Located near the center of the parish, Leesville has served as the parish seat since creation of the parish in 1871. History buffs will love the Historic Downtown District centered on Third Street. The district offers a variety of artistic entertainment through art exhibits, musical performances, and several annual festivals which are held throughout the year.

Visit our website at www.VentureVernon.com or call 1-800-349-6287 for more information.

The current Vernon Parish Courthouse is located at 215 South Fourth Street in the historic First National Bank building. The historic courthouse at 201 South Third Street is the third to be built on this original site. The first, built in 1871, was a simple wooden building. The second was built in the 1880s and was an elaborate Romanesque Revival structure. Unfortunately, the grand structure had to be destroyed when the tower began to pull away from the main building due to problems arising from artesian wells on the site.

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Locally owned and operated.

Venture into the Past...

1. Vernon Parish Historic Courthouse, 1910 – This building in the Italianate style is the third courthouse to occupy this site. Built in the shape of a Greek cross, it has two floors and a stone cupola which has a clock on each side. The bell which was originally housed inside the cupola can be seen in the gazebo on the courthouse lawn. Currently U.S. Post Office. Offered by elaborately decorated pediments, facing each entrance.

2. Smart Plantation Home, 1858 – The oldest building in Vernon Parish, the plantation home was the home of Dr. Edmond E. Smart, a prominent Leesville physician. The city was laid out and built on his plantation after he donated land for the courthouse.

3. Lyons-Strong Home, 1900 – The dense brown sandstone house is a prime example of Arts & Crafts architecture. John Booser’s Pub is located inside the completely renovated Bed & Breakfast.

4. Lyons Building, 1907 – The Lyons Building is a large two-story building. The flat roof, imposing pretentious homes in Vernon Parish.

5. Leesville Hotel, 1907 – The original hotel at this site was an open-air theater called the Dreamland. Later renamed the Vernon Theater, this movie house played movies from the years of Tom Mix to those of Jane Fonda before it closed and was reopened as Celebrations, a hall currently available for parties and special occasions.

6. Ward House, 1920 – The Ward House is an early 1900s property that was first built as a boarding house by Mrs. Ward, who was known for her gracious hospitality and comfortable accommodations. The house with its large L-shaped porch supported by stone columns is an example of Arts & Crafts architecture. John Booser’s Pub is located inside the completely renovated Bed & Breakfast.

7. Booker-Lewis House, 1904 – The Booker-Lewis House & Restaurant offers a graceful balance of elegance and country charm. Built in the Queen Anne Revival style, the house retains many of the original window panes and all of the original Louisiana yellow pine door casings and floors. It was originally built for Mr. H.T. Booker, a bookkeeper at the Nona Mills Lumber Company.

8. Cain Motor Company – Originally a car dealership, the property is currently owned by a local businessman and houses his collection of retro memorabilia. Through the windows you can view vintage vehicles, an original soda fountain, antique gas signs and more.

9. Dreamland Theater, 1915 – The original theater at this site was an open-air theater called the Aerial-Dome. There were no walls or roof, merely a fence around the property. In the 1920s a Moorish movie palace with Spanish tile, twisted columns and niches on the second floor facade, was built and called the Dreamland. Later renamed the Vernon Theater, this movie house played movies from the years of Tom Mix to those of Jane Fonda before it closed and was reopened as Celebrations, a hall currently available for parties and special occasions.

10. Vernon Bank, 1907 – The Vernon Bank was located in this large commercial building built in 1927 by George R. Ferguson of the Nona Mills Lumber Company. The bank portion of the building is a Romanesque style façade with arched windows and a corner entrance with Corinthian columns.

11. Vernon Parish, 1928 – The distinguished Merchants & Farmers Bank building is built in the English Revival style. Hallmarks of this style are corner quoins and classical architectural devices such as the egg and dart molding across the main façade. The bank originally had a bronze clock on the front and still has its beautiful white marble counters.

12. National Hotel, 1907 – The National Hotel was lavishly decorated. The original building featured 20-museums in the central two-story gallery on the front, welcoming visitors. The lower floor held the lobby, a variety of offices, and a restaurant in the rear of which opened onto Courthouse Street. Guest rooms were on the upper floors.

13. First National Bank, 1907 – Built in the style popular for large commercial buildings at the beginning of the 20th century, and used as a bank, this large building also housed the opera house known as the National Theater. Although the bank closed during the depression, the theater continued to present concerts and traveling shows for many years. This building now houses the Vernon Parish Courthouse.

14. Vernon Parish Veterans’ Plaza, 2000 – The Vernon Parish Veterans’ Plaza was built to honor all Vernon Parish veterans. Since it was begun, the memorial has grown to contain seven stone tablets engraved with the names of Vernon Parish vets. At the site, the American flag sits above the flag of the five U.S. military branches, including the Air Force, Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard, as a POW flag flutters to the side, alone, but not forgotten.

15. Museum of West Louisiana, 1900 – The Museum of West Louisiana is housed in the historic Leesville KCS Depot building. From 1916 until 1968, the railroad served as a primary travel and transportation center for the city of Leesville and all the surrounding area. In 1958 the building was restored to serve as a storehouse of artifacts illustrating the history, culture, and resources of Vernon Parish and the West Central area of the Louisiana Territory.

16. US Post Office, 1936 – Built by the WPA during the Great Depression, the Post Office is now used for administrative purposes. The building continues to house a post office.

17. Museum of West Louisiana, 1900 – The Museum of West Louisiana is housed in the historic Leesville KCS Depot building. From 1916 until 1958, the railroad served as a primary travel and transportation center for the city of Leesville and all the surrounding area. In 1958 the building was restored to serve as a storehouse of artifacts illustrating the history, culture, and resources of Vernon Parish and the West Central area of the Louisiana Territory.