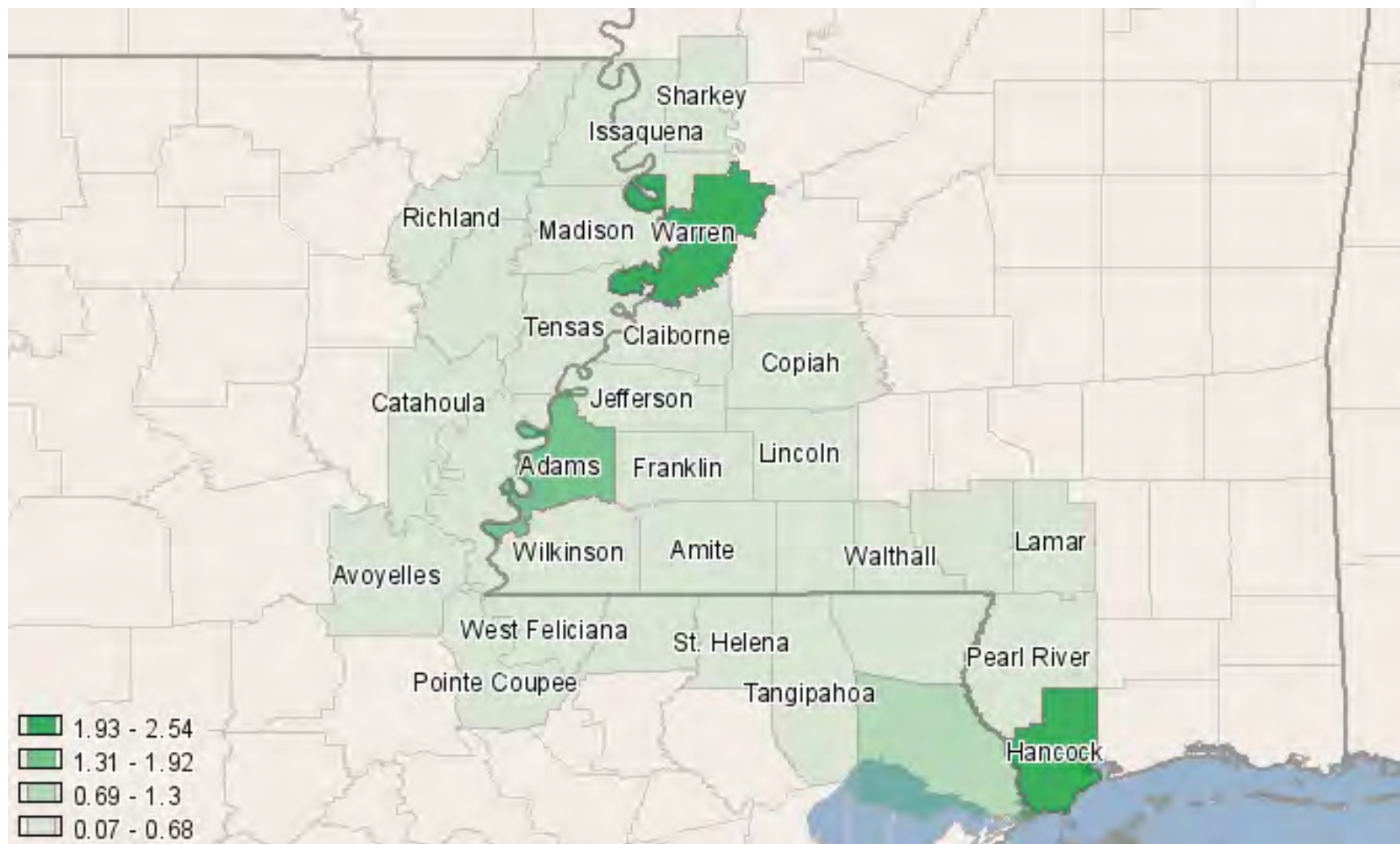


*Enhancing Rural Tourism  
In the  
Miss-Lou through Collaboration and Regional Planning*

Rachael Carter  
Chance McDavid



# Ten Years Looking Back

- History - The Miss-Lou Rural Tourism Association began in 2005 as a desire to enhance opportunity in the Mississippi and Louisiana Deltas by creating a partnership between the two states to host an educational program on rural tourism

# What We Do

- Bring Rural Tourism Stakeholders Together
- Educate
- Create a Product that Celebrates the Host Community
- Showcase Rural Tourism
- Hit Hot Topics and Address Current Challenges
- Local Community Embraces Resources

# Tourism and Economic Returns

- Public budgeting is difficult.
- Tourism is sometimes misunderstood.
- Community development is vital.
- Small towns have limited resources.
- Take advantage of what you have.

**ECONOMIC  
GROWTH**



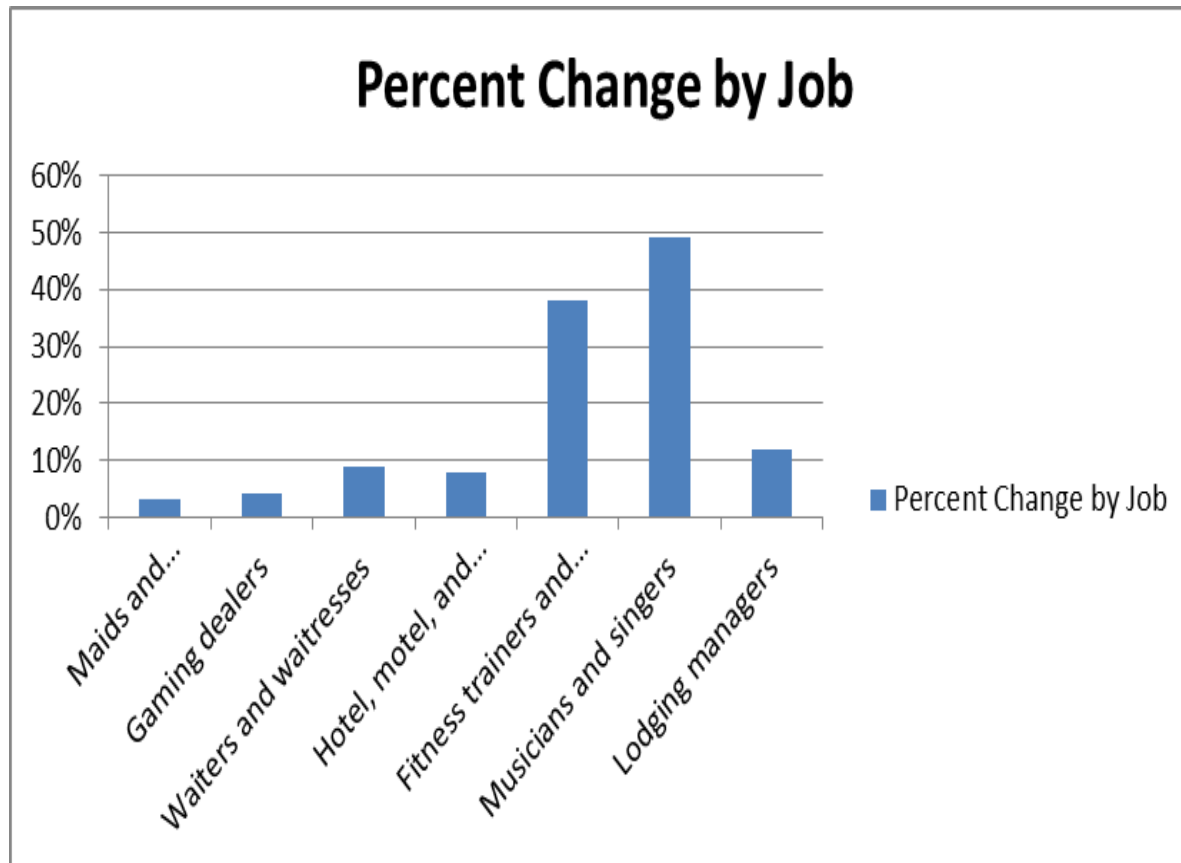
# Types of Rural Tourism

- 
- Agritourism
    - Farm Tours
    - Petting Zoos
    - Tractor Shows
    - Rodeos
    - Trail Rides
  - Historical Tourism
    - Museums
    - Story Telling
    - Indian Mounds
    - Battlefields
  - Ecotourism
    - Canoeing
    - Bird Watching
    - Butterfly Watching
  - Sports Tourism
    - Large Sporting Events
    - Travel Tournaments
    - Professional Matches and Tournaments
    - Runs or benefits
  - Music Tourism
    - Large Music Events
    - Small Venues
    - Music Festivals
    - Music Museums
  - Festival and Special Events
    - Arts Festivals
    - Street Fairs
    - Community Events
    - Music Festivals
    - Auctions, Yard Sale, Flea Market
    - Wildlife Festival
  - Culinary Tourism
    - Restaurants
    - Local Foods
    - Festivals the promote foods (Sweet Potato)

- Held yearly and bi-yearly workshops since 2006.
- Trained over 1600 participants.
- Consistent group of 300 participants.

- Benefits expressed by participants
  - Problem solving for rural tourism and rural issues.
  - Focus on education not strictly motivation.
  - Resource based.
  - Interactive experience.
  - Gives the communities something to grow.





# Mission of the Mississippi Louisiana Rural Tourism Initiative

To educate the elected officials, the public, and the hospitality industry about how to sell the experience of the region



## **Things to Preserve**

- Mississippi River – river view and experience
- Shift from competition to collaboration among attractions- keep visitors overnight\
- Jazz Music
- Riverboats
- Natchez Trace
- Festivals especially in small communities
- Hunters
- Heritage and culture (film programs)- especially in the younger generation(example- French Creole vs. Cajun)
- Arts Councils
- Publicly accessible natural areas

# Things to Improve

- Local hospitality training for citizens and retail staff( be ambassadors)
- Tell the whole story- but be careful
- Sell experience not just passive museum “looking”
- Better listing of unique products in the region
- Not open for change

# Strategies

- Targeting the younger generation
- Public service announcements
- DVDs and publications - make information more accessible
- Using YouTube and other social media to go viral
- Train the Trainer

# Our Clientele and What they Create

CVB's

Main Street Managers

Artists

Musicians and Industry  
Members

Writers

Entrepreneurs

Movie Producers

Haunted Cemetery Tours

Crop Dusters

Indian Mound Tours

Movie Producers

Coon Dog Cemetery

Movie Site Tour

Culinary Tourism

Music - Zydeco, Johnny  
Cash Flower Pickin, Rock  
Bands, Jazz Bands

**MISSISSIPPI STATE  
UNIVERSITY™  
EXTENSION SERVICE**



MISS-LOU RURAL TOURISM ASSOCIATION PRESENTS

# GEOCACHING WORKSHOP

APRIL 30 9 AM - 4 PM

**NATCHEZ GRAND HOTEL,  
NATCHEZ, MISSISSIPPI**

COME JOIN THE MLRTA AS THEY DESIGN A  
GEOCACHING EXPERIENCE IN THE MISS-LOU

To register contact Rachael Carter, Stennis Institute of Government and Community  
Development, Mississippi State University  
662-325-1619 or email [carter@sig.msstate.edu](mailto:carter@sig.msstate.edu)

**COST - FREE TO  
CURRENT  
MLRTA  
MEMBERS.**

**\$35 TO  
NON-MEMBERS.  
(FEE INCLUDES  
MEMBERSHIP  
DUES TO MLRTA)**



## Global Tourism Workshop

Come Join the Miss-Lou Rural Tourism Association and Beacon Consultants  
August 13 from 10 am—2pm. Cost \$25 includes lunch. Location, Lower MS River  
Museum, Vicksburg, MS Call 662-325-1619 to register.



Welcome to the world of global tourism. Explore ways to take  
your community's customer relations skills to a higher level  
by learning to attract and entertain international visitors.  
Southern hospitality with just the right twist can make guests  
from far and near feel comfortable. Whether your customers  
are tour groups, families on holiday, retirees, or business  
persons considering relocation, the time is right to be ready  
for global tourism.



Partners: MSU-Stennis Institute, LSU AgCenter, MSU-ES, Vicksburg Main  
Street, Mississippi Development Authority Division of Tourism







# Miss-Lou Tourism Summit 2014

## Miss-Lou Tourism Summit

### Hotel Information

Paragon Casino Resort  
711 Paragon Place  
Marksville, LA 71351  
1-800-946-1046  
Reservation ID: MLRT243

### Conference Rates

Sunday through Thursday  
Standard guest room • \$82  
Deluxe atrium guest room • \$119

### Registration Fee

\$105 entire conference  
\$75 one-day only



Discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or marital status is a violation of federal and state law and MSU policy and will not be tolerated. Discrimination based on sexual orientation or group affiliation is a violation of MSU policy and will not be tolerated.  
Extension Service of Mississippi State University, cooperating with U.S. Department of Agriculture. Published in furtherance of Act of Congress, May 8 and June 30, 1914. GARY B. JACKSON, Director  
M1971 (10-01-14)



# Where Are They Now?

- Woodville, Miss.
- Natchez, Miss.
- Ferriday, La.
- Rolling Fork, Miss.
- Marksville, La.
- Vicksburg, Miss.
- Bay St. Louis, Miss.

# Next Steps

- Connect Mississippi
- Virtual Tourism
- Advertising Dollars
- Taking Advantage of Trends
- Identifying Opportunities
- Weekend Experience Outreach Project
- Leesville, LA
- Agritourism and Local Foods
- New Partner Louisiana Lafayette

- Resource Links
- Mississippi Louisiana Rural Tourism on Facebook
- Mississippi State University Center for Government and Community Development
  - <http://gcd.msucares.com/rural-tourism-toolbox>
- Southern Rural Development Center - Stronger Economies Together Project

Questions?