



**BILLY NUNGESSER**  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

**State of Louisiana**  
OFFICE OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

POST OFFICE BOX 44243  
BATON ROUGE, LA 70804

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Bill Sherman  
Office of the Lieutenant Governor  
225.342.7009  
[bsherman@crt.la.gov](mailto:bsherman@crt.la.gov)

Jessica Ragusa  
Office of the Lieutenant Governor  
225.342.7009  
[jragusa@crt.la.gov](mailto:jragusa@crt.la.gov)

**LT. GOV. NUNGESSER ANNOUNCES RETIRE LOUISIANA CERTIFIED RETIREMENT COMMUNITIES**

**BATON ROUGE** – Lt. Governor Billy Nungesser, along with the Louisiana Office of Tourism, are proud to announce that eight communities from across Louisiana are officially Louisiana Retirement Certified Areas. The Encore Louisiana Commission worked for over three months on naming these specific locations across the state that are now certified and focused on bringing retirees to enjoy their “encore” at life.

“These eight communities represent all of Louisiana and what we have to offer,” said Lt. Governor Billy Nungesser. “With nearly 76 million baby boomers nearing retirement in the coming years, many states are working to draw them to their areas, and we thought we should take advantage to not only grow tourism but help spur economic development.”

The eight communities that have been certified include: Lafayette; Lake Charles; Natchitoches; Ruston and Lincoln Parish; Toledo Bend and Sabine Parish; Shreveport-Bossier City; Houma and Terrebonne Parish; and Thibodaux.

Criteria that was used in selecting the first eight communities included: climate; demographics; tax structure at the state and local levels; local housing availability; public safety and crime index; employment and volunteer opportunities; healthcare and medical services; public transportation; recreational areas; and festival and fairs, just to name a few.

Each of these communities have demonstrated qualities that make them premier locations for retirees. Part of being certified as a retirement area includes state-level marketing effort inclusion, networking opportunities and possible grant funding to support the program and help it grow. More communities will be chosen in the coming years as the program expands in order to attract a larger number of retirees.

The Encore Louisiana Commission was mandated by the Legislature in 1999 as the Louisiana Retirement Development Commission to market and promote Louisiana as a retirement community state. In 2009, the Legislature renamed the commission as the Encore Louisiana Commission with the goal of setting guidelines and requirements in developing criteria for a destination to become a Louisiana Certified Retirement Community. For more information visit <https://www.louisianatravel.com/retire>.

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