

PRESS RELEASE

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Experience Atchafalaya Days runs throughout October

Over 40 nature, culture and history activities slated in America's largest swamp basin.

BUTTE LaROSE, La. - The unique nature, culture, and history of the Atchafalaya Heritage Area will be celebrated through special events throughout the month of October.

"Experience Atchafalaya Days," sponsored by the Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism, runs October 1-31, 2004, and offers over 40 events typically not available to the public. The event kicks off Friday (October 1) with an opening ceremony at the Interstate 10 Atchafalaya Welcome Center in Butte LaRose between Lafayette and Baton Rouge.

Now in its third year, Experience Atchafalaya Days is the result of strong partnerships between state, federal, and local governmental agencies, non-profit organizations, and individual volunteers. The event sponsors include the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism's Atchafalaya Heritage Area, Division of Archaeology, Office of State Parks and the Louisiana Main Street Program, along with the Department of Natural Resources' Atchafalaya Basin Program and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. "Experience Atchafalaya Days brings together Louisiana's nature, culture and history in a unique and exciting way," stated Angele Davis, Secretary of the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism. "Guided by strategic partnerships, this celebration shows that working together provides excellent opportunities for education, conservation, interpretation and recreation."

The Atchafalaya Heritage Area includes 13 parishes in south central Louisiana and contains one of America's most dynamic landscapes. With over 838,000 acres and roughly 25% of Louisiana's human population, this vast habitat is home to hundreds of species of fish, birds, mammals and reptiles, and the financial impact of its fisheries, wildlife and recreational resources are estimated at about \$97 million annually.

"The Atchafalaya Heritage Area is one of the most culturally rich and diverse regions of our state," said Louisiana Lt. Governor Mitch Landrieu, who oversees the Department of

Culture, Recreation and Tourism. "Experience Atchafalaya Days is a unique opportunity for the state of Louisiana to shine the light on one of the world's pre-eminent cultural- and eco-tourism gems."

Landrieu will join other state, federal and regional officials at the kickoff celebration, which will include event leaders demonstrating a sampling of Experience Atchafalaya Days events.

For up-to-the-minute Experience Atchafalaya Days event information, visit www.eadays.com.

Experience Atchafalaya Days events slated, by heritage area sub-region include:

- Upper Atchafalaya region (Avoyelles, Concordia and Pointe Coupee parishes)
 - "New Deal Archaeology" at Marksville State Historical Site in Marksville Oct. 1-10 will display archaeological tools of the 1930s and offer guided tours of the Ancient Mounds Trail site. 318-253-8954.
 - A Bayou Grosse Tete Mounds Tour Oct. 2 will offer visitors the chance to view several Native-American mound sites via maps that will be available at the Livonia mound site in Livonia. 225-342-8170.
 - A basic Hunter's Safety Course will be presented Oct. 15 and 16 by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries at their Sherburne headquarters office near Livonia. 337-948-0255.
 - "White Bread and Fixins" will showcase Concordia Parish musicians and artists at the Vidalia Riverfront Amphitheater Oct. 16. The event is held in conjunction with the Natchez, Miss., Balloon Festival. 601-431-9080.
 - The Main Street Harvest Fest in downtown New Roads Oct. 23 includes a farmers market and crafts show. 225-638-9350.
 - "Myths and Monsters" offers Native-American children's stories at Marksville State Historic Site Oct. 27-29, with tours of the museum and mounds at the site following. 318-253-8954.
- Bayou Teche Corridor region (Iberia, Lafayette, St. Landry and St. Martin parishes)
 - "Archaeology of Acadiana" at the Acadian Memorial in St. Martinville Oct. 1 explores Cajun, African, Attakapas, Chitimacha, Creole and German history and culture in Acadiana. 337-394-2258.

- "Settlement On The Bayou" at Longfellow-Evangeline State Historic Site in St. Martinville Oct. 1 discusses the importance of Bayou Teche and other inland waterways to Louisiana and how they shaped settlement patterns. 337-394-3754.

- "Profiles in Archaeology: William G. Haag" at the Opelousas Museum and Interpretive Center Oct. 1 tracks the noted archaeologist's career in Louisiana, including his work at Poverty Point, a prehistoric Native-American site and a state historic site. 337-948-2589.

- New Iberia's "Downtown Farmer's Market" offers homemade and homegrown produce, fruit, jellies and jams, bread, pies, candies, peppers and arts and crafts every Tuesday afternoon and Saturday morning in October. 337-369-2330.

- The Rendez-Vous des Cajuns Live Radio Show at Eunice's Liberty Theater offers live Cajun music and entertainment every Saturday night in October. 337-457-7389.

- New Iberia's "Live In the Park" at City Park features live music, poetry reading and other performances Oct. 3, 17 and 24. 337-369-2337.

- A "Ghost Dinner Tour" at Chretien Point Plantation in Sunset Oct. 3 will include costumed docents recounting tales about the home's owners, pirate Jean Lafitte and the spirits that supposedly haunt the antebellum mansion. 800-880-7050.

- Over 100 merchants and antique dealers at the Old Schoolhouse Mall in Washington will hold their annual Outdoor Market Oct.8-10. 337-826-3580.

- Chretien Point plantation in Sunset will host a re-enactment of the Civil War Battle of Carrion Crow Oct. 8-10, plus a living history museum and mock period camps. 337-662-7050.

- "Sugar - From The Soil To The Table" at Longfellow-Evangeline State Historic Site in St. Martinville Oct. 8, 11, 20 and 30, explores the past and present of the crop and its significance to Acadiana culture. 337-394-3754.

- "Canoe De Swamp" at Lake Fausse Pointe State Park near St. Martinville Oct. 9 offers canoeing with a naturalist and lunch at a campsite along the park's canoe trail. 337-229-6173.

- "Canoe The Bayou" on bayous Courtableau and Fordoche and Lake Henderson Oct. 9-10 includes canoeing and overnight camping on an island in the middle of the swamp. 337-739-2410.

- "Voices From Our Past," a cemetery tour at St. Landry Catholic Church in Opelousas Oct. 9-10 and 16-17, revisits area families, their daily lives and significant events as far back as the early 1800s. 337-948-2589.

- "Basic Basin Birding" offers an introduction to birdwatching in the Atchafalaya Basin Oct. 9 with naturalists Jim and Carolyn Delahoussaye. 225-219-3002.
- "Artwalk" in the Sans Souci Fine Crafts Gallery in downtown Lafayette Oct. 9 features traditional and contemporary works by members of the Louisiana Crafts Guild. 337-266-7999.
- Tours of Bayou Grosse Tete Oct. 11 will originate near Interstate 10 in Grosse Tete and explore the waterway via boat before a catered lunch. 225-342-6437.
- Attakapas Trade Days at Longfellow-Evangeline State Historic Site in St. Martinville Oct. 14-16 includes living history demonstrations of trappers, traders and hunters' daily lives in the early 1800s, blacksmith and leather work, outdoor cooking and black powder weapons. 337-394-3754.
- The "Fall Ramble" Oct. 16 is a day-long historic tour of the Opelousas area, including sites that are normally not open to the public. 225-344-6001.
- A Prehistoric Louisiana Indian Technology Demonstration will run in conjunction with a Hunter's Safety Course at the Sherburne Wildlife Management Area headquarters Oct. 16. Demonstrations include atlatl (type of spear) throwing, flintknapping and hunting and fishing techniques. 225-342-8170.
- The "Atchafalaya Adventure Race-Sprint" at Lake Fausse Pointe State Park Oct. 16-17 will combine 10 miles of canoeing, 20 miles of off-road mountain biking, six miles of hiking and running and mystery events. 225-342-6437.
- The Fall Fest and Trade Days Oct 23 in downtown Eunice features live entertainment, Cajun food and arts and crafts booths. 337-948-8004.
- The Opelousas Yambilee Festival's "Soiree Royale" Oct. 21 offers dishes of 40 of Acadiana's finest chefs and a live sweet potato auction. 337-942-2683.
- "Terror On The Teche" Oct. 23 mixes Halloween storytelling for families and tours of Shadows-On-The-Teche Plantation in New Iberia. 337-369-6446.
- The Louisiana Yambilee Festival Oct. 27-31 in Opelousas features live music, regional cuisine, tours of local sweet potato farms, carnival rides, a beauty pageant and a town parade. 337-948-8848.
- The Indian Bayou Trail Ride is a guided horseback tour of the bayou, through adjacent woods, lowlands and prairies designed specifically for families. Horses will not be provided. 337-942-6281.
- Between Two Rivers region (East Baton Rouge, Iberville and West Baton Rouge parishes)

- "Explore Atchafalaya's Swamps" is a two-hour boat tour of the Bayou Sorrel area of the basin for up to six people at a time. It runs throughout October. 225-659-2499.
- "Dead Clothes: Fashions From the Grave" displays cast iron coffins from a Catholic cemetery Oct. 2 in Thibodaux. 225-765-2437.
- "The Bayou Jasmine Archaeological Site" is an exhibit of artifacts recovered in St. John the Baptist Parish at the Rural Life Museum in Baton Rouge Oct. 2. 225-342-8170.
- Oct. 13's "Pipeline Seminar" explains the network of pipelines in the Atchafalaya Basin, their uses and the process taken to obtain permits. 225-342-6437.
- "Historic Boats of the Bayou," at Plaquemine Locks State Historic Site Oct. 16, will discuss the boats used and the provisions needed on them in the basin network through history. 225-687-7158.
- "Firepower!" at Port Hudson State Historic Site Oct. 16 demonstrates weapons used during the site's Civil War battle, including field cannons. 888-677-3400.
- Tours of the future Children's Fishing Pier site at the Interstate 10 Atchafalaya Welcome Center are set for Oct. 25. 225-342-6437.
- Coastal Zone region (Assumption, St. Mary and Terrebonne parishes)
- "Yesterday's Tomorrows," a traveling Smithsonian exhibit focusing on the futuristic views of people of the late 19th and 20th centuries, runs Oct. 2, 5-9, 12-16, 19-23 and 27-30 at the Jeanerette Bicentennial Park and Museum in Jeanerette. The museum's exhibits include extensive information on Louisiana's past and present sugar industry. 337-276-4408.
- The city of Houma's "Downtown On The Bayou" festival, set Oct. 9-10, includes Cajun and Native-American crafts and food exhibitors and a mock Cajun wedding. 985-873-6308.
- "People Of The Bayou" focuses on the history of Native-American tribes in the lower Atchafalaya Basin. It runs Oct. 18 at the Immaculate Conception Church in Charenton. 337-923-4281.
- The Atchafalaya Powerboat Race and Exhibition runs Oct. 23-24 at Lake End Park near Morgan City. Over 40 limited class, modified and leader boats will race and vintage powerboats will be on display. 985-395-4905.

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