

CULTURE
AND
RECREATION

A black and white photograph of a young child swinging happily on a swing set. The child is wearing a light-colored patterned shirt and dark pants. The background is slightly blurred, emphasizing the child's motion.

RECREATION LIBRARIES STATE PARKS FILMING TOURISM CULTURE MUSEUMS AND TOURISM

“Libraries are an American value. In communities across America, they provide a free people with the resources they need to read, learn and connect to the full spectrum of ideas and information that is essential to our democracy. The greatness of our libraries and our profession is our commitment to intellectual freedom — the right of every individual to seek and receive information without restriction.”

– Symons, 1999

Contributors to this chapter include:

Louisiana State Library
225-342-4931

Louisiana Department
of Recreation, Culture
and Tourism
225-342-8115


**CULTURE
AND
RECREATION**
**How is this parish
doing?**

Library	N/A
Museum	N/A
Parks	N/A
Cultural development	N/A
Film and video	N/A
Tourism	N/A

**ORLEANS PARISH
LIBRARIES**

219 Loyola Ave.
New Orleans, LA 70112
504-596-2602 or
504-596-7323
504-596-2606 fax
Ms. Gertiana Williams,
Acting Director

**ALGIERS POINT
BRANCH**

725 Pelican Ave.
New Orleans, LA 70114
504-596-2640
Jane Palmer, Branch
Manager

**ALGIERS REGIONAL
LIBRARY**

3014 Holiday Dr.
New Orleans, LA 70014
504-596-2642
Jackie Sherman,
Branch Manager

ALVAR BRANCH

913 Alvar St.
New Orleans, LA 70117
504-596-2624
Ed Real, Branch
Manager

CULTURE, RECREATION AND TOURISM

Throughout this book, health risks and outcomes as well as economy, education, issues of access-to-care and crime and safety have been discussed as aspects of quality of life. These topic areas are strongly related to the health of communities and individuals. Quality of life also includes the opportunities that exist for community residents to seek recreation, go to parks, participate in culture, celebrate history and discover arts. Often there is a relationship between these activities and improved physical and mental health, in addition to stronger community ties. These factors also attract and maintain business and tourism, bringing in money that can lead to overall civic improvements.

For example, in 1997, small businesses nationally ranked the presence of open spaces, parks and opportunities for recreation first in the factors that influenced their decisions about choosing new locations. Other surveys about quality of life by companies such as Arthur Andersen

Consulting found that people and businesses are attracted to communities that have cultural institutions, recreation and open spaces (Trust for Public Land, 1999).

This chapter will briefly look at the ways in which libraries, museums, parks and other aspects of cultural life relate to the health and quality of life of a community. In Louisiana, the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism is the state agency charged with maintaining and improving these institutions. The department has a three-fold mission. The

first part is to preserve and enhance Louisiana's unique heritage and natural landscape. The second is to provide cultural, informational and recreational resources. The third part is to promote the use of these resources by diverse citizens and visitors.

The Department is made up of six agencies. They include Tourism, State Parks, Cultural Development, State Museums, Film and Video and the State Library. The agencies work together to make educational resources available. They also conserve and interpret Louisiana history, work to support the arts, and develop recreational opportunities. In addition, the agencies fuel economic growth through tourism, and operate programs that generate state and local tax revenues and provide a stable source of income for the state. **These agencies were responsible for more than \$7.4 billion worth of business in 1997 ([1] Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism, 1999).**

Knowing how many visitors use these facilities and how much money is generated by that use helps communities and agencies plan for future growth. Such knowledge can

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also highlight areas that need improvement, repair or more promotion. It is difficult to get information at the parish level to describe how or why a park or library is used other than in terms of visitors and money. Community members may want to find out more information themselves, such as miles of trails in parks, health education programs or children's story-times in local libraries. Improvement in these areas may require communities to raise money, make donations of goods or engage in physical labor. In 1998, voters nationwide recognized the importance of public land by voting for more than \$7.5 billion towards both the improvement and purchase of land and historic resources (Trust for Public Land, 1999).

PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Libraries are public sources of in-depth information on all aspects of living, including information about health conditions and positive health behaviors. Also, in Louisiana, local public libraries have programs that address literacy, personal health, adolescent health, hygiene, parenting and other health-related topics. This information is available free or for very little cost to the public (State Library of Louisiana, 2000).

Louisiana citizens receive library service through the state's public libraries, which include 65 headquarter libraries, 259 branches and 36 bookmobiles. Through grants and aid from the State Library, there are now over 2,000 computers in Louisiana's public libraries with which Louisiana citizens can freely access the Internet and the resources available. The State Library provides materials from its collection and reference service directly to those in state government. The library has an extensive collection of materials, including information about Louisiana's political, social and past, present and future economic status. In addition, the State Library directly serves the state's visually impaired and physically handicapped citizens with Braille and recorded books. It also assists state correctional and mental institutions in establishing libraries for staff and residents. The Louisiana Center for the Book, a program of the State Library, encourages reading by providing a cultural focus on Louisiana's literary heritage. The Library's Youth Services Section provides programs that promote reading for children and young adults and encourage use of the libraries by children and their families. Youth Services programs reach over 700,000 children annually ([3] State Library of Louisiana, 1999).

MUSEUMS

The reservation and shared understanding of local history are strongly linked to a community's capacity to work on quality of life improvements (Goodman et al, 1998). This is accomplished by establishing and maintaining local public lands and cultural institutions.

The Office of the State Museum is responsible for preserving Louisiana's past through its historic landmarks, artifacts, documents and works of art.

DID YOU KNOW?

In Louisiana there are 324 public library buildings and 36 bookmobiles in operation, providing residents with free access to a total of nearly 11 million books, magazines, video and audio cassettes, CDs, encyclopedias and other reference and research materials.

- (1) State Library of Louisiana, 1998.

All of the state's 65 public library systems—including 324 library buildings and many of the 36 bookmobiles—are connected to the Internet.

- (1) State Library of Louisiana, 1998.

Orleans Parish Library, 1997

Collection size	738,418
Circulation	969,319
Library visits	1,399,515
Service hours	22,777
Source: (2) State Library of Louisiana, 1999.	


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DID YOU KNOW?

The National Park System covers 80.7 million acres of land across the United States and includes 18 recreational areas, such as coastal areas.

— (1) National Park System, 1998.

In 1993, 656 park concessionaires (companies that sell refreshments) grossed \$657 million and employed over 20,000 people.

— (2) National Park System, 1998.

The Museum is comprised of eight buildings in New Orleans' French Quarter and the Wedell Williams Memorial Aviation Museum in Patterson. Five of the institution's New Orleans sites are open to the public. These sites include the Cabildo, the Presbytere, the 1850 House, the Old U.S. Mint and the Arsenal. They feature exhibits that explore the state's history. They also show aspects of its diverse and fascinating cultural legacy. The Wedell-Williams Museum traces Louisiana's aviation history through the display of planes, photographs and artifacts. A number of travelling exhibits are in circulation at venues throughout the state. The Museum is among the state's most prominent heritage attractions. Every year it draws hundreds of thousands of citizens and tourists (Louisiana State Museum, 1998).

PARKS

Many parks have walking trails, sports fields, bodies of water and strengthening equipment people can use freely for recreation and exercise.

According to a study in 1999, there is a positive relationship between leisure time and positive health outcomes. Particularly, park use resulted in better perceived physical and mental health. Spending time with friends and family also provides positive health benefits (Payne, 1999).

The Office of State Parks is responsible for planning, designing, constructing, operating and maintaining a system of 16 parks, 14 commemorative areas and one preservation area. Each of the state parks was chosen for its scenery and recreation potential. Visitors can fish, hike, bike and bird watch. All of the state parks have a waterfront location, campsites and picnic areas. Some even have cabins or group camps ([1] Louisiana Office of State Parks, 1999).

The Office also provides technical assistance to local governments in the development of outdoor recreation places. In addition, it assists with grant applications for acquiring and developing state parks. **Louisiana parks have 1.4 million visitors a year. In**

**More
Than
Just
Scenery:**
Louisiana State Parks

taking control

State parks have much more to offer than you might think. Beyond beautiful scenery, state parks host many programs throughout the year in which children and adults alike can participate. At Mansfield State Commemorative Area, teachers and students can tour the site museum and walk the trails. Here a costumed guide will demonstrate civil war weapons, food preparation and period games played by soldiers. At Lake Bistineau State Park, visitors can learn to identify birds by size, shape, color, location behavior and song. A guided bird-watching hike then allows participants to test the skills they learn. Lake Fausse Ponte State Park invites children to learn about Mardi Gras in south Louisiana. Participants construct simple masks. Later that day they wear their

masks during a small parade throughout the campground.

These are just a few of the many events scheduled on certain days throughout the year. Even when there isn't a special event, there is plenty to see and do. Every day of the year you can find rangers at each park who make an effort to teach children and adults. They will point out interesting plants, birds and animals that you might or might not see. The Office of State Parks is trying to get children and teachers to become aware of these parks and activities. This past year, they created book covers that displayed a state map highlighting each state park. These book covers were distributed to all eighth graders.

— For further information or to obtain a calendar of yearly events by call 888-677-1400. Or you can find it using keywords: park and calendar of events. <http://www.crt.state.la.us>

Taking Care, Taking Control: State Parks, More Than Just Scenery



1994, this provided over \$63 million in economic impact to the state ([2] Louisiana Office of State Parks, 1999).

State Commemorative Areas were selected for their cultural, historical or archaeological importance. These areas tell their story through museums, artifacts, outdoor displays and interpretive programs (Louisiana Office of State Parks, 1999).

CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Cultural development includes exposure to visual arts, theatre, music, folk art and all media of expression available to a people. It also includes the preservation and maintenance of these crafts, through public and private funding and education.

In 1997, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) engaged communities across the United States in a conversation about the role of arts and culture in community. Responses indicated a strong belief that the arts can serve many community purposes, including creating a link to heritage, stimulating economy, bringing families together, reducing crime and youth risk behaviors, increasing school achievement and improving quality of life (Larson, 1997).

The importance of art and culture has been dramatically illustrated with youth and child development. Consistent exposure to the arts is correlated with better test scores in school, a reduced likelihood of dropping out and reduced risk behaviors in youth (Louv R, 1999)

The Office of Cultural Development is responsible for promoting an appreciation for the preservation of Louisiana's rich heritage. Within the office, there are three divisions. They identify, protect and make accessible the state's cultural resources and traditions ([1] Louisiana Office of Cultural Development, 1999).

The Division of the Arts develops and promotes the arts through several grant programs that award funds to Louisiana artists and arts organizations. The Division awards more than \$4 million in grants per year. The organizations are within the areas of crafts, dance, design arts, folklife, literature, media, theatre and visual arts ([2] Louisiana Office of Cultural Development, 1999).

The Division of Historic Preservation encourages the preservation of significant historic Louisiana sites. It assists owners who wish to have their properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It also governs the Louisiana Main Street Program and a federal tax credit. This program helps to encourage restoration of historic properties ([3] Louisiana Office of Cultural Development, 1999).

The Division of Archeology identifies and encourages preservation of archaeological sites important to understanding Louisiana's past. It also increases public awareness of the state's rich archaeological heritage ([4] Louisiana Office of Cultural Development, 1999).

ATTRACTING BUSINESS

One way cultural institutions function in communities is to attract business. Louisiana has much to offer virtual and actual visitors, whether they travel through movies and

ORLEANS PARISH LIBRARIES CONTINUED:

**BROAD STREET
BRANCH**
4300 S. Broad St.
New Orleans, LA 70125
504-596-2675
Katie Rubin Evans,
Branch Manager

**CHILDREN'S
RESOURCE CENTER
(NAPOLEON BRANCH)**
913 Jackson Ave.
New Orleans, LA 70115
504-596-2628
David Schmidt, Branch
Manager

**EAST NEW ORLEANS
REGIONAL BRANCH**
5641 Read Blvd.
New Orleans, LA 70127
504-596-2646
Joe Clark, Branch
Manager

**MARTIN LUTHER
KING, JR. BRANCH**
1617 Caffin Ave.
New Orleans, LA 70117
504-596-2695
Henrietta Kinney,
Branch Manager


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Healthy People 2000 set the following goals for community fitness facilities:

- One mile of hiking, biking and fitness trails for every 10,000 people; and
- Four acres of park and recreation open space for every 1,000 people.

- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1997.

commercials or plan a visit. The Office of Film and Video and the Office of Tourism both work to attract money, provide jobs and publicize Louisiana.

The Office of Film and Video is responsible for promoting Louisiana as a location for filming movies and television programs, commercials, music videos and documentaries. **In 1997, Louisiana saw an \$80 million economic impact from filming activity. The state has hosted 14 feature films and two series in the past.** These films included *Orleans* and *The Big Easy* in locations across the state ([3] Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism, 1999).

The Office assists individual production crews with location scouting. It also helps communities to attract production companies to their areas. In addition, the office publishes an annual directory of crews and services in Louisiana available to filmmakers to make it easier for out-of-state productions to hire local personnel and use local services. The Office has a production hotline announcing upcoming productions in the state. The hotline is 225-342-FILM ([3] Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism, 1999).

Louisiana's rich culture and diverse characteristics attract visitors of all ages. The visitors come from all around the world. **In 1997, 25.5 million visitors came to Louisiana. These visitors in turn spent \$7.3 billion.** Tourism fuels much of the state's economy ([2] Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism, 1999).

The Office of Tourism is dedicated to developing appropriate and targeted markets, using appropriate marketing tools. These tools include trade development, public relations and promotional and communications efforts [1] Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism, 1999). The quality of life of Louisiana communities and the unique culture and history of the state are part of that effort.

THE COMMUNITY CAN...

- ❶ **Culture, recreation and tourism**
 - Visit and explore the state parks in your area as well as throughout the state. State Parks are open 365 days a year. State Commemorative Areas and Preservation Areas are open 9 am to 5 pm daily except Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day. For more information, call the Office of State Parks. Their number is toll-free at 888-677-1400 or 225-342-8111. You can also write to P.O. Box 44426, Baton Rouge, LA 70804-4426.
 - Encourage local schools to visit historical sites and learn about Louisiana's rich history. Free information about archaeology for teachers is available. This information includes an activity guide for middle school teachers and a picture book for lower elementary. Call 504-342-8170 or write to P.O. Box 4427, Baton Rouge, LA 70804.



- Visit local art exhibits that are scheduled throughout the year. Contact 225-342-8180 for a calendar of events.
- Become a member of your local library. Its free and you simply need proof of residence. Take advantage of the services it has to offer.
- Have the children in your community take part in the Library's Youth Services Program. A highlight of this program includes their Summer Reading Program. Contact your local library for more information.

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- (3) Louisiana Office of Cultural Development. 1999. keywords: Division of Historical Preservation <http://www.crt.state.la.us/crt/ocd/cultdev.htm>
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ORLEANS PARISH LIBRARIES CONT.:

MILTON H. LATTER
BRANCH
5120 St. Charles Ave.
New Orleans, LA 70115
504-596-2625
Stacy Sizemore, Branch
Manager

NORMAN MAYER
GENTILLY BRANCH
2098 Foy St.
New Orleans, LA 70122
504-596-2644
Sonia Castro Zaimis,
Branch Manager

NORANAVRA
BRANCH
1902 St. Bernard Ave.
New Orleans, LA 70116
504-596-2623
Lydia Bigard, Branch
Manager

NIX BRANCH
1401 S. Carrollton Ave.
New Orleans, LA 70118
504-596-2630
Erskin Barbarin, Branch
Manager

ROBERT E. SMITH
BRANCH
6301 Canal St.
New Orleans, LA 70124
504-596-2638

- (2) State Library of Louisiana,
1998



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