Louisiana Office of the Lieutenant Governor
Department of Culture, Recreation, & Tourism
Office of Lt. Governor

Julio Guichard
Office of the Lieutenant Governor
jguichard@crt.la.gov
225-342-7009

LOUISIANA STATE PARKS AND STATE MUSEUMS SET TO REOPEN THIS WEEKEND UNDER PHASE ONE GUIDELINES WITH A FOCUS ON RECOVERY

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BATON ROUGE, La. – As Louisiana enters Phase 1 of the plan for reopening, Lieutenant Governor Billy Nungesser today announced 18 State Parks, all 18 State Historic Sites, and all 9 State Museum buildings will reopen starting this weekend under the new guidelines. During phase one, all welcome centers will remain closed; however, those with exterior doors to restrooms will have 24-hour restrooms available.

"As we begin a careful, safe process to reopen Louisiana, the tourism and travel industry is faced with the task of recovering to the record-breaking success we saw prior to this crisis," said Lieutenant Governor Billy Nungesser. "I urge everyone in the state to take this time to be safe, but also get out and enjoy all the wonderful things right here in our backyard, like our state parks, historic sites, and state museums. The road to our recovery starts with the strong people of Louisiana."

Louisiana State Parks & State Historic Sites

Louisiana residents can now begin making reservations to stay at the 18 state parks starting Friday, May 15. All previously-booked out-of-state reservations are being canceled. Additionally, all 18 State Historic Sites will be open on Friday, May 15. Reservations will be taken for campsites, cabins, large capacity lodges, meeting rooms, and group camps. Louisianans are encouraged to get out and explore our state parks and state historic sites in a safe manner, respecting social distancing and the Governor's guidelines for Phase 1, keeping within in the 25% capacity for these facilities.

Each state park and state historic site will follow guidance issued by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the American Hotel and Lodging Association (AHLA) to ensure all areas are disinfected and safe for visitors. All employee working in fee stations, and coming into contact with visitors, will wear PPE including masks and follow proper prevention hygiene such as washing their hands frequently and using alcohol-based hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available. Additional measures will be taken, following the CDC guidelines, on proper cleaning and sanitizing after guests leave to prepare for the next set of visitors.

Three state parks, which were used as isolation areas for patients, will remain closed. Those state parks are Chicot State Park in Ville Platte, Lake Bistineau State Park in Doyline, and Bayou Segnette State Park in Westwego. Before opening each of these facilities to the public, certified cleaning crews will perform a decontamination cleaning of each area of the park.

For more information about Louisiana State Parks visit LaStateParks.com, or follow Louisiana State Parks on Facebook and Twitter.

Louisiana State Museums

Beginning **Saturday, May 16,** our 9 state museum facilities will reopen to visitors at 25% capacity. Employees with direct interaction with guests will follow CDC guidelines and will be wearing face masks. Throughout each museum, additional hand sanitizing stations have been set up for use by visitors and staff. Cleaning crews will take additional measures to properly clean and sanitize each of our state museum buildings throughout the day and overnight.

State museum building hours for most facilities will be from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Final tickets each day will be sold at 3 p.m. and those visitors will be informed they have one hour to view exhibits. The exhibit spaces will close at 4 p.m. to all guests.

For more information on our Louisiana State Museums visit louisianastatemusem.org, or follow them on Facebook and Twitter.

Welcome Centers

The lobby area of all Louisiana Welcome Centers will remain closed during Phase 1. Those Welcome Centers with exterior doors to restrooms will have 24-hour restrooms available. Cleaning crews will sanitize each restroom throughout the day and night. The Welcome Centers in St. Francisville on Highway 61, Pearl River on I-59, and in the French Quarter will remain closed to visitors as these buildings do not have exterior door access to restrooms.

During this time, employees will be working inside the lobby areas of the Welcome Centers. Each center will have a notice with a phone number for visitors to contact the staff inside for assistance. Welcome Center staff will assist visitors as needed, but do so without direct contact with visitors.

Focus on the Future

Lieutenant Governor Nungesser is urging all Louisianans to help in the recovery effort by staying safe, but also stay in the state. "The way to economic recovery starts with each of you making the choice to shop, play, and stay in parts of the state you have never before seen. Support your local Main Streets and businesses, hotels, and restaurants."

As the state moves through the different phases to a complete reopening, Lieutenant Governor Nungesser and the Department of Culture, Recreation & Tourism will introduce the Louisiana Lagniappe program aimed at luring conventions and conferences back to Louisiana. Through the Louisiana Lagniappe program, the Louisiana Seafood Promotion & Marketing Board will offer conventions and conferences Louisiana seafood for one meal, prepared by Louisiana chefs and caterers. Additionally, Louisiana musicians will be provided as entertainment at an event during their stay in the state.

"Some say this will be impossible. But in my experience, through hurricane, floods, and oil

spills, Louisianans have always faced this challenge head on and done what many say cannot be done. We are a strong state, filled with strong people. Our resilience has inspired and changed the world. We have experienced hardships before and have always come back stronger because we are Louisiana Strong."

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