The world stands out on either side
No wider than the heart is wide;
Above the world is stretched the sky.
No higher than the soul is high.

From the poem *Renaissance*
by Edna St. Vincent Millay

The time is fast approaching for dramatic changes in the way the world functions. Think of the technological changes of the twentieth century—the same magnitude of change that has occurred in science is taking shape in human consciousness.

Of course, none of us know all that these changes will entail. However, it seems clear that a major force in this process will involve people gaining a better understanding of others throughout the world. In that sense, travel will become increasingly important in the process of moving toward a new era of world harmony and peaceful coexistence. An increased need to reach out toward others is being manifested in the world.

The issue was addressed recently by the former president of Continental Airlines, Martin R. Shugrue, Jr., with these words:

*Despite the efforts of the various communications media to supplant the human experience, it is still the personal testimony that brings to life the culture, cuisine, and character of another country and gives it meaning. There will always be that need to see, to touch, and to sense the people, places, and things of another nation or region of the globe.*

And this is what *Louisiana Open House* is about to do. To open Louisiana's doors wider than ever they have been opened and to invite all to share in Louisiana's special vision of life, seen through the state's culture, cuisine and character.

*The doors will open to our neighbors as well. There is an old saying in Iceland: "Let not the grass grow on the paths between your houses." Its meaning is clear. Life's experiences are ours to share and in Louisiana this must always be true or there will be something of great value lost from the soul of our people.*

*Louisiana stands out among other regions because community and family are woven into the fabric of daily life. It is a precious quality and endears the state to those who visit, often capturing the visitor so strongly that he is unable to live elsewhere and so returns to live among us. Louisiana has been a melting pot for generation after generation, pulling together diverse cultures, connecting them to the main stem of community and family without altering beyond recognition the special qualities of the newcomer. *Louisiana Open House* is concerned with helping to focus attention on these values at a time when the state most needs to remind itself of who we are and why we all choose to live here.*

Louisiana is at a crossroads. The direction we choose to follow will determine our course for many years.

We all understand the need to diversify our economy and we know that we need to re-orient ourselves to new opportunities. Where do we begin? We start together. We work as partners. We end up winners. And we begin today.

United through our common commitment to the goals of the *Louisiana Open House* and linked through the limitless avenues of cooperation that the *Louisiana Open House* spreads before us, we shall create so strong a positive assertion of our values and strengths that we shall silence our critics. We shall reassure our friends. We shall uplift our citizens and lay a framework for the next decade that will continue to pay rich dividends to every sector of Louisiana.

The key to everything lies in what is present in our hearts and minds. We can turn that key and unlock that human resource. It is a resource far richer than the products of our generous lands and waters.

Communities, business interests, cultural entities, organizations of varied stripe are necessary to the success of the *Louisiana Open House*. Blending those interests into a united
force in the months leading up to the Year of the Louisiana Open House has been underway since the program was unveiled in February, 1987. That process is accelerating and it is time for an investment of the best of our leadership’s capacities and a commitment to action by all who share the goals of the program.

The investment will come in many ways, because the structure of the program allows for the participation of everyone in a limitless number of ways. It will come for many by connecting with one of the four Core Programs that are explained in this brochure.

You are invited to become a member of the team.

The payoff for the investment will come in many ways as well. But an essential return on investment for all who participate will necessarily come from the knowledge that their efforts have helped to strengthen the state’s enduring qualities. From that effort, many other good things will follow.

And the good things that are here today...will be here tomorrow—because of that effort.

Many communities have begun planning for their participation in Louisiana Open House and many organizations are lending their support. An incomplete list, but one suggestive of those who have endorsed the goals of Louisiana Open House, includes:

- Governor Buddy Roemer
- Lt. Governor Paul Hardy
- Secretary of State Fox McKeithen
- President of the Senate, Senator Allen Bares
- Speaker of the House, Representative Jimmy Dimos
- Commissioner of Administration, Dennis Stine
- Louisiana Department of Agriculture
- Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism
- Louisiana Department of Economic Development
- Citizens for Culture in Louisiana
- Foundation for Historic Louisiana
- Friends of the Cabildo
- Louisiana Archaeological Society
- Louisiana Arts Council
- Louisiana Association of Business & Industry
- Louisiana Association of Convention & Visitors Bureaus
- Louisiana Association of Fairs and Festivals
- Louisiana Association of Museums
- Louisiana Cultural Alliance
- Louisiana Folklife Commission
- Louisiana Hotel/Motel Association
- Louisiana Industrial Development Executives Association
- Louisiana Library Association
- Louisiana Municipal Association
- Louisiana Preservation Alliance
- Louisiana Press Association
- Louisiana Recreation and Parks Association
- Louisiana Travel Promotion Association
- Piney Hills Association
- Preservation Resource Center
- Public Affairs Research Council
- Seafood Promotion Board
What is to be gained through Louisiana Open House?

The Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism has committed its resources to the full implementation of the goals and objectives of Louisiana Open House. This ambitious, statewide program, scheduled for the whole of 1990, is designed to provide a broad promotional umbrella under which communities can expand the impact of their local efforts to improve their economies. 1990 is an excellent year in which to launch such a promotion:

- It comes at a time when the state is seeking to diversify the economy and thus affords a significant mechanism to call attention to all regions of the state.
- It encourages consideration of Louisiana as a retirement relocation site or as a choice for long winter vacations.
- It brings back to Louisiana a large number of friends and former citizens and sends them back out into the world with a renewed sense of the values inherent in Louisiana's unique and richly textured society.
- It reinforces the belief of Louisiana's citizens in themselves and in the special qualities of life in our state.
- It raises statewide awareness of the regions and communities of Louisiana and opens up the potential for new intrastate partnerships.
- It provides a boost to the economy and spreads the impact of the tourism dollar evenly around the state.
- It is based upon grassroots support for organization and implementation.
- It encourages the development of new tourism initiatives and the creation of new businesses within the travel industry.
- It takes advantage of the increased national and international interest in Louisiana as a travel destination and in the growth climate with travel worldwide.

Tourism is already the state's second largest employer with 73,000 employees.

Tourism is projected to be the major retail industry by the turn of the century.

Travelers spent nearly $3.76 billion in Louisiana in 1987, 21.6 percent more than in 1983. Travel-generated employment grew 0.5 percent in 1987, compared to a 2.7 percent decline in the total state employment. Employees in these jobs earned over $763 million in wage and salary income.

Travel spending generated nearly $174 million in state tax revenue, approximately 5.2 percent of all Louisiana state tax collections in 1987. Local tax revenue generated through travel spending totaled $709.9 million in 1987.

An estimated 19.3 million domestic visitors traveled to Louisiana in 1987, up 5 percent from 1986.

Latest foreign visitor estimates from the United States Travel and Tourism Administration show Louisiana to rank third in the South in overseas visitors, and show an increase of overseas visitors of 55 percent from 1985 to 1987. Foreign tour wholesalers have listed Louisiana on their itineraries more times than 43 other states.

The number of Canadian visitors to Louisiana grew by 30 percent from 1986 to 1987—the third largest increase recorded by any state.

The market is there for Louisiana. Louisiana Open House will assure Louisiana an advantage against the offerings of its competition, given that the program is adequately promoted.

Current data on Louisiana employment reveals a striking picture: travel-related jobs are out-performing most other types of employment.

In fact, the travel and tourism industry is the second largest non-agricultural employer in Louisiana—ahead of oil and gas extraction and refining.

The Louisiana Open House will produce significant results for our economy. It will capitalize on the opportunities of the moment and will deliver jobs, public funds through added tax collections, renewed pride and increased interest in Louisiana from many quarters.

How can we start?

As with any open house, a first step in creating the right atmosphere for inviting guests for a visit is to straighten and clean. Fortunately, this is a process that is well underway, spearheaded by concerned citizens statewide and coordinated through the award-winning programs of the Louisiana Litter Control and Recycling Commission.

Your efforts are needed. We all recall the pride the state felt when the world was presented a remarkably shined-up New Orleans during the Republican National Convention in 1988. Imagine the effect of that same housecleaning effort statewide! We have a strong and functioning Keep America Beautiful System (KAB) today. Louisiana's program has been recognized as an outstanding KAB leader and named Program of the Year for 1989. Is your community a member? Are you helping to educate and motivate your community to establish the right attitudes necessary for a clean city to stay clean? Through Louisiana Open House, your efforts will pay off for your community and for all others. Together, we can change the face of the state's highways, waterways and public spaces.

Once our visitors and friends arrive, we want them to have the time of their lives. We want them going back home with enthusiastic tales of good fun and outstanding hospitality. You can help to create the party through your participation in your community's efforts and through the statewide four Core Programs. Let's look now at an outline of the Core Programs.
Reunions

Essential to the success of Louisiana Open House, the Reunion Program will help bring about a significant increase in visitors to the state. Family values, community values and the values of unity and loyalty are all underscored by the Reunion Program.

A Guide to Reunions is available to assist the smallest family or the largest group. Workshops on planning reunions will take place across the state from which you will gain exciting ideas for your own special gatherings.

When you consider that a single family reunion can bring as many as 800 or more people to town, you begin to sense what reunions can mean to your community's economy. Reunion-goers are like tourists everywhere. They have the same needs for food and lodging in many cases. They want to purchase souvenirs. They want to explore the countryside and take part in interesting activities, such as festivals and community events. They want to visit museums and historic sites, to take part in outdoor recreation, to relax and enjoy.

Your group or organization, your professional association, your occupational group, your church, your civic association—all can plan and execute reunions, from the small gathering of two dozen to the small (or large!) convention that will fill hotel rooms and restaurants in your area.

Our Guide will show you how to use your reunions to generate publicity. It will also answer the many questions you have concerning "How to go about doing it right." This Core Program is open to all and will provide benefits to all, on both a personal level as well as the community level.

Cultural Exchanges

Many of you are familiar with the idea of Sister Cities and of the Twinning of Cities on an international basis. What about a similar program conducted between the cities within the state?

If we are to help each other, we've got to know each other and know each other well. The Cultural Exchange Program provides an important mechanism for South to get to know North, East to learn about West, small communities to pair with similar towns to share mutual concerns and find new solutions to problems, and large cities to reach out in many directions.

The Cultural Exchange Program was launched in November, 1988 by the cities of Opelousas and Ruston. These cities have set a pattern that is available for your community to follow. Their Exchange brought them national, positive attention. An Associated Press story ran in newspapers across the nation. The Chicago Tribune ran a full-page feature in a Sunday edition and the Atlanta Constitution sent a reporter to both towns for a week-long investigation.

Mayors across the state have received information about the Cultural Exchange Program and have been offered an opportunity to participate. You will have a role to play if your community chooses to take part. The Cultural Exchange Program affords a means for professional and civic groups to take a leadership role in bringing to fruition a meaningful dialogue between the regions of the state.

From the increased understanding we all gain of our various strengths and weaknesses, our mutual problems, our solutions to difficulties, we shall be armed with new allies as we all take part together in bringing Louisiana back from the economic edge onto solid footing.

Training seminars in Cultural Exchanges will take place and additional information made available through writing Louisiana Open House, Post Office Box 1990, Baton Rouge, LA 70821. (Phone: 504-342-8130)
A number of festivals have been contacted and have expressed unanimous approval of the Storytellers Program for use with their existing festivals. It clearly can be a program that continues after the special year of Louisiana Open House, throughout the decade, perhaps leading up to a special turn-of-the-century program in the year 2,000.

Beyond the festivals, the Storytellers Program will operate in various ways, depending on the support and interest available in given areas of the state.

Imagine a few concrete examples of how the program will operate:

- A tour group with a box lunch at a dogtrot house in North Louisiana. Several "storytellers" are there to greet them. The tour group shares the stories—the life stories—of the people from that region. Perhaps one tells of their father's career as a circuit rider. Another talks of the old Chatauga. How cotton is cultivated. The experiences of being a midwife in rural Louisiana. Country ballads and the life experiences that inspired them.

- Another tour group at a hotel. The hotel has made available a meeting room and several storytellers arrive to share their histories. Some will talk about regional events—major floods or other natural disasters. Surviving hard times. Another tells about the way he made his living—anything from being a timber cutter to a pilot on the Mississippi River, from a trapper and shrimper to a school teacher in a one-room schoolhouse during the Depression. Perhaps the way soldiers were trained in Louisiana during World War II at one of the many military bases.

- Imagine a library with storytellers on hand at certain times during the week, available to visitors, local citizens (especially to local young people), as well as anyone who happens to be visiting the area at the time. Imagine that the local community coordinator for the Storytellers Program has found a sponsor and has arranged to videotape the storytellers. From a library of stories, the visitor can select from a variety of speakers, or can add to the experience gained from a particular live presentation. Imagine all the wonderful evenings from your childhood when you sat quietly listening.
to the grown-ups talk the evening away, until gradually you fell asleep filled with a sense of belonging.

And now think about how much America has lost contact with that heritage. Think how we have become a nation of strangers, unconnected with our past and unconnected to each other. And think of Louisiana opening up her story to share with the nation. Not the story of the history books, nor the story of the canned tour that sounds like a recording, but the story of real people's honest experiences of life in a unique and enchanting state—Louisiana. Their stories will be told at plantation homes, in theaters, on college campuses, in motel lobbies, in parks, historic sites, museums and even in private homes. They will be told at reunions, to convention groups, to special tours and to individual travelers.

Some will be videotaped, some recorded on audio tape and some will be collected in books to be passed down to future generations. David Thomas plans a series of books that will be coordinated under his supervision with the cooperation of the Acadiana Arts Council, for which he works. A sample of other similar publications is available.

Community coordinators are the essential key to the success of this program. A local entity—whether in the public sector, such as a mayor's office, or whether in the private sector, such as a Junior League—must commit to ensuring that schedules of presentations are maintained. Your help is needed.

Securing the pool of talent necessary for a successful program can be facilitated by challenging professional, occupational and social organizations to provide their own storytellers. Who can best represent the experiences of the sugarcane farmers in an area? What retired person, whether a judge or a road construction supervisor, knows the little-known tales of a region? A mechanism will be devised for eliciting those tales and for rewarding the groups that work in the program—rewarding them with community recognition and the prestige of being in the limelight.

The long-range benefits of the program will extend beyond 1990. As a result of the implementation of this program, the social history (not the political history) of Louisiana will enter the mainstream of our consciousness. And the stories that are told will be repeated—some by the same storytellers, others by new storytellers. The program will continue as a means for some to supplement their incomes through working with travel attractions.

Retirement Industry Inducement Program

Louisiana Open House provides a unique environment in which to launch a coordinated effort to attract retirees to the state. A comprehensive sales piece describing all areas of the state and including information about cost of living, housing costs, health care services and climate, along with a description of the lifestyle and cultural attractions of Louisiana will be produced.

Additionally, the coupon for ads placed by the Louisiana Office of Tourism will include a space to be checked if the person reading the ad wishes to receive information about retirement opportunities here. And, corporate partners in the program will include similar advertising which will bolster the impact of the program.

Why should we go after this market?
- Per capita after-tax income of the 55 to 64 year-old is greater than any other age group.
- Households headed by 55 to 64 year-olds have the highest net worth of all United States households.
- Retirees have the greatest amount of spendable discretionary income among all population groups.

In Arkansas, which has been particularly successful in attracting retirees, the plus 65 population has an above average education and an average income exceeding twenty-thousand dollars.

Contrary to popular belief, 90 percent of the senior population functions independently in individual households.

This can be thought of as a program to attract permanent tourists; people who will migrate into the state to live out their lives and who will become valued citizens while retaining the tourist’s curiosity and desire to explore the state and region.

What Else?

The What Else? involves a large array of promotion programs to be implemented through the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism that will complement your local efforts. These promotions will assist in attracting regional, national and international attention to the Louisiana Open House, thereby bringing your local efforts under a broad umbrella of advertising and support.

The What Else? involves corporate support at the state level as well as the local level.

The What Else? is, above all else, the very real fact that with a united effort, the state of Louisiana can create a very joyful noise through the unique synergy that Louisiana Open House will generate.

Won't you please take part? Your efforts will make a big difference!

Here's how you can get involved...

The Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism has devised four programs that offer simple yet powerful tools for stimulating interest in your community and region and that offer you and your neighbors an opportunity to work together to help bring Louisiana Open House to its full potential. Seminars will be conducted statewide by the Department to offer training and organizational skills to community and area leaders, drawing from the pool of concerned citizens from every walk of life who want to do something to help the state. The Department will be a source for information and coordination, so please be sure to get onto the mailing list for their programs and bulletins. Write to:

Louisiana Open House
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Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70821
(504) 342-8135