

# P R E S S   R E L E A S E



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## **WASHINGTON MARDI GRAS ROLLED UNDETERRED BY WINTER STORM JONAS**

Washington, D.C.

As most Louisianians know, nothing stops Mardi Gras. In like fashion, nothing stopped the 2016 Washington Mardi Gras held at the Washington Hilton Hotel this past weekend. Washington Mardi Gras was only overshadowed, to some respect, by one thing: the record snow dumped on the eastern seaboard, including Washington D.C., by Winter Storm Jonas. Many of those attending the festivities found themselves stranded away from home, as transportation in and out of town was shut down for three days. Nevertheless, the event continued, virtually without a hitch.

The Washington Mardi Gras is a yearly event where local lawmakers, businessmen, industry executives, parish leaders, and economic developers connect with the state's U.S. Congressional delegation and with one another to bring improvement or positive change to the state of Louisiana. It's also a celebration and exhibition of Louisiana traditions. Almost 3,000 people were in attendance of the multi-day event, including Governor Jon Bel Edwards, Congressman (and Washington Mardi Gras 2016 Chairman) Cedric Richmond, Senator (and Washington Mardi Gras Captain) David Vitter, and the rest of the Louisiana Congressional delegation. Washington Mardi Gras 2016, themed *Rollin' on the River*, kicked off with a networking social, *Louisiana Alive*, complete with Zydeco and brass bands, plus food from some of Louisiana's best chefs.

The main event for the Port of South Louisiana was the River Parishes Economic Development Breakfast, which it co-hosted along with the parishes of St. Charles, St. John the Baptist, and St. James, its partners in the River Region Economic Development Initiative (RREDI). The talking point that echoed during the breakfast is the steadfast alliance the Louisiana Congressional delegation has in working with each other for the good of the region; to keep things rolling on the river.

During the breakfast, emceed by Port of South Louisiana Executive Director Paul Aucoin, speakers included Congressman Steve Scalise's aide, Geoffrey Green, Congressman John Fleming, Congressman Garret Graves, Congressman Charles Boustany, Senator Bill Cassidy, Congressman Cedric Richmond's Chief of Staff, Virgil Miller, Congressman Ralph Abraham, St. John the Baptist Parish Natalie Robottom, St. James Parish President Timothy Roussel, and St. Charles Parish President Larry Cochran. Also in attendance was Lieutenant Governor Billy Nungesser, St. Bernard Parish President Guy McInnis, Louisiana Economic Development Secretary Don Pierson, Port of South Louisiana Commission President D. Paul Robichaux and Port of South Louisiana Commissioner Joey Murray.

Aucoin attended other networking events, like the Committee of 100 Congressional Luncheon and Committee of 100 Coastal Restoration/Replenishment Program featuring Congressman Garret Graves. In each and every event he attended, the theme was loud and clear. "All of the slated speakers spoke about

the importance of Ports,” said Aucoin. “I’m so pleased to see that our message is finally driving home; that the health of our maritime infrastructure is directly correlated to economic growth.”

Aucoin also met with Howard Hill of the Department of Transportation to discuss how the Port of South Louisiana can improve its TIGER grant application process (awarded to projects that will provide significant improvements in transportation infrastructure).



*Port of South Louisiana Executive Director Paul Aucoin as emcee of the Washington Mardi Gras RREDI Breakfast on Friday, January 22, 2016  
(Photo courtesy of St. James Parish)*



*St. James Parish officials at the RREDI Breakfast on January 22, 2016  
(L-R): Libby Hotard, St. James Parish Personnel Manager; Eddie Kraemer, St. James Parish Councilman; Jason Amato, St. James Parish Councilman;  
Paul Aucoin, Port of South Louisiana Executive Director; Timothy Roussel, St. James Parish President, and his wife Linda Roussel;  
Alvin St. Pierre, St. James Parish Councilman; and Michelle Nailor-Octave, St. James Parish Administrative Officer  
(Photo courtesy of St. James Parish)*



*St. John the Baptist Parish officials at the RREDI Breakfast on January 22, 2016  
(L-R): Torri Buckles, Director of Economic Development; Laverne Saulny, Chief Administrative Officer;  
Eliza Eugene, St. John Parish Economic Development Committee Secretary; Michael Wright, St. John Parish Councilman;  
Paul Aucoin, Port of South Louisiana Executive Director; Natalie Robottom, St. John Parish President;  
Peggy Joseph, St. John Parish Economic Development Committee Vice Chair;  
Larry Sorapuru, St. John Parish Councilman, and Buddy Boe, St. John Parish Councilman  
(Photo courtesy of St. John the Baptist Parish)*

### **About Washington Mardi Gras**

The event almost had its inception in 1938, but Louisiana State Society of D.C. nixed it just prior to the celebration. In 1944, the Society's president, C.J. Bourg and Lt. Col. Leonce Legendre decided to throw a Mardi Gras-style celebration on George Washington's birthday. It continued intermittently due to international conflict. In 1957, however, after much opposition from the Society and the Louisiana delegation, Russell Long insisted and achieved his goal of creating The Mystick Krewe of Louisianians. In 1977, the Washington Mardi Gras Association was formed as the official sponsor, later to be replaced by the non-profit organization, the Mystick Krewe of Louisianians. "What began as a 'demonstration of the spirit of Mardi Gras' has grown into a celebration of Louisiana, its politics and its people." For more information about Washington Mardi Gras and the Mystick Krewe of Louisianians, go to [www.mkofl.com](http://www.mkofl.com).

### **About the Port of South Louisiana**

The Port of South Louisiana is a 54-mile port district on the Mississippi River between New Orleans and Baton Rouge, encompassing the parishes of St. Charles, St. John and St. James. The facilities located within the port's district consistently handle over a quarter billion short tons of cargo annually, ranking it the largest tonnage port district in the Western Hemisphere, the nation's greatest grain exporter, and the number one energy transfer port in the United States. Along the 108 miles of deep-water frontage on both banks of the river there are seven grain transfer facilities, four major oil refineries, 11 petrochemical manufacturing facilities and several other facilities for a total of more than 50 docks owned and operated by an impressive group of resident tenants such as ADM, ArcelorMittal, Dow, Cargill, DuPont, Motiva Enterprises, Marathon, Shell, Nucor Steel, Occidental, Valero, and Occidental Chemical. To learn more, visit us at [www.portsl.com](http://www.portsl.com), like us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/portsl), and follow us on [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/portsl).

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