Crowley, Louisiana
WHERE LIFE IS RICE AND EASY!™
DOWNTOWN DISTRICT

Take a trip back in time with a journey to historic downtown Crowley. This area of the city maintains its original, turn-of-the-century, atmosphere. Some merchants are restoring the buildings to their original color themes and trimmings.

Visit First Bank, formerly the First National Bank, 126 North Parkerson Avenue. When constructed in 1920, this seven-story "skyscraper" was the tallest building between Houston and New Orleans. It is currently the tallest building in Crowley.

The downtown district holds many unique shops, with merchants who are ready to show you their treasures. While shopping in beautiful historic downtown Crowley, take the opportunity to enjoy delicious cuisine at one of the tasty restaurants in the city.

Information is available at City Hall, the Acadia Parish Tourist Commission, Crowley Chamber of Commerce, the Main Street Office or any bank branch in Crowley for a driving tour of the historic district, which includes information on many historic buildings located downtown.

RICE INTERPRETIVE CENTER

Crowley earned the title "Rice Capital of America" by milling more rice annually than all rice-producing countries in the world combined. Also contributing to its title is the large number of rice mills that line Mill Street.

The Rice Interpretive Center, scheduled to open in the spring of 2004, focuses on the rice industry. Watch a video on the history, growing and production of rice, and take a look at the old machinery and other exhibits associated with the rice industry. Then take a two-hour driving tour down the Rice Trail. From rice mills to the Rice Experimental Station to Crystal Palace Plantation to rice and crawfish farms, you will get a glimpse of this fascinating industry.

The Interpretive Center will also be home to the totally restored J.D. Miller Recording Studio Museum, today known as Master-Trak Sound Recorders. J.D. "Jay" Miller began his career as a musician/songwriter. In 1946 he decided to open his own studio and produce records using local talent on his own label. Miller was also a songwriter for a Nashville publishing company and wrote several hits. His most famous, "It Wasn't God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels," was recorded by Kitty Wells in the early fifties.

Miller's studio is the oldest recording studio in continuous existence in the state of Louisiana and is best known for its Cajun, zydeco, blues & country releases from artists including: Wayne Toups, Slim Harpo, Rockin' Dopsie, Jimmy C. Newman, Clifton Chenier, Doug Kershaw, Nathan Abshire, Sammy Kershaw, Buckwheat Zydeco, Warren Storm and Sonny Landreth. The studio has also seen inspirational artists such as John Fogherty and Paul Simon whose Grammy Award winning CD "Graceland" was partially recorded at Master-Trak.

HISTORIC DISTRICT

Citizens of Crowley work hard to preserve their city's history and heritage. The Crowley Historic District is a shining example of their hard work. Because of the large mid-Western influence, all of the superb Victorian residences feature Queen Anne-style architecture and Eastlake galleries. This type of architecture is unique to the Crowley area and cannot be found in such quantities anywhere else in the state. Crowley has more than 200 buildings on the National Register of Historic Places.

Among those buildings are the School-dele Houssaye House, 704 East Third Street. This building was constructed as Crowley's first public school in 1887 and is one of the oldest buildings in Crowley. In 1893 the schoolhouse was purchased by a private owner and remodeled as his personal residence.

The Lawrence House, 219 East Second Street, is a colonial revival residence built in 1906 by W.W. Duson as a wedding present for his daughter, Mamie Duson. The home has remained unchanged throughout the years. The P.L. Lawrence family currently owns the home. Lawrence was one of the organizers of the First National Bank and helped to build the seven-story bank building.

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RICE THEATRE

The Southern Amusement Company built the art deco movie theatre in 1940. Before its scheduled opening date in August of that year, the theatre was damaged by a flood caused by a hurricane and had to be renovated before it finally opened in January, 1941. The newly renovated theater now features Saturday evening live shows. For more information call the City of Crowley at 337-788-4103 or visit our web site at www.crowley-la.com.

GRAND OPERA HOUSE

In December 1900 Dave Lyons, a deputy sheriff and a livery stable owner, began building an opera house at a cost of $18,000 with seating for 1,500. Lyons opened the Grand Opera House in November 1901 when Crowley was just a village with a population of 4,000.

For thirty years traveling road companies performed in Crowley, which was ideally situated on the Southern Pacific railroad between New Orleans and Houston. Busby Berkeley's extravaganzas, the opera "Faust," Irene Dunne in "Irene," "The Way of the Cross," and Prima Donna of the Paris Opera, Madame de Vilchez Bisset, were but a few of the long list of famous names and shows presented on stage.

Jack Dempsey and Jess Willard, Babe Ruth, Buffalo Bill and Pawnee Bill, Huey Long and William Jennings Bryan were a few of the famous who made personal appearances on this stage.

When Dave Lyons died in 1940 the Grand Opera House closed its doors. Recently the doors were reopened, and tours are now available. In the future, the Opera House will once again house quality entertainment. For more information call 337-785-0440.
Welcome to Crowley, Louisiana
Where Life Is Rice And Easy!

At the “Rice Capital of America” everyone has a smile and a warm welcome. We invite you to get to know us a little better. We are a city full of history and are proud of our heritage.

Crowley has earned the designation as a National Arbor Day Foundation “Tree City USA.” We are also recognized as a national main street community.

Spend a day in Crowley and enjoy a down-home day in the South. Visit our historic sites like the Grand Opera House, the Rice Theatre, the LSU Rice Experiment Station and our vast historic district. Be sure to eat at one of the local restaurants serving authentic Cajun cuisine. Take a relaxing stroll down main street to visit one of the unique shops or catch one of our spectacular events throughout the year such as Mardi Gras, July Fête and the International Rice Festival.

Crowley features three major festivals a year: Carnival d’Acadie, International Rice Festival and July Fête.

Carnival d’Acadie is a Mardi Gras celebration that holds true to the cultural roots from which the tradition originated. Carnival d’Acadie is held on Mardi Gras day.

The International Rice Festival was first held in conjunction with Crowley’s 50th birthday in 1937. The festival has gained international fame over the years and has been attended by celebrities such as Senator and Mrs. John F. Kennedy and Senator Barry Goldwater. The festival features two parades, rice cooking and eating contests along with food, entertainment and arts and crafts.

July Fête is an old fashioned July 4th celebration complete with a parade, music, children’s activities, fireworks and a softball tournament.

For more information contact Crowley City Hall at 337-788-4100 or visit our web site at www.crowley-la.com.