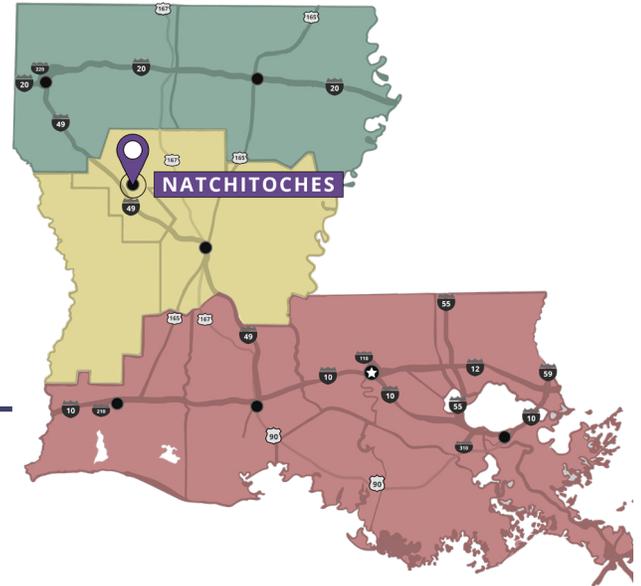




Louisiana's Oldest City and original French colony, Natchitoches (Nack-a-Tish) was established in 1714 and retains its European flavor through its architecture, heritage and lifestyle.

Natchitoches is located in the central region of Louisiana and in the Cane River National Heritage Area - a largely rural, agricultural landscape known for its historic plantations, its distinctive Creole architecture and its multicultural legacy.

Learn more at www.Natchitoches.com.



Turning the Corner

As the oldest settlement in the Louisiana Purchase, Natchitoches is actually three years older than New Orleans! This community of 18,000 people is turning the corner after the pandemic by welcoming more visitors to central Louisiana to celebrate its historic, as well as progressive, elements. The Natchitoches Christmas Festival is Louisiana's oldest festival and began in 1927 and draws thousands every year during the holidays. The 96-year-old festival is ranked as the "Third Best Holiday Light Show" in the country behind Rockefeller Center and Disneyland by Yahoo! Travel. The Natchitoches Christmas Festival was named the "2020 Best Public Holiday Light Display" by USA TODAY 10Best Readers' Choice Awards.

Natchitoches is also home to the modern and futuristic Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame and Northwest Louisiana History Museum. The Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame is hailed as an award-winning modern piece of architecture, fused into the historic buildings and brick-lined streets of downtown and featured on the Smithsonian Channel for its modern design.

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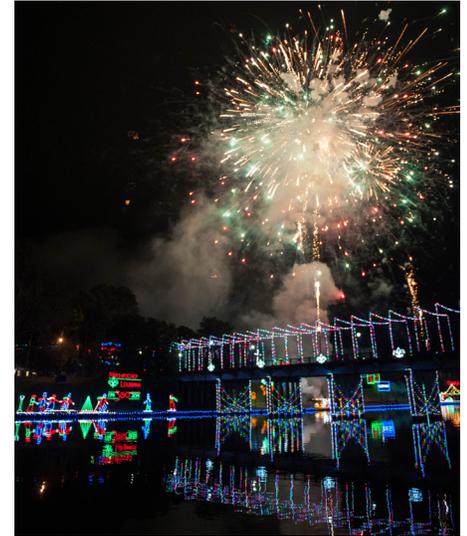
Natchitoches Christmas Festival

The Natchitoches Christmas Festival was first presented in 1927. In 1936, a fireworks display was added to the festival. Allen Cox and Sam West conceived the idea and initiated funding from local businesses. The display cost \$300. Today's fireworks shows cost over \$100,000 and are a spectacle every Saturday from the Saturday before Thanksgiving until New Years Eve.

Through the years, unique traditions have evolved that allow the Natchitoches community to celebrate in its own special way. The first Christmas Festival Parade is believed to have taken place in the 1940s. The tradition of selecting Miss Merry Christmas began in 1956 when Judy Hubley, a 17-year-old Natchitoches High School senior was chosen to represent the Christmas festival. Her responsibilities were to ride in the parade and to promote the Christmas Festival on the radio. This tradition continues today.

In 1989, the festival and its famous lights and Christmas set pieces can be seen in the movie "Steel Magnolias," which was set and produced in Natchitoches by Robert Harling, who grew up there.

Today, the annual festival has evolved into a six-week-long Natchitoches Christmas Season, which extends from the Saturday before Thanksgiving through Twelfth Night (January 6). In Louisiana, this day marks the beginning of Carnival Season leading up to Mardi Gras.



Learn more at www.NatchitochesChristmas.com.

