



MITCHELL J. LANDRIEU
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

State of Louisiana
OFFICE OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR
DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE, RECREATION & TOURISM
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

ANGÈLE DAVIS
SECRETARY

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Contact:
Scott Aiges
504-427-6619

scott@louisianamusicexport.com

LOUISIANA SPOTLIGHTS MUSIC AT INDUSTRY CONVENTION

With attention focused on Louisiana in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the state in mid-March will use the music industry's biggest showcase and networking event to promote its music and music businesses.

Louisiana's presence at the South By Southwest Music & Media Conference in Austin, Texas -- which features hundreds of artists and companies from around the world -- includes a mix of elements designed to bolster the state's image as a cultural landmark and also a growing hub of music business activity.

Among them:

- More than 30 concerts showcasing Louisiana musicians across a range of genres, from blues and rock to zydeco and hip-hop
- A free, day-long festival on the banks of Austin's Town Lake featuring such top Louisiana artists as Allen Toussaint, Buckwheat Zydeco, Beausoleil, and the Dirty Dozen
- An evening presented by the Ponderosa Stomp festival, celebrating Louisiana and Gulf Coast roots music
- A 12-page guide to Louisiana at SXSW produced by OffBeat magazine, a Louisiana music monthly
- A crawfish boil for an industry networking party
- A large stand at the SXSW trade show, with meeting areas and video display showing concert footage

At least 15 Louisiana music businesses will be represented at SXSW, ranging from the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival to PreSonus Audio Electronics, a Baton Rouge equipment manufacturer. Including all of the artists, managers, agents, studios, concert venues, record labels, festivals, web developers and media outlets in attendance, Louisiana's total delegation at SXSW numbers more than 100.

“It’s important to use events like SXSW to remind the global music industry that Louisiana is open for business,” said Gov. Kathleen Babineaux Blanco. “When we promote our state, we also help all of our businesses benefit from our fame as a cultural treasure.”

“Louisiana is known around the world as the birthplace of American music,” said Lt. Gov. Mitch Landrieu. “But we can’t rest on our laurels. We need to seize marketing opportunities to increase the impact our culture has on our economy.”

One initiative state officials will be touting at SXSW is the new Sound Recording Investor Tax Credit – an incentive, much like the state’s highly successful film program, to boost production in the state’s music industry. Since 2002, the film credits have pushed movie production in Louisiana from \$20 million a year to more than \$250 million a year. The sound recording credits took effect Jan. 1 and include incentives to invest in studio infrastructure.

“The new sound recording credits will generate increased employment opportunities within the music and recording industries and will increase global competition to expand economic development options within this vibrant sector,” said Louisiana Economic Development Secretary Michael J. Olivier.

“Showcase opportunities like SXSW not only provide great exposure for our musicians and music industry, they help develop another important industry for our state: tourism,” said Angele Davis, Secretary of the Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation & Tourism. “When we export our music, we import tourists.”

The Louisiana presence at SXSW is a collaboration between the public and private sectors. Two state agencies, Louisiana Economic Development and the Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation & Tourism, partnered with Southern Comfort, Putumayo World Music and Hibernia National Bank to cover the costs of trade show marketing, advertising, networking events, artist travel and more. The Louisiana Music Export Office, a private nonprofit, coordinated the effort.

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