



Introduction



"This quarterly report indicates that Louisiana's tourism industry is strong and experiencing steady growth. As dollars spent by visitors continue to increase, the industry is on track to make a \$10 billion economic impact in 2005. These statistics bear out the significant impact the industry makes on our state's economy. But I am never satisfied. We will continue take an innovative, aggressive, and entrepreneurial approach to expanding tourism."

-- Mitch Landrieu, Lt. Governor

Winter 2004/2005

The Louisiana Travel Pulse is a seasonal industry travel barometer designed to present recent trends in travel industry performance. This issue's emphasis is on the Winter 2004/2005 season (December 2004 – February 2005). Performance measures are primarily presented to show differences in levels from one year ago. However, much of the following data also illustrates the most recent twelve to eighteen-month trend as well. Some indicators also show comparisons of national and/or regional trends when data is available. The following Pulse has three primary parts. The first part shows statewide indicators for hotels, airports, visitor centers, riverboat gaming, parks, and attractions (pages 2-9). The second part of the Pulse contains a regional analysis of the Winter season using some of these same indicators (pages 10-11). The final element contains national leading indicators (pages 12).

The Louisiana Travel Pulse is published quarterly by the Office of Tourism within the Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism. Any questions or issues concerning this Pulse should be directed to the Research Section, Louisiana Office of Tourism, Post Office Box 94291, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804-9291 or by calling 225-342-8100.

Winter 04/05 Performance At-A-Glance

Hotel Occupancy Rate: +6.8%
 Hotel ADR: +4.6%
 Hotel Room Supply: +1.4%
 Hotel Room Demand: +8.5%
 State Visitor Center Visitors: +1.6%
 Total Gaming Revenue: +2.1%
 Airport Enplanements: +5.3%
 State Parks and Historic Sites Visitors: +8.9%
 Local Information Center Visitors: +0.4%
 Attractions Visitors: -5.5%

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Note: These Louisiana indicators show the percentage difference from Winter03/04 to Winter 04/05.

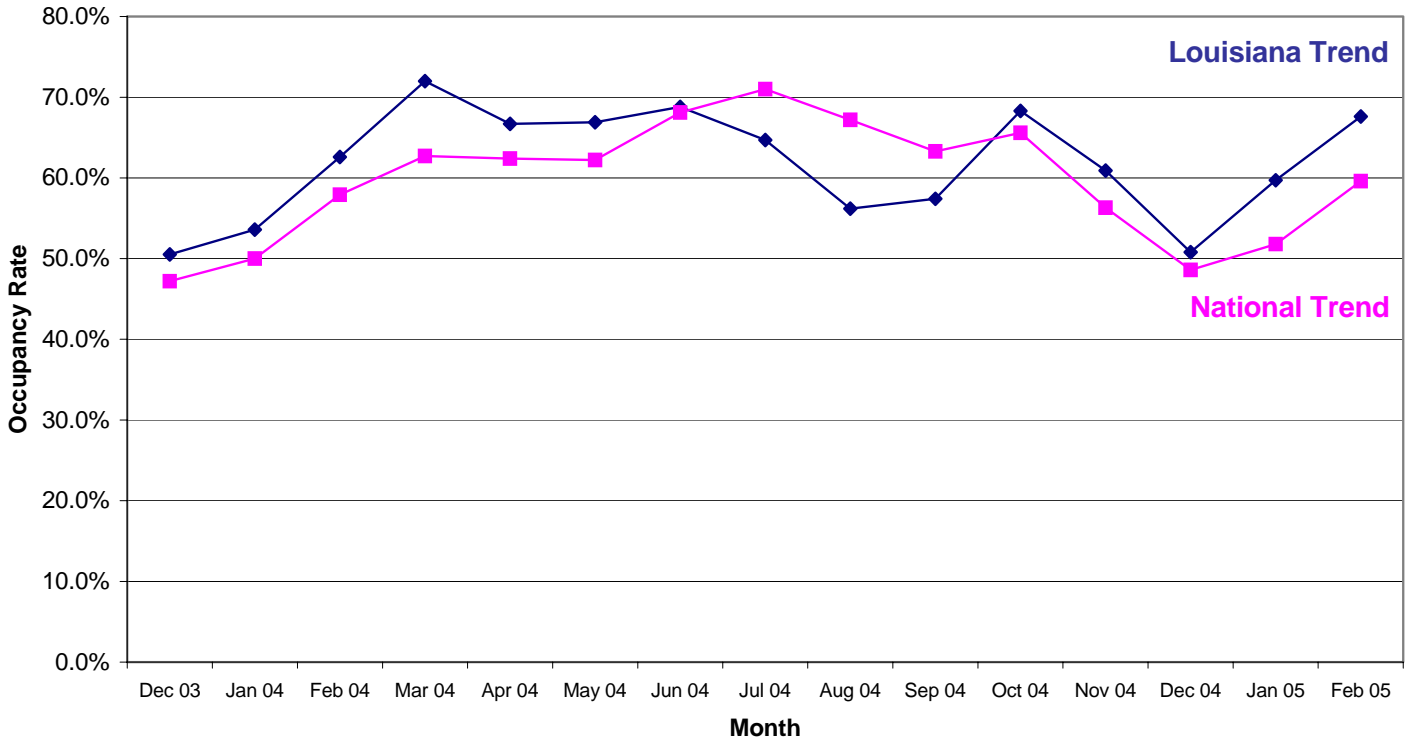
Factors Influencing Winter 2004/05 Travel To Louisiana

The end of 2004 and the beginning of 2005 were strong performance periods for the U.S. travel industry according to most industry experts.... Most performance indicators for Louisiana are extremely encouraging.... Low airfares and bargain deals continued to boost air travel... Fuel prices were at record levels and getting higher but there was no threat of shortages... The value of the dollar continued to provide clear advantages for international travelers to come to the U.S. and Louisiana.... The threat of high inflation due to gasoline prices is about the only reason consumer confidence is stalled, but is still higher than recent years.

Previous copies of the Louisiana Travel Pulse are available on the web at: www.latour.lsu.edu

1. Hotel Trends - Occupancy Rate

Winter 2004/05 – Occupancy Rate Trend



Winter 2004/05 Season

Louisiana hotel/motel occupancy: 59.4%
 % difference from prior year: +6.8%
 % difference from 5 years ago: -4.1%

U.S. hotel/motel occupancy: 53.3%
 % difference from prior year: +3.2%
 % difference from 5 years ago: -0.5%

2005 Performance (January-February)

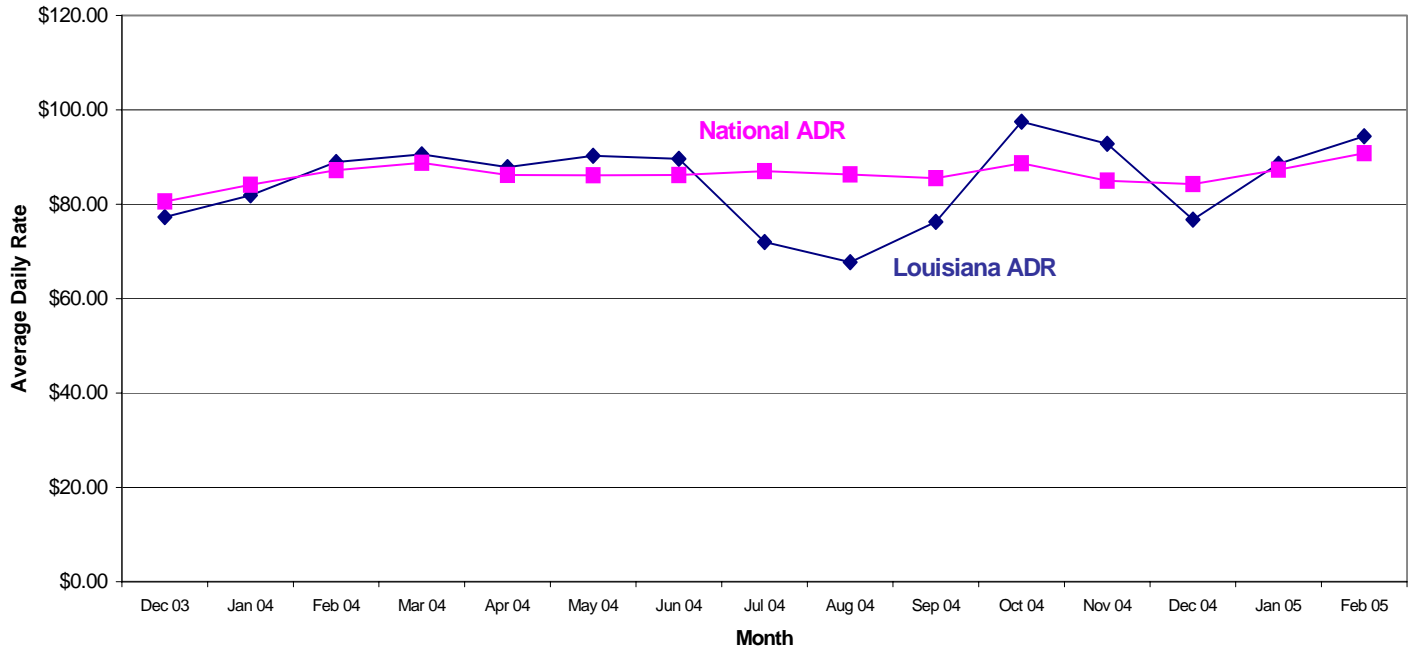
Louisiana hotel/motel occupancy: 63.4%
 % difference from prior year: +9.5%
 % difference from 5 years ago: +1.9%

U.S. hotel/motel occupancy: 55.5%
 % difference from prior year: +3.4%
 % difference from 5 years ago: -0.7%

Source: Smith Travel Research

2. Hotel Trends - Average Daily Rate

Winter 2004/05 – Average Daily Rate Trend



Winter 2004/05 Season

Louisiana hotel/motel average daily rate: \$86.55

% difference from prior year: +4.6%

% difference from 5 years ago: -4.5%

U.S. hotel/motel average daily rate: \$87.46

% difference from prior year: +4.2%

% difference from 5 years ago: +5.8%

2005 Performance (January-February)

Louisiana hotel/motel average daily rate: \$91.51

% difference from prior year: +6.9%

% difference from 5 years ago: -2.5%

U.S. hotel/motel average daily rate: \$89.11

% difference from prior year: +4.2%

% difference from 5 years ago: +4.5%

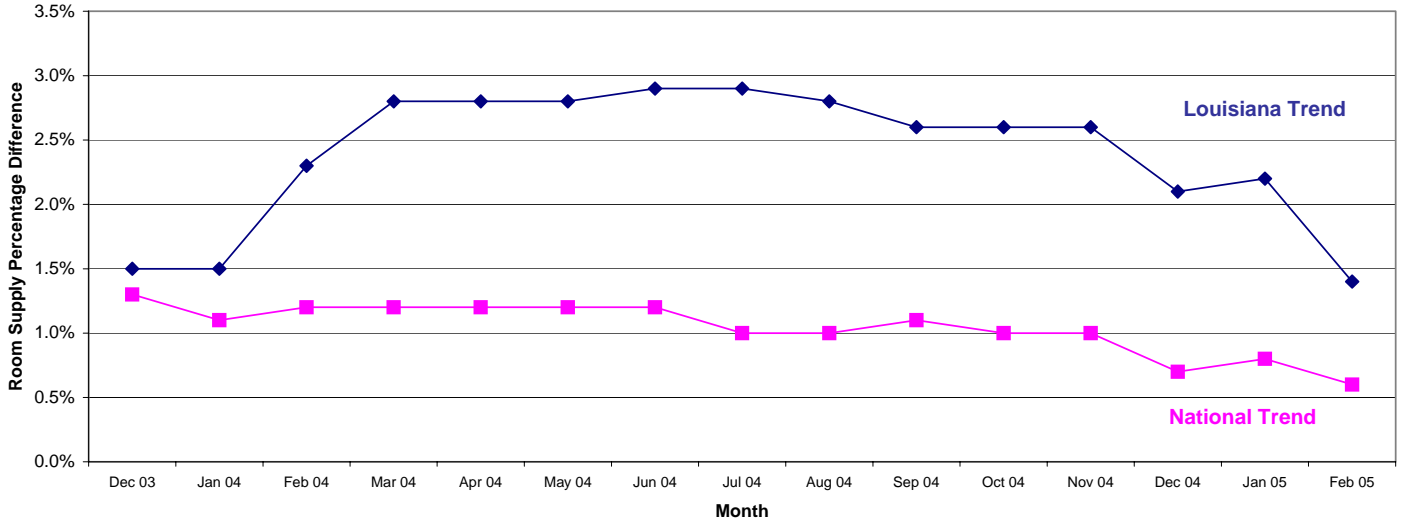
Source: Smith Travel Research

“The combination of significant ADR growth with rising occupancy rates results in very strong increases in hotel revenues. Major city hotel rooms revenue (RevPAR) is projected to grow 8.0 percent in 2005. This follows RevPAR growth of 9.5 percent in 2004. PKF Hospitality Research (PKF-HR) has not observed two consecutive years of such strong growth in RevPAR since the late 1970s when high inflation was the main impetus for price increases.”

Source: *Quarterly Trends in the Hotel Industry – United States*, PKF Consulting, March, 2005.

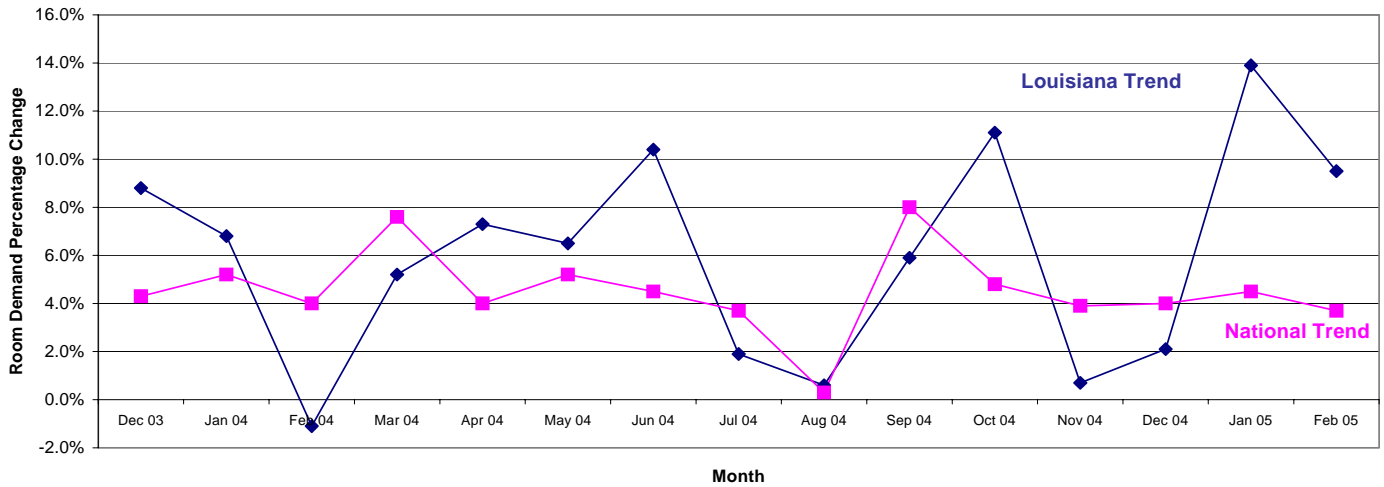
3. Hotel Trends - Room Supply

Winter 2004/05 - Room Supply Trend



4. Hotel Trends - Room Demand

Winter 2004/05 - Room Nights Sold Trend

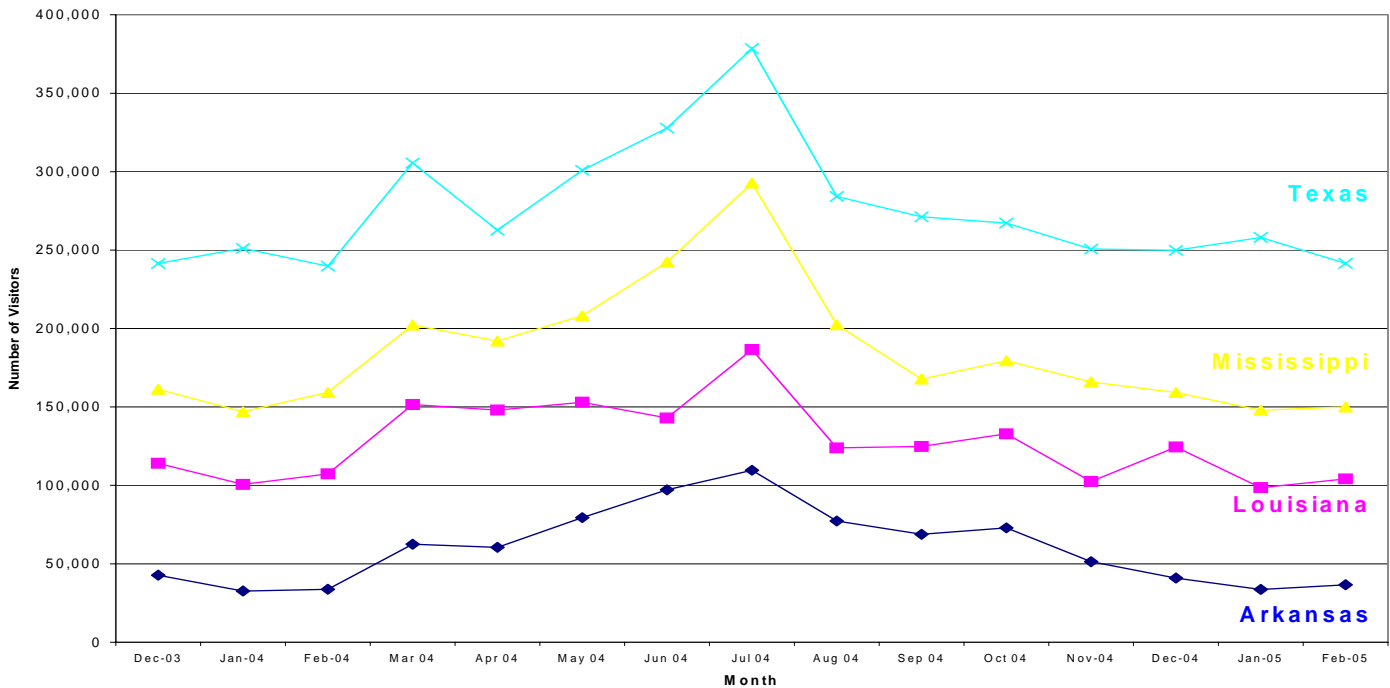


With an inventory of nearly 79 thousand rooms in over 700 properties, Louisiana continues to add rooms at a faster pace than the national average (+1.0% for U.S. vs. +2.6% for La. in 2004). Also, the number of room nights sold in Louisiana continued to show monthly increases for every month except February 2004. Louisiana's room demand growth was the tenth highest among all U.S. states in 2004, and its inventory growth was fourth highest.

Source: Smith Travel Research

5. State Information Center Visitors

Winter 2004/05 State Welcome Center Visitor Trend



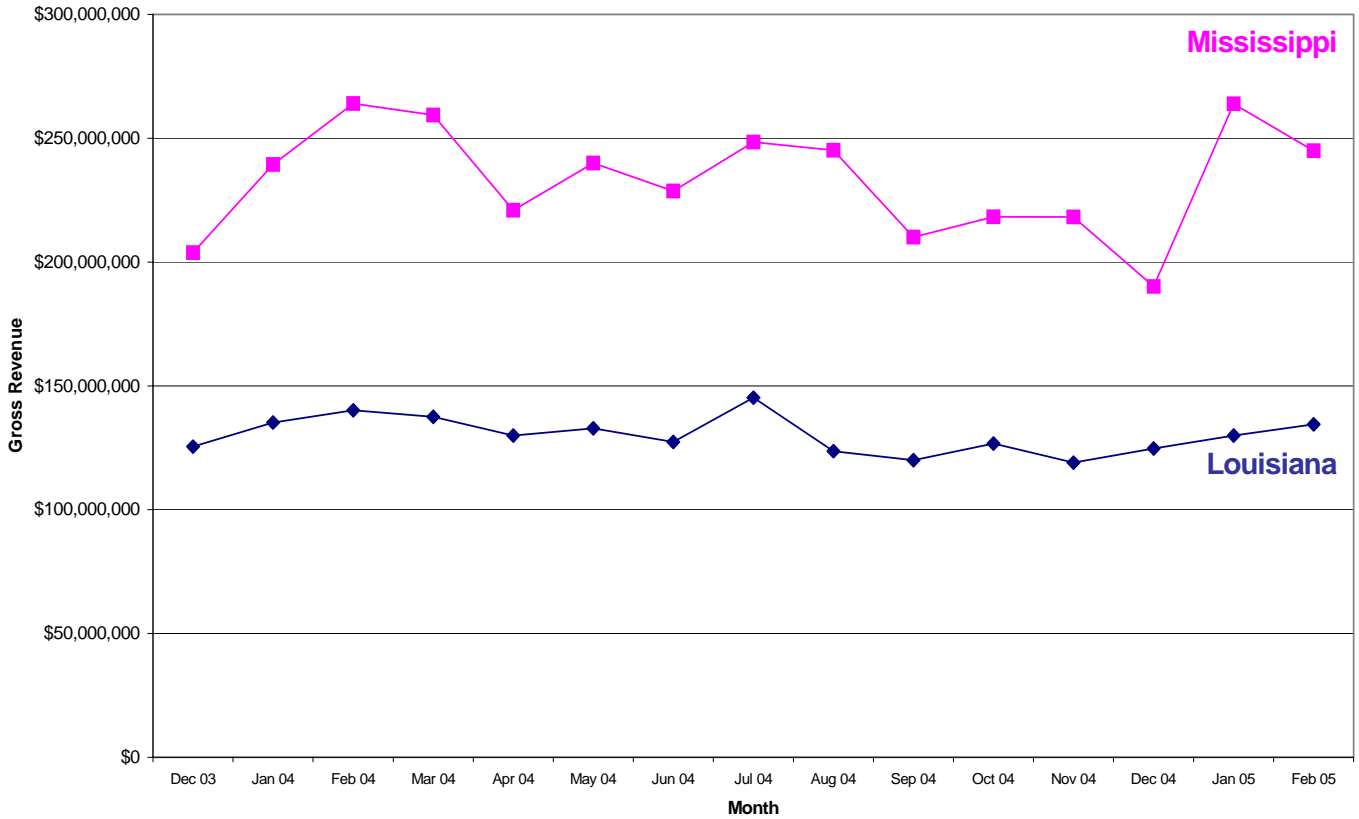
	Arkansas	Louisiana	Mississippi	Texas
Winter 2004/05 Trend*				
Number of Visitors	111,231	327,205	457,236	749,564
% difference from prior year	+1.8%	+1.6%	-2.2%	+2.3%
Year-To-Date Trend (January-February)				
Number of Visitors	70,343	202,718	297,982	499,672
% difference from prior year	+5.9%	-2.5%	-2.7%	+1.8%
*While each state uses a different method to calculate welcome center visitors, there have been no changes to the methods used over the last 15 months.				
Source: Louisiana Office of Tourism				

Travel Facts

- Louisiana's I-20 Center in Mound began renovations in December 2004. The staff is currently operating out of a temporary building on the site until renovations are completed later this year.
- According to the Texas Department of Transportation's Texas Travelog, the top ten attractions in Texas by non-Texans are: 1) Alamo, 2) San Antonio River Walk, 3) Six Flags Over Texas, 4) Space Center Houston, 5) Fort Worth Stockyards, 6) SeaWorld San Antonio, 7) State Capitol, 8) Texas Motor Speedway, 9) Amerquest Field in Arlington, and 10) Texas Stadium.

6. Riverboat Gaming

Winter 2004/05 – Gross Revenue Trend



	Louisiana	Mississippi
Winter 2004/05 Season		
Total Gross Revenue	\$389,113,301	\$698,982,229
% difference from prior year	-2.9%	-1.2%
% difference from 5 years ago	+11.5%	+10.6%
2005 Year-to-Date (January thru February)		
Total Gross Revenue	\$264,374,379	\$508,871,433
% difference from prior year	-4.0%	+1.1%
Sources: Louisiana State Police, and Mississippi State Tax Commission (http://www.mstc.state.ms.us/index.html)		

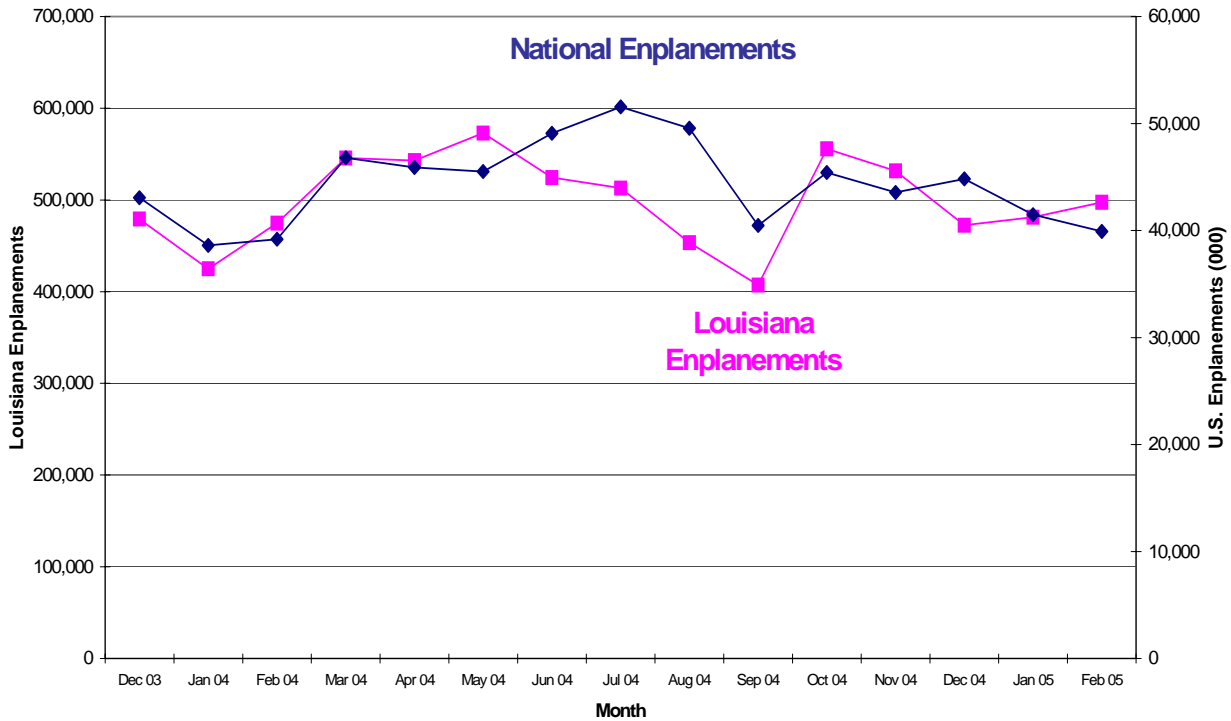
- The gross revenue for Louisiana’s land based casino in New Orleans for the Winter 2004/05 was over \$80,883,428, 6.9% greater than the same period the year before.
 - The total gross revenue for Louisiana’s riverboats, land-based casino, and racetrack slot machines for the Winter 2004/05 was \$550,402,809, 2.1% greater than the year before.
- Source: Louisiana Gaming Control Board (<http://www.dps.state.la.us/lgcb/welcome.html>)

7. Airport Passenger Enplanements

"It is important to note that Louisiana's airport passengers grew by five percent. This is significant since annual passenger enplanements had fallen every year since 2000. In addition, the Tax Free Shopping Program for international travelers showed large increases. With low exchange rates, we will continue our efforts to attract international visitors."

-- Angèle Davis, Secretary of Culture, Recreation and Tourism

Winter 2004/05 Enplanements Trend



Winter 2004/05 Season

Louisiana Airport Enplanements: 1,451,196

% difference from prior year: +5.3%

% difference from five years ago: +5.7%

U.S. Airport Enplanements: 126 million

% difference from prior year: +4.4%

% difference from five years ago: -3.7%

2005 Performance (January-February)

Louisiana Airport Enplanements: 978,676

% difference from prior year: +8.8%

% difference from 5 years ago: +7.6%

U.S. Airport Enplanements: 81 million

% difference from prior year: +4.6%

% difference from 5 years ago: -4.5%

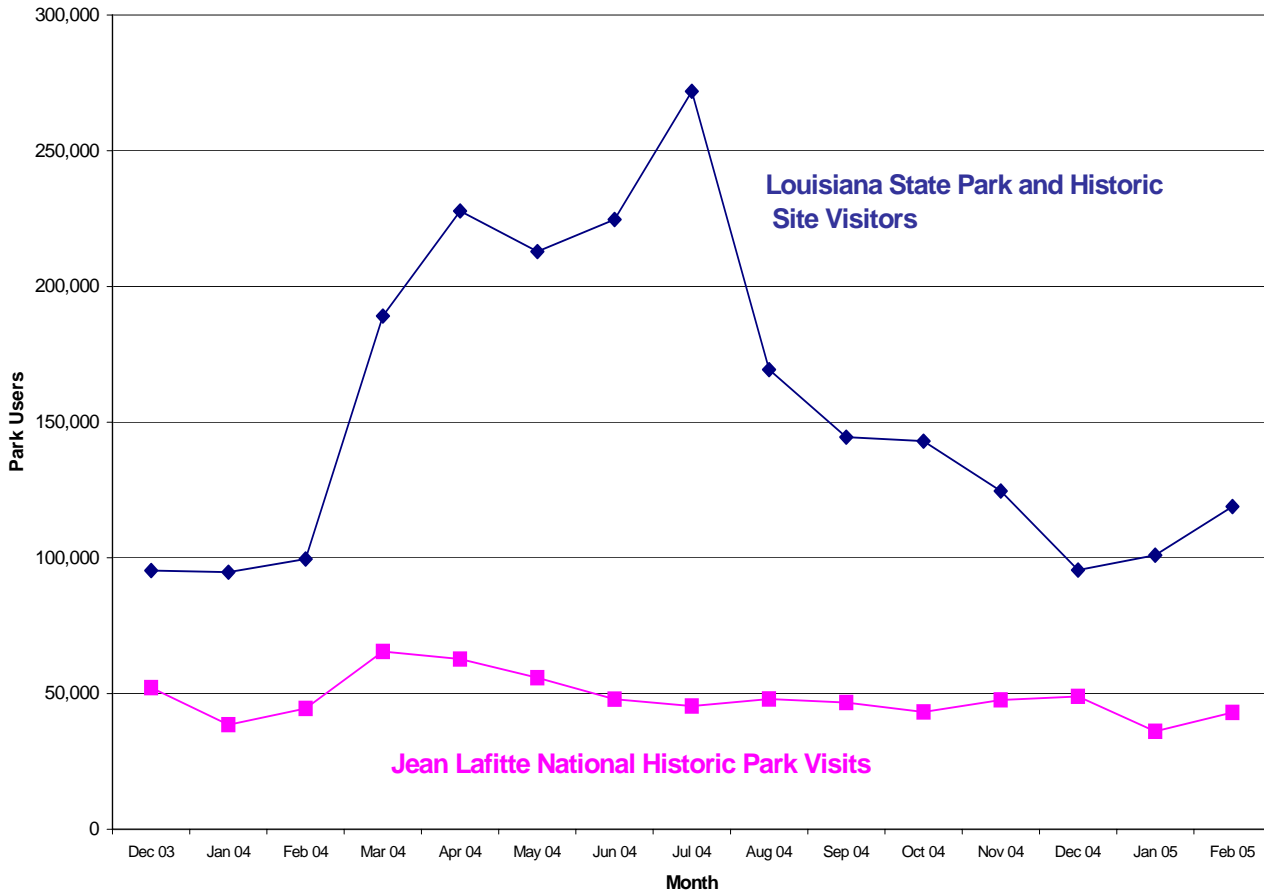
Source: Louisiana Office of Tourism, and the Air Transport Association (<http://www.airlines.org/>)

"A recent survey of 444 RV owners by the Recreation Vehicle Industry Association indicated that seven of 10 RV users plan to use their recreational vehicles as much this summer as in past summers. Only 4 percent of those surveyed plan to cut back on their trips. "RVers are as enthusiastic as ever about traveling this season," said Robert Hitlin, president of Robert Hitlin Research Associates, Inc., who conducted the study for the RVIA. "Over the past several years it appears that spikes in fuel prices have had a minimal impact on RV travel plans. RVers are desensitized to these fuel price spikes because we have had several of them in the past few years." Reeves agrees with that assessment. "People are concerned with high gas prices, but I don't see it putting a stop to them doing the things that they want to do."

Source: <http://www.shreveporttimes.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20050422/SPORTS06/504220355/1001/SPORTS>

8. State and National Park Visitors

Winter 2004/05 Park Visitors Trend



Winter 2004/05 Season

Louisiana State Parks and Historic Site Visitors: 315,435
 % difference from prior year: +8.9%

Jean Lafitte National Historical Park Recreational Visits: 128,118
 % difference from prior year: -5.2%

2005 Year-To-Date Performance (January-February)

Louisiana State Parks and Historic Site Visitors: 219,944
 % difference from prior year: +13.2%

Jean Lafitte National Historical Park Recreational Visits: 79,153
 % difference from prior year: -4.7%

Source: Louisiana Office of State Parks, and the U.S. National Park Service (<http://www2.nature.nps.gov/stats/>)

9. Local Tourist Information Centers

Louisiana local tourist information center visitors: 92,458
 Percentage difference from prior year: +0.4%

During the Winter 2004/05 season, 14 information centers reported increased visitor volume and 16 information centers recorded a decrease in visitors compared to the previous Winter season.

Source: Louisiana Office of Tourism. Local information center visitors are operated by municipal and parish tourist bureaus throughout Louisiana. Most use registration sheets to record the volume of visitors who enter the centers for travel information.

10. Attractions Visitors

The Louisiana Office of Tourism received visitor counts from 72 attractions across the state. Numbers were received from 8 plantation homes, 17 public campgrounds, 32 historical museums and historic sites, 8 gardens, zoos and wildlife areas, and 7 other attractions. The total number of visitors to these Louisiana attractions decreased by 5.5% during the Winter Season 2005 (December 2004 – February 2005) compared to the previous Winter season. For the fifth season in a row attendance at most of Louisiana's attractions were below previous year's levels. The price of gasoline rose to record levels during the winter and likely affected day-trip and overnight travel patterns by deterring trips farther from their place of residence. Also, the rising cost of travel is likely causing visitors to choose less attractions on a trip. At least 80% of Louisiana's visitors arrive by automobile, truck, RV, or similar motor vehicle according to the Travel Industry Association's TravelScope survey.

	Winter 2005	Fall 2004	Summer 2004	Spring 2004	Winter 2004
Number of Sites w/increased attendance	32	32	24	33	40
Number of Sites w/decreased attendance	40	39	48	49	36
Percentage difference from previous year*	-5.5%	-21.4%	-5.1%	-7.4%	-8.6%

* Percentage difference in actual visitors recorded at all parks, museums, and attractions submitted to LOT.

"More American Automobile Association members are asking about gas prices with travelers opting for alternatives, such as more frequent trips at shorter distances or staying fewer days, said Mary Greer of the association's Colorado branch. Taking out a calculator can help. For example, a vehicle that gets about 20 miles to the gallon will use 50 gallons for a 1,000-mile trip. If gas is 50 cents higher this year than in 2004, an additional \$25 will be needed for the same trip. Representatives of several national parks, including Yellowstone, Utah's Zion and Colorado's Rocky Mountain national parks, say history has shown that gas prices don't usually prompt visitors to cancel their trips. "Last year as gas prices increased, we didn't see a decline in our visitation. In fact, we had a slight increase," park spokeswoman Tessy Shirakawa said."

Source: Sandy Shore, The Associated Press, 4/21/05

10. Regional Trends - Winter

"Every report on tourism's performance is a report on the achievement of the industry as a whole. The separate contribution of all the players adds up to the total results we gain as a unit. Our network of CVBs, added to our Welcome Centers, added to our advertising, added to our public relations... all these work synergistically, influencing the decisions of visitors to choose Louisiana."

--Darien Wilson, Assistant Secretary, Office of Tourism

Greater New Orleans	2004/05	2003/04	% +/-
New Orleans International Airport			
Passenger Enplanements	1,177,403.....	1,119,225	+5.2%
New Orleans Hotel-Motel Occupancy Rate			
December	51.3%.....	53.9%	-4.8%
January	63.0%.....	54.0%	+16.7%
February	71.8%.....	63.1%	+13.8%
New Orleans Visitor Center	31,677.....	31,810	-0.4%
Slidell Visitor Center	75,343.....	78,461	-4.0%
Kentwood Visitor Center.....	34,205.....	34,121	+0.2%
Pearl River Center.....	30,477.....	18,450	+65.0%
Parks, Attractions, Museums.....	611,601.....	674,507	-9.3%

Plantation Country	2004/05	2003/04	% +/-
Baton Rouge Metro Airport			
Passenger Enplanements	90,894.....	84,302	+7.8%
Baton Rouge Hotel/Motel Occupancy Rate			
December	49.2%.....	46.3%	+6.3%
January	55.6%.....	53.8%	+3.3%
February	69.0%.....	62.0%	+11.3%
State Capitol Visitor Center	21,369.....	22,292	-4.1%
St. Francisville Visitor Center	5,998.....	6,271	-4.4%
Parks, Attractions, & Museums	95,362.....	96,296	-1.0%

Cajun Country	2004/05	2003/04	% +/-
Lafayette Regional Airport			
Passenger Enplanements	39,363.....	39,904	-1.4%
Lake Charles Regional Airport			
Passenger Enplanements	11,213.....	10,476	+7.0%
Lafayette Hotel-Motel Occupancy Rate			
December	45.6%.....	48.7%	-6.4%
January	53.5%.....	55.4%	-3.4%
February	64.9%.....	67.6%	-4.0%

Lake Charles Hotel-Motel Occupancy Rate			
December	50.1%	47.7%	+5.0%
January	59.2%	54.0%	+9.6%
February	62.7%	63.3%	-0.9%
Vinton Visitor Center	38,210	41,692	-8.4%
Atchafalaya Visitor Center	17,876	Opened June 2004	
Parks, Attractions, & Museums	95362	96,296	-1.0%

Crossroads	2004/05	2003/04	%+/-
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England International Airport			
Passenger Enplanements	32,683	27,922	+17.1%
Alexandria Hotel-Motel Occupancy Rate			
December	52.6%	42.8%	+22.9%
January	58.7%	51.3%	+14.4%
February	61.2%	56.5%	+8.3%
Vidalia Visitor Center	4,609	4,944	-6.8%
Boyce (I-49) Visitor Center	8,616	5,177	+66.4%
Parks, Attractions, & Museums	58,192	58,857	-1.1%

Sportsman's Paradise	2004/05	2003/04	%+/-
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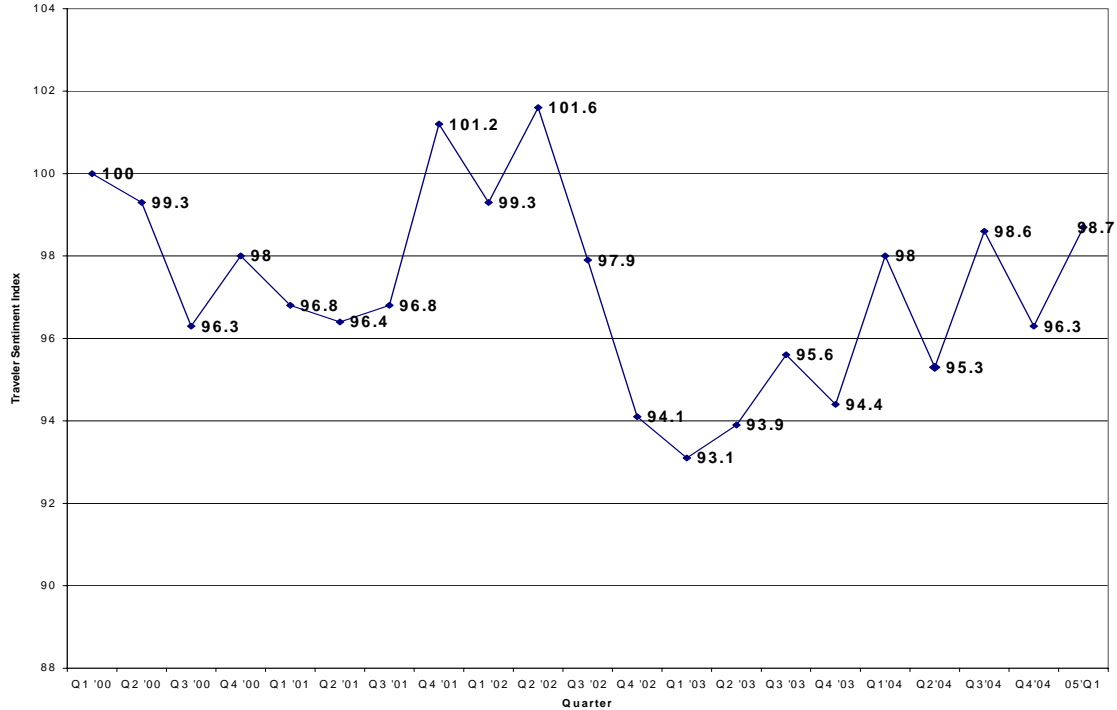
Shreveport Regional Airport			
Passenger Enplanements	73,699	74,042	-0.5%
Monroe Regional Airport			
Passenger Enplanements	25,941	25,846	+0.4%
Shreveport Hotel-Motel Occupancy Rate			
December	57.2%	54.0%	+5.9%
January	63.1%	56.4%	+11.9%
February	67.6%	66.8%	+1.2%
Monroe Hotel-Motel Occupancy Rate			
December	50.6%	48.3%	+4.8%
January	54.1%	52.5%	+3.0%
February	61.2%	57.8%	+5.9%
Greenwood Visitor Center	42,049	43,055	-2.3%
Mound Visitor Center	16,776	19,791	-15.2%
Parks, Attractions, and Museums	40,425	45,694	-11.5%

Notes on Regional Trends: Hotel/Motel statistics are from Smith Travel Research, Inc.; all other figures are from the Office of Tourism. Park figures include both day-use and overnight visitors. Attendance at parks, attraction and museums are self-reported to the Office of Tourism and include many different methods of recording visitors/customers.

11. Looking Ahead

This section provides U.S. and Louisiana leading indicators which have predictive value for future tourism trends. They are called “leading” because their direction or magnitude historically “leads” the focus of our industry.

A. U.S. Traveler Sentiment Index Trend* Consumer Sentiment Rises Slightly In First Quarter



**Note: The Traveler Sentiment Index is conducted quarterly by the Travel Industry Association of America (TIA), and is based on responses of 1000 interviews with U.S. adults who have taken at least one trip in the past year. TIA began the Traveler Sentiment Index study in first quarter 2000 (January), which serves as the baseline period. In general, the Traveler Sentiment Index measures consumer interest in pleasure travel and their perceived ability to take pleasure trips.*

B. U.S. Consumer Expectations Index Trend*

	2003	2004	January 2005	February 2005
1985 = 100	87.7	96.9	100.4	96.1

**Note: The Consumer Expectations Index is a part of the Consumer Confidence Survey developed by The Conference Board. This index is a monthly measure of the public's confidence in the health of the U.S. economy. Industries that rely on the Survey for forecasting include manufacturers, retailers, banks, the Federal Reserve, and United States government agencies.*