairman

JEDCO | kscram@jedco.org | 504.875.3908 | www.jedco.org

Follow us on social media:





Are You Ready?

Hurricane Season is here — is your business prepared?

By Pamelas Marquis

On June 1, it begins again — the anticipation, the anxiety, the wondering if this year a hurricane will once again at best disrupt, or at worst destroy our lives.

The Atlantic hurricane season runs from June 1 to November 30 and the Tropical Meteorology Project from Colorado State University (CSU) predicts that this season we will have a total of 13 named storms, including five hurricanes, two of which are expected to be major.

When discussing past hurricanes, many Gulf Coast residents look to Betsy, Camille and Katrina as benchmarks. Together, these three storms changed the lives of millions and effected devastating losses. A 2015 Federal Emergency Management Agency mitigation assessment team report places damages for these storms (adjusted to 2015) as follows: 1965's Betsy — \$10 to \$12 billion; 1969's Camille — \$7 billion; and 2005's Katrina — \$125 billion in economic loss.

“Across six states there was \$41 billion in insured losses due to Hurricane Katrina,” says Thomas McMahon Jr., president and CEO of Eustis Insurance & Benefits. “Combined, Hurricanes Katrina and Rita accounted for \$29 billion in insured losses in Louisiana alone, and these figures exclude flood losses.”

A study conducted by James Richardson, an economics professor at Louisiana State University, found that in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, 11 percent of homes in the New Orleans area alone were destroyed or deemed uninhabitable. Throughout Louisiana, nearly 18 percent of businesses were in a similar state.

Businesses large and small felt the economic impact of Katrina's wrath, and with another hurricane season upon us, now is the time to plan for the worst.

Since Katrina, new maps have replaced those from 1995 and now account for improvements and upgrades in drainage canals, pump stations and levees. In new 'X' zones, flood insurance will now be optional instead of required for most mortgages. Property owners can quickly determine if their rates have changed by going to maps.riskmap6.com/LA/Orleans/ for Orleans Parish or maps.riskmap6.com/LA/Jefferson/ for Jefferson Parish.

Business owners should be aware, however, of the limits of their property insurance. “It is always important to keep in mind that property insurance does not cover flood damages,” says McMahon.

Businesses should also have their building(s) inspected by a licensed professional, such as a structural engineer, to find out if their workplace is vulnerable to hurricane-force winds and what may be recommended in retrofits.

Review Insurance Policies

“In springtime, check everything,” says McMahon. “Review all your policies: flood, property and interrupted



business. And make sure you’ve updated all of your equipment. For example, what do you currently have on your yard? Have you covered that new forklift?”

Mark Dufour, a certified insurance counselor with Clockwork Insurance Services, agrees that it is important for businesses to have a complete inventory list and that they need to document and photograph all of their equipment, supplies and even their workplace.

“It’s important to keep accurate inventory records,” he says. “Take into account things such as your business’s furnishings, your stock on the shelves and your computers. Also, have a redundant list that you keep on a jump drive or in a safe deposit box. I always preach that if you have all of this available, it’s much easier and faster for us to pay your claim.”

“At the time of Katrina we only had two businesses,” says Jennifer Weishaupt, owner of Ruby Slipper Café. “We had a real estate rental business, State Street Management Group LLC, and Mid-City Restorations, LLC. We had three properties that sustained wind and flood damage, and all were adequately insured. We learned from that experience the value of adequate insurance coverage and routine reviews of coverage.”

Weishaupt works with Dufour, who recommends businesses at the very least review all of their policies annually.

“Bigger businesses should review quarterly or twice a year,” says Dufour. “You need to sit down with your agent and make sure you have adequate coverage for your exposure. Things change, business owners get caught up in the business of running their businesses. We want to make sure everything is correct and updated and that you are protected.”

Insurance Contact Info

When disaster strikes, it's important to know who to call and what information you'll need to provide.

“Make sure to have your policy number, if not memorized, close at hand,” says McMahon. “And have your insurance agent's number so you can reach him immediately. You want to make sure to be on the top of the claim stack.”

Interruption of business

Business interruption and contingent business interruption are also insurance options to consider. Business interruption insurance covers businesses for losses stemming from unavoidable interruptions in their daily operations as a result of physical damage.

“Business interruption insurance was an ‘overlooked’ coverage prior to Katrina,” says Trey Maddox with Morrison Insurance Agency. “Many business owners could have been paid for the time they were displaced if they had had business interruption included in their property policy.”

McMahon agrees that after property loss, the loss of income is an important factor to consider when reviewing insurance policies.

“You could lose your income stream up to six months,” he says “It is important to be on the lookout and be prepared. Make sure you are fiscally protected and have the proper coverage with a deductible you can afford.”

Rev. Tony Talavera, owner of the French Quarter Wedding Chapel, says his business was hit hard by Katrina.

“We were canceling weddings on the way out the door,” he says. “We usually don't offer refunds, but we returned \$20,000 in deposits alone for Katrina.”

“The other equally important part,” says Doug Mills, with Gillis Ellis & Baker, “is making sure you have coverage for the expenses needed to restart your business. If you're evacuated or closed for a time, you may have to rent temporary office space, relocate employees or advertise to reach clients. The right policy anticipates and covers these costs.”

Protect Business Data

Businesses should protect their data with backup files. It's also important to prioritize servers and mission-

critical apps because not all servers in a computer room are of equal importance to a business.

“We weren’t prepared,” says Talavera. “I loaded up cats, dogs and even my mother-in-law into the car and hit the road. At the time, we had three computer towers and we had to pack them into the car too. Now we back up all of our info and use laptops. It’s so much easier.”

Have Cash On Hand

Another suggestion to prepare for a hurricane is to make sure your business obtains sufficient cash for business operations. Keep in mind that banks and ATMs won’t be in operation without electricity and few stores will be able to accept credit cards or personal checks.

“Our bank was underwater,” says Talavera. “It was very challenging.”

Recovery Plan

It is critical for businesses to have a disaster recovery plan in place and for all departments to be able to communicate and coordinate.

Katrina helped kick-start Mullin Landscape Associates. The company was started in February 2007, during the peak of the rebuilding effort.



“I’d suggest that businesses have a hurricane preparation plan,” says owner Chase Mullin. “Within that, they should have all team members’ contacts, as well as a plan for clients to be able to contact them. Primarily, we encourage all employees to evacuate or seek safe shelter, and we developed a plan to get people back in place post-hurricane.”

Jennifer Weishaupt agrees. “We currently have more than 200 employees, so in the case of a storm, we have a call/text hierarchy so

employees can report their whereabouts and status.”

It is also important for businesses to contact their customers and suppliers and share your communications and recovery plan in advance with them.

“We opened just three months after Katrina hit, but our biggest challenge was to keep serving our clients who were located all over the country,” says Kathleen Turpel, owner of Imaginal Marketing Group.

Be Adaptable

Talavera says the most important thing is to be adaptable. “We couldn’t do weddings for a long time after Katrina and that’s our business, so we moved things out and began renting cots,” he says. “We also added washers and dryers and a vending machine.”

He says he’s learned from the past and is much better prepared for another bad storm. “We now have a motor home, a generator and laptops. We still may not have the best insurance, but it’s what we can afford.”

McMahon cautions that businesses not look to past hurricanes for guidance.

“You know humans tend to look back,” he says. “They prepare for the future based on the past. So before Katrina, people looked at Betsy or Camille and said we didn’t flood then, so we won’t flood this time. But that may not be true because storms are unpredictable. No two storms are the same, so you have to hope for the best and prepare for the worst.”

A Few Helpful Resources

Check out the full **JEDCO Hurricane Preparation for Businesses Checklist** at Jedco.org/2016/06/hurricane-prep-for-businesses/ for more on what to do before, during, and after a storm.

A good resource for personal and business hurricane preparation is “**A Season of Resilience**,” by the **Episcopal Relief and Development** — a new resource designed to encourage developing disaster preparedness in small steps. Each week for five weeks, individuals are asked to take on small tasks or small purchases to build up their emergency kits.

Edola.org/preparing-for-hurricane-season-2016-things-to-do-the-first-week-of-may/

“Living With Hurricanes,” a guide developed by the LSU AgCenter, includes information on planning for wind and water damage, preparing emergency supplies and items needed for evacuation, and developing a family emergency plan. The guide, which is available online in the Publications section of www.lsuagcenter.com or the special hurricane section of that site at www.lsuagcenter.com/hurricanes, provides details on the extent of damage wind and storm surges can inflict on property.

Biz JEDCO, Jefferson NEW ORLEANS Chamber To Host Public Speaking Seminar

By 6-13-16

PROSPER JEFFERSON 2016 Seminar Series



AVONDALE, LA – Public speaking can be daunting, but doing it effectively can have a very positive impact on your reputation and your business. Being a good communicator may help a business owner to better connect with customers, increase sales and open his/ her business to new opportunities. As part of the 2016 Prosper Jefferson seminar series, JEDCO & the Jefferson Chamber are teaming up to help enhance public speaking skills.

Three expert public speakers will share their tips and techniques to ensure presentation success on Wednesday, June 29, 2016, at the JEDCO Conference Center, 701A Churchill Parkway, in Avondale, from 9:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.

Topics will include:

- How to develop a foundation for skillful speaking
- Understanding the basic elements of the communication process to effectively engage one's audience

- Identifying and overcoming fears of public speaking
- Best practices to increase confidence in public speaking abilities
- Effective PowerPoint presentations
- Personalized selling

^a Storytelling to connect with your audience

Event speakers include:

- Chuck Mutz, Sr. Enterprise Relationship Manager at CenturyLink Communications

When it comes to the communications industry, Mutz is a seasoned veteran, boasting nearly 20 years in the business. He began his outside sales career working with digital phone systems before moving to cellular and wireless applications. Finally, he moved into the complex world of fiber optic networks. Mutz has been a nationally recognized sales leader at four different Fortune 1000 companies. On top of his experience in the communications world, Mutz is also a professional auctioneer. He received his Auctioneers License in 1987. At that time, he was the youngest licensed and bonded auctioneer in Louisiana.

Today, Mutz serves on the Board of Directors for the Jefferson Chamber of Commerce, the East Jefferson Business Administration, and several other non-profit and special event committees. In 2015, Mutz was recognized as the Jefferson Chamber Ambassador of the Year.

- Glenn Milliet, Founder of Glenn Michael Salon

As a sought-after industry advisor, communications and sales expert, Milliet has educated thousands. He utilizes his communication, consultation, and conversational skills to provide expert education, motivation and inspiration to business owners regularly. His presentations, programs and seminars are designed to increase sales, raise productivity, and develop clients for life.

Forty years and thousands of consultations later, Milliet is an expert on life-changing powerful communication techniques. He is an international speaker, coaching individuals and groups with time-tested and proven powerful communication strategies that will raise self-esteem, self-image, self-worth and self-confidence. Additionally, as a salon owner and Master Stylist, Milliet's work has appeared in numerous consumer and trade publications, television and print nationally and internationally. Milliet is also an active member (and frequent presenter/consultant) of the National Speaker Association. He is also a member of the prestigious Intercoiffure organization, representing the top 1% of salons worldwide.

- Ronnie Slone, President of The Slone Group

Slone is the founder and president of The Slone Group, a consulting firm that specializes in organizational development and training for growing companies and organizations. He has over 30 years of experience in operations management, human resources, training, and professional staffing. In addition to leading his growing consulting firm, Slone is a faculty member of the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses Program at Delgado Community College and the national cohorts at Babson College. He is also the facilitator of Leadership Jefferson, a program of the Jefferson Chamber Foundation that puts business leaders through nine monthly sessions exploring topics such as quality of life, healthcare, economic development, education, diversity, law enforcement /governance, and community. Slone also served as the Interim Director of the Jefferson Chamber of Commerce.

Slone's commitment to the community can be seen and felt through his work on several boards, including: Greater New Orleans, Inc. (GNO, Inc.), City Park New Orleans, the Good Shepherd School, The Jefferson Chamber Foundation, Jefferson Dollars for Scholars, and the Jefferson Community School. Slone served as the Chairman of the Jefferson Chamber of Commerce in 2010 and he currently serves as Chairman of Court Appointed Special Advocates for Children (CASA) Jefferson Parish. Slone was awarded the Jefferson Chamber of Commerce's Member of the Year in 2012, selected as a Young Leadership Council Role Model in 2012, and he was awarded the New Orleans Regional Leadership Institute's (NORLI) Diversity Award in 2015.

This event is free and open to the public.

[Register here](#)

JEDCO is the economic development organization for Jefferson parish with the main objective of attracting, growing and creating new business in the area. JEDCO's mission is to proactively influence the economy through the retention and creation of quality jobs, entrepreneurship and investment in Jefferson Parish. Located in the growing Churchill Technology & Business Park, JEDCO is home to a business incubator for early-stage ventures and it also operates a state-of-the-art Conference Center.

[For more information](#)

The Jefferson Chamber is the leading voice for Jefferson Parish's business community. As a non-profit, membership-driven organization, the Chamber is an effective advocate for small and large businesses at the local, state, and federal levels. The Chamber's mission is to work for the advancement of the business community; to enhance the economic, civic and cultural environment; and to improve the quality of life in Jefferson Parish. The Jefferson Chamber is Four-Star Accredited by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and was awarded the 2013 Chamber of the Year Award by the Louisiana Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives in the Large Chamber Category.

[For more information](#)

Learn tips and tricks to improve public speaking skills, increase sales, and connect with consumers.



PRESS RELEASE
June 10, 2016

JEDCO, Jefferson Chamber to host public speaking seminar

(AVONDALE, La) -Public speaking can be daunting, but doing it effectively can have a very positive impact on your reputation and your business. Being a good communicator may help a business owner to better connect with customers, increase sales, and open his/her business to new opportunities. As part of the 2016 Prosper Jefferson seminar series, [JEDCO](#) & the [Jefferson Chamber](#) are teaming up to help enhance your public speaking skills.

We invited three expert public speakers to share their tips and techniques to ensure your presentation success. Topics include:

- How to develop a foundation for skillful speaking
- Understanding the basic elements of the communication process to effectively engage one's audience
- Identifying and overcoming fears of public speaking
- Best practices to increase confidence in public speaking abilities
- Effective PowerPoint presentations
- Personalized selling
- Storytelling to connect with your audience

Join us **Wednesday, June 29, 2016, at the JEDCO Conference Center (701A Churchill Parkway, Avondale, LA 70094) from 9:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.** for our upcoming Prosper Jefferson seminar. This event is free and open to the public. Please register at www.jedco.org/events

Meet our Speakers

Chuck Mutz, Sr. Enterprise Relationship Manager at CenturyLink Communications

When it comes to the communications industry, Chuck Mutz is a seasoned veteran, boasting nearly 20 years in the business. He began his outside sales career working with digital phone systems before moving to cellular and wireless applications. Finally, he moved into the complex world of fiber optic networks. Chuck has been a nationally recognized sales leader at four different Fortune 1000 companies. On top of his experience in the communications world, Chuck is also a professional auctioneer. He received his Auctioneers License in 1987. At that time, he was the youngest licensed and bonded auctioneer in Louisiana.

Today, Chuck serves on the Board of Directors for the Jefferson Chamber of Commerce, the East Jefferson Business Administration, and several other non-profit and special event committees. In 2015, Chuck was recognized as the Jefferson Chamber Ambassador of the Year.

Glenn Milliet, Founder of Glenn Michael Salon

As a sought-after industry advisor, communications and sales expert, Glenn Michael Milliet has educated thousands. He utilizes his communication, consultation, and conversational skills to provide expert education, motivation, and inspiration to business owners regularly. His presentations, programs and seminars are designed to increase sales, raise productivity, and develop clients for life.

Forty years and thousands of consultations later, Glenn is an expert on life-changing powerful communication techniques. He is an international speaker, coaching individuals and groups with time-tested and proven powerful communication strategies that will raise self-esteem, self-image, self-worth and self-confidence. Additionally, as a salon owner and Master Stylist, Glenn's work has appeared in numerous consumer and trade publications, television and print nationally and internationally. Glenn is also an active member (and frequent presenter/consultant) of the National Speaker Association. He is also a member of the prestigious Intercoiffure organization, representing the top 1% of salons worldwide.

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About JEDCO: The [Jefferson Parish Economic Development Commission](#) (JEDCO) is the economic development organization for the parish with the main objective of attracting, growing, and creating new business in the area. JEDCO's mission is to proactively influence the economy through the retention and creation of quality jobs, entrepreneurship, and investment in Jefferson Parish. Located in the growing [Churchill Technology & Business Park](#), JEDCO is home to a [business incubator](#) for early-stage ventures and it also operates a state-of-the-art [Conference Center](#). For more information, visit www.jedco.org and follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Vimeo](#), and [LinkedIn](#).

About the Jefferson Chamber: The [Jefferson Chamber](#) is the leading voice for Jefferson Parish's business community. As a non-profit, membership-driven organization, the Chamber is an effective advocate for small and large businesses at the local, state, and federal levels. The Chamber's mission is to work for the advancement of the business community; to enhance the economic, civic and cultural environment; and to improve the quality of life in Jefferson Parish. The Jefferson Chamber is Four-Star Accredited by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and was awarded the 2013 Chamber of the Year Award by the Louisiana Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives in the Large Chamber Category.

For more information about the Jefferson Chamber, visit www.jeffersonchamber.org, and follow on [Facebook](#), Twitter [@jeffersoncoc](#), and [YouTube](#).

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