

# SUCCESS STORY



## LAKE CHARLES/SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA



The bases are loaded; the crowd erupts into a roar as the crack of a bat sends the ball soaring high above everyone, launching it into the sky. And, just like that, championship memories are made. Some win, some lose, but that's sports. It's a life lesson in being gracious (hopefully) and being part of something bigger than yourself. But, that's just part of the story...

Youth sports tournaments don't just happen, and those incredible memories have another team of people working in the background to make it a reality - tournament organizers, the hospitality community, governmental agencies, CVBs, media partners, volunteers and the list goes on. The Lake Charles/Southwest Louisiana Convention & Visitors Bureau (LC/SWLA CVB) is a thriving center for youth sports, having built relationships with tournament organizers over the greater span of two decades.

As the Youth Sports Capital of Louisiana, Southwest Louisiana has benefited greatly from youth sports being an economic driver from softball, baseball

and basketball to swimming and a myriad of other tournaments. The LC/SWLA CVB has worked with community leaders to make sure this is an integral part of the economic fabric and spirit of the community.

The Louisiana High School Athletic Association is one example of how multiple tournaments bring bread-and-butter business to the community, increasing awareness of the destination and tourism as a whole. The total economic impact for three tournaments alone in the early part of 2018 totaled \$5,818,200. The Southwest Louisiana area hosts multiple events throughout the year with LHSAA as well as USSSA and other national organizations. For these tournaments, working with partners at the Calcasieu Parish Police Jury, Sulphur Parks & Recreation, Ward 3 Recreation, and municipalities is critical.

Building on success, the LC/SWLA recently spearheaded an initiative with the Calcasieu Parish Police Jury, the City of Lake Charles and Ward 3 Recreation to launch an Artificial Turf Installation Project, covering the infield playing areas on 9 fields in Lake Charles, 4 at OD Johnson and 5 at the Power Center. The project will break ground by the fall of 2018 with the expectation of playing ball in the spring of 2019. This \$3.25 million-dollar project showcases the investment that can be made when community agencies and partners work together with an end-goal in mind.



## IMPACT STATEMENT

In addition to youth sports, Lake Charles/Southwest Louisiana is known as the South's Premier Gaming Resort Destination with plentiful options for pleasure-seekers looking to indulge in luxurious surroundings of the area's 4 casino properties with golf, entertainment, spa experiences, and stunning pools, while also enjoying the great outdoors along the Creole Nature Trail, local Cajun/Creole culture, music, food and new emerging activities with the economic growth in the southwest corner of the state.

The LC/SWLA CVB is the official destination marketing organization (DMO) for Calcasieu Parish, dedicated to strengthening the economy of Southwest Louisiana through overnight visitation. In 2017, \$732 million was added to Calcasieu Parish through travel expenditures; the bureau booked over 67,000 room nights, and the LC/SWLA CVB was honored with *ConventionSouth's* Annual Readers' Choice Award. Furthermore, the U.S. Tourism Quality Index ranked Lake Charles as #2 in the entire nation for the "experiential quality" for small destinations in 2017 based on review websites such as Trip Advisor and Yelp.

The dedicated staff works to showcase the best of Southwest Louisiana through marketing, promotions, public relations, and sales efforts to bring meetings, conventions, tournaments, media tours and groups to Lake Charles/Southwest Louisiana. For more information on the Lake Charles area, log onto [VisitLakeCharles.org](http://VisitLakeCharles.org) and follow #VisitLakeCharles on social platforms.