

Sabine Parish Tourist Commission

Employee Handbook of Procedures and Personnel Policies

We would like to welcome you to the staff of the Sabine Parish Tourist Commission. This manual will help you to adjust to a new environment and provide you with a broader understanding of the Tourist Commission's role in our community. We want you to know about our organization and to share our pride in it.

The Sabine Parish Tourist Commission is a place where ideas are born and programs are started for the betterment of our community and the economy of Sabine Parish. You as an employee are part of this project. The successful accomplishments of these programs rest, in large measure, on how well our jobs are performed. Please study this handbook and use it frequently in the future to refresh your memory on certain procedures and practices of this organization.

Approved 9/13/11

Historical Background of Toledo Bend Lake Country

As a result of rapid industrial development and the changing demands of an evolving economy during the late 1940's, the people of the Sabine River area, both in Texas and Louisiana, realized a need to provide for the future of the area. In 1949, the Texas State Legislature created the Sabine River Authority of Texas, followed immediately by the Louisiana State Legislature in 1950, who created the Sabine River Authority, State of Louisiana. Together, these two bodies were given the duties of conserving and developing the waters of the Sabine River Basin for beneficial purposes.

In 1955, the seeds of Toledo Bend as we enjoy it today were sown by both Authorities cooperating under a memorandum of agreement. Studies were undertaken and the results clearly indicated the feasibility of such a project.

Toledo Bend is the largest man-made body of water in the South, and the fifth largest in surface acres in the United States. From the dam site, the reservoir extends 65 miles upriver to Logansport, Louisiana, and inundates land in Sabine, Shelby, Panola, and Newton Counties in Texas, and Sabine and DeSoto Parishes in Louisiana. It was constructed for the purposes of water supply, hydroelectric power generation, and recreation. In all, the lake normally covers an area of 185,000 acres.

The construction cost of about \$70 million was shared equally by Texas and Louisiana. The cost included the entire project-land, dam, spillway, powerhouse, new roads and bridges, and clearing of boat lanes and shorelines. The states of Louisiana and Texas in 1959 arranged for the financing of \$30 million in hydroelectric revenue bonds. The sale of electricity was the only source of income used to repay the revenue bonds and is one of the main sources, with the sale of water, for funds for the Authority's operation and maintenance.

Land acquisition began in 1963, with construction of the dam, power plant and spillway the next year. Following completion of the structures, the power plant began operation in early 1969. Toledo Bend Reservoir is the only public water conservation and hydroelectric project in the nation to be undertaken without federal participation in its permanent financing.

Also provide information on the following:

- Hodges Gardens State Park
- Fort Jesup State Historical Site
- El Camino Real de los Tejas National Trail
- List of all accommodations with amenities
- List of other employees with contact information
- Contact information for State Representative and Secretary
- List of all Board Commissioners

The Commission:

What is the Sabine Parish Tourist Commission?

The Sabine Parish Tourist Commission is considered a political subdivision of the state that promotes Toledo Bend Lake Country to tourists and retirees. The mission of the Sabine Parish Tourist Commission is to increase overnight room nights sold and to improve the quality of visit, and to encourage guest to extend his or her visit or to plan a return trip.

How the Sabine Parish Tourist Commission operates.

The Tourist Commission is funded by a three percent Hotel/Motel Occupancy Tax that is collected from the visitor by each accommodation in Sabine Parish and by the State Enterprise Fund that is a rebate of 3.96 percent of the 4 percent sales tax collected on each hotel or motel room, RV pad, etc. in the parish. The sales tax is remitted to the State Treasurer's Office and reimbursed to the Commission quarterly.

Board of Directors – The Board of Directors are the policy making body of the Sabine Parish Tourist Commission. The Board consists of seven members that are appointed by:

- The Sabine Parish Police Jury – one member
- The Sabine Parish Chamber of Commerce – two members
- The President of the Sabine Parish Tourist and Recreation Commission – one member
- The Mayor of Many – one member
- The Mayor of Florien – one member
- The Mayor of Zwolle – one member

The President of the Tourist Commission presides over all meetings of the Board.

Executive Committee – The Executive Committee consists of Chairman, Vice Chairman, and Secretary/Treasurer. It exercises the powers of the Board between those times when Board meetings are held.

Personnel Policies:

Equal Employment Opportunity

It is the policy of the Sabine Parish Tourist Commission to grant equal opportunity to all qualified persons without regard to race, color, age, sex, religion, or national origin. It is also the intent and desire of the Tourist Commission that equal opportunity is provided in wages, promotions, benefits, and all other privileges, terms and conditions of employment.

Hiring

The Executive Director has the sole responsibility for hiring staff personnel required to conduct the business of the Commission. Staff positions will consist of:

- Administrative Assistant/Accounting
- Marketing/Media Assistant
- Tourist Counselor/Social Media Assistant

Salary

The Executive Director is responsible for setting salaries with approval from the Commission. Salaries are based on job content and responsibility and when economically feasible, comparable to those paid for by similar firms in the area and other Tourist Commissions in the state.

Annual Review

All employees will have a yearly evaluation that will be conducted by the Director. During this evaluation methods will be given for improvement of the employee's performance and a recommendation for a yearly pay raise will be discussed. The Commission Board according to the Employment Contract will review the Executive Director.

Employee Records

Correct and accurate employment records are important. Information concerning address, phone number, person to contact in case of accident, change in name, marital status and number of dependents must be kept up-to-date. The Administrative Assistant maintains the employment records.

Compensatory Time

If required to work on weekends or holidays, salaried employees may receive a like number of hours of compensatory time off which is time and a half for each hour worked. An

employee may add such accumulated time to paid vacation leave. Employees must have advance approval before they can accumulate compensatory time and must have approval from Executive Director to schedule time off.

Hours of Work

Regular office hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m, Monday through Friday, with a thirty minute break for lunch. Staff should alternate 30 minute lunch breaks on a regular basis during the hours of 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. If office is to be locked for lunch breaks at any time, it should only be locked between the hours of 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m. and a notice should be posted on the door. Two fifteen minute breaks are given during an eight hour work day. Weekend office hours consist of Saturdays from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. during peak season months. Saturday workers need to bring their lunch because office hours do not allow for a lunch period. If it is necessary to leave to pick up lunch, it should be done during the hours of 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m. with a proper notice on door and only for fifteen minutes. Permanent employees will be issued an office key and must be responsible for it. At the end of employment, the key shall be returned prior to or concurrently with the issuance of the employee's final payroll check. If the employee fails to return the key, the final check will reflect a deduction to reimburse the Sabine Parish Tourist Commission for any and all actual expense incurred or to be incurred as a result thereof (including, without limitation, cost to rekey or change locks.)

Office Procedures

Opening Procedures – consist of turning on all building lights, turn off porch lights, set AC/Heat Unit to reasonable temperature, and turn on office machines.

Closing Procedures – consist of initialing daily door signing sheet to ensure that all office doors are locked at the end of the day. AC and Heat unit should be set on 75 degrees, all fans and lights in the building should be turned off, all appliances and office equipment should be turned off, and porch lights should be turned on. On Fridays, all trash should be taken out and brochure displays inside and out should be filled. Both restrooms should be filled with soap, toilet tissue, and hand towels. All plants inside and out should be watered once a week during the spring and summer months and during the winter months plants should be watered once every two weeks. Saturday check all outside brochure displays and during heavy traffic periods leave additional brochures in container by front door.

Employee Benefits:

Sick leave

Employees will have five days of paid sick leave per year. Those days not used will be carried over to the following year, which begins January 1. An employee may accumulate up to 20 days (160 hours) of sick leave. Should an employee leave or be terminated there is no compensation for sick days. Doctor's appointments taking less than four hours will be excused. Longer appointments will be considered days of sick leave. Employees are not eligible for sick leave consideration until after completing six months of continuous employment.

Vacation Benefits

Vacations Eligibility Schedule:

No vacation may be taken until completion of six months of employment.

One week after completion of full-time employment of six months.

Two weeks after completion of full-time employment of one to five years.

Three weeks after completion of full-time employment of six to 15 years.

Four weeks after completion of full-time employment of more than 15 years.

Employees may take vacations at any time during the year but times must be approved by Executive Director prior to being scheduled. They must, however, pre-arrange such vacations to avoid conflict with scheduled and other work of the Tourist Commission that may require their presence. Two consecutive weeks cannot be used without special approval. No more than one employee may take vacation at the same time. In the event of a conflict, the Director will make the decision on what is in the best interest of the Tourist Commission.

Employees may carry over vacation time at the end of each calendar year if not used. If an employee does not take the full number of vacation days by December 31, he or she may carry the days into the next year. When an employee leaves the employment of the Commission they may be paid up to 300 hours of accumulated vacation time.

Absenteeism

It is recognized that circumstances other than illness and vacation sometimes result in absence from work. Employees are paid for time spent away from work in the event of death in the immediate family. The approved length of time should be discussed with the Executive Director. On occasion, an employee is unavoidably away from work. Employees with no accrued sick or annual leave are granted reasonable leave with pay upon approval of the

Executive Director. Employees, who are unable to report to work, are required to notify the Director as soon as possible. If the Director is not available, the employee must notify the Administrative Assistant. The intent of this requirement is that employees should be sure someone is notified when they are unable to work.

Forced absences – employees will be paid for time spent on jury duty and jury pay will be integrated with Tourist Commission pay. Employees will be expected to work during the hours when not actually engaged in jury duty.

Maternity Leave

Employees must use sick leave and vacation leave for maternity leave. She will be granted time off without pay for the remainder of the days.

Paid holidays:

Authorized holidays with pay for all full-time employees are as follows:

1. New Year's Day
2. Martin Luther King Day
3. President's Day
4. Memorial Day
5. Good Friday
6. Fourth of July
7. Labor Day
8. Thanksgiving Day and the day after Thanksgiving
9. Christmas Day and the day after Christmas
10. Floating holiday at the discretion of the Executive Director

When any of these holidays fall on a Saturday or Sunday, if the prevailing practice in the community is to observe it on Friday or Monday, the Tourist Commission will observe this practice. If a holiday falls within the vacation period of an employee, the employee will receive the day off as a holiday not as vacation.

Holiday Pay for Part Time Employees

In the case where a part time employee has specific assigned days of the week to work and a holiday falls on any of those days the employee will be paid for the holiday. Part time employee that works days on an as needed assigned basis will not be paid for the holiday time.

Pay Period

Employees are paid by check bi-monthly, on the 15th of each month and on the last day of each month. When a payday falls on a weekend or holiday, salary checks will be distributed on the previous working day.

Salary Deductions

By law, the Sabine Parish Tourist commission makes the following deductions from the salary of employees:

- A. **Federal Income Tax** – the amount of this deduction is dependent upon the amount of the salary, the number of exemptions claimed, and any special instruction the employee may give authorizing amounts withheld.
- B. **Social Security** – This is provided for all employees under the federal Insurance Contribution Act. The law requires this deduction subject to change by action of Congress. The Tourist Commission pays an equal amount to this protection.
- C. **State Income Tax** – This tax follows the Federal withholding provisions described above.

Reimbursed Travel Per Diem/Expenses

The Commissioners will approve all travel expenses with the approval of the annual budget. The Commission will reimburse the employee/commissioner in full for all direct expenses relating to the trip. The employee must complete an expense voucher listing in detail, by day, all expenses to be reimbursed. Expense statements are to be submitted not more than twice monthly before pay periods. Employees are issued expense checks prior to departure for travel that will be over 2 days in length.

Meals – Per Diem rates apply for meal expenses for travel outside a 50 mile radius of Many. The following rates apply for meals. Breakfast \$7.25, lunch \$14.50, dinner \$21.75.

Mileage – The reimbursement for mileage is .50 per mile or current state rate.

Accommodations – depends on market and event. Most events have a host hotel with set rates up to \$139 plus taxes per night. Accommodation costs need to stay within this range if possible.

Receipts for expenses not covered must be turned in for approval and reimbursement. Tax exempt forms must be given to all hotel employees when traveling.

Worker's Compensation Insurance

Employees are protected under provisions of worker's compensation, which provides medical and hospital care, and partial compensation for lost time due to an accident or occupational disease during the course of employment. Prompt reporting of accidents arising out of or in the course of employment is essential to protect employees' insurance interests. All accidents must be reported immediately.

Retirement Benefits

The Tourist Commission provides a Simple IRA Plan for each full time employee with a three percent match. Full-time employees are able to obtain retirement benefits upon the completion of six months of employment.

Medical Insurance Benefits

The Tourist Commission provides insurance coverage by Blue Cross Blue Shield to each full time employee with a 50 percent match for the employee only. If the employee chooses to obtain a family plan then the employee is required to pay for the employee's family portion of the plan.

Phone Messages

All daily phone messages are to be documented in a phone message book with the name, contact number, date, reason for calling, and employee must initial. When the director is not available to take his or her messages all messages should then be directed to the Administrative Assistant.

Cell phone usage and Telephone calls

Please limit personal telephone calls to 2 minutes and only when necessary. Excessive personal telephone calls are disruptive to entire staff. Charge all personal long distance telephone calls to your home number and keep local calls to a minimum.

Smoking destinations

Designated smoking is allowed at the back entrance of the Tourist Commission building. Smoking receptacles are placed at the back entrance of the building for employees only. They are placed in the front of the building for tourist.

Personal Conduct

First impressions are important in any business but especially for employees of the Sabine Parish Tourist Commission. Tourist Commission staff should conduct themselves in an orderly manner in relations with the public and fellow workers. Since the Tourist Commission is judged to a great extent by its personnel, it is most important that employees maintain conduct above reproach at all times. Personal appearance, body language, voice grammar and dictation are very important. Proper phone etiquette is stressed at all times.

Confidential Matters

The Tourist Commission is entrusted with many confidential matters. Employees must keep such matters handled by the Tourist Commission in strictest confidence.

Dismissal

Employment may be terminated by Executive Director for any reason at any time. Dismissal of Executive Director is covered in Employment Contract.

Resignation

For the convenience of the Commission, when an employee decides to resign, he or she should give the following notice: Two weeks notice from clerical staff and four weeks notice for management staff. Vacation pay not utilized will be compensated for any departing employee up to 300 hours.

Leaving the office

When an employee is carrying out assigned duties outside the office, he or she must make certain that a member of the staff knows of the absence, the destinations and the approximate time of return.

Use of equipment

The Tourist Commission does not permit use of any Tourist Commission equipment for personal reasons. Personal phone calls must be kept to a minimum. Abuse of this privilege may result in a warning or probation.

Satcom Policy

Because of the importance of the Toledo Bend Lake Country website and the goals of the Commission, all correspondence with Satcom is to be documented and kept until all issues with that particular subject are finalized. After two weeks of sending correspondence to Satcom with no action taken, notices are to be forwarded to the Director for follow up action.

Social Media Policy

Social Media correspondence is to be conducted on a daily basis. All festivals, events, events, and activities should be promoted through all social media websites.

Administrative Policies:

Agreements/Contracts

The Director is able to negotiate agreements/contracts on behalf of the Tourist Commission for no greater than 10 percent of its budget for the current fiscal year, or the full amount of money transferred to the Tourist Commission from another source for a particular project such as large fishing or golfing events.

Special Events Policy

The Tourist Commission agreed in May of 2008 to establish a Special Events Policy as approved by letter from the Attorney General's Office. This policy states that the Tourist Commission encourages and supports recreational and cultural activities and events that create and implement innovative marketing and promotional initiatives and economic development. To accomplish these goals the Tourist Commission has created a plan to facilitate recreational and cultural economic developments (See attached Special Events Policy).

Public Comment Period – a three minute time period will be allocated at all Tourist Commission Board Meetings for guests to speak in reference to agenda items.

Public Functions – No alcohol will be allowed during Tourist Commission functions that are held on the Tourist Commission's premises.

Use of building

Other community groups and businesses may utilize the board room for meetings. These must be booked through the Administrative Assistant's calendar. There will be no charge. Scheduling cannot conflict with the needs of the Tourist Commission.

The building is not allowed to be used for any political purpose. If the building is approved for usage after normal business hours, arrangements must be made for personnel of the Commission or a Board Member of the Commission to be present. The organization must pay compensation if an employee is required to stay and the hours must be approved by the Executive Director.

Sabine Parish Tourist Commission

Employee Handbook and Policies

I have read the Sabine Parish Tourist Commission Handbook and Policies and understand all requirements and agree to abide by all rules and regulations.

Signature: _____ Date _____