WHY NEW ORLEANS IS IMPORTANT TO AMERICA

The Crescent City is One of America’s Most Significant Cities With A History Unlike Any Other

New Orleans is one of the oldest cities in America, boasting a storied 300-year history unlike any other city in the country. The Louisiana Purchase, which doubled the size of the fledgling United States in 1803, was made for the primary purpose of securing the city of New Orleans and its port. The transfer was made between France and the United States on December 3, 1803 in the Cabildo on Jackson Square – one of America’s most historic buildings. Today, New Orleans has more than 35,000 buildings on the National Register of Historic Places, 15,000 more buildings than its closest competitor, Washington, D.C.

A landmark military victory in American history, the Battle of New Orleans was fought here, with General Andrew Jackson leading a small group of American fighters against a much larger, professionally trained English military force. It was the final battle of the War of 1812, and it occurred after the two countries had signed a treaty ending the war days earlier.

New Orleans is the birthplace of jazz, widely considered America’s greatest contribution to art. The city is also the home of the oldest opera house in America and known as America’s First City of Opera. The city hosted the first opera in North America on May 22, 1796. The New Orleans based Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra is the country’s only musician-owned symphony.

The Port of New Orleans is one of the busiest ports in America. The city is the home of major shipbuilding facilities, a naval base, the nation’s Marine reserve headquarters and the world’s first World Trade Center.

There are more than 40 museums in New Orleans, in addition to a world-class zoo, aquarium and children’s museum. New Orleans is also the home of esteemed medical research facilities and seven institutions of higher learning.

New Orleans is universally considered one of the top three culinary destinations in the world, a tribute to its indigenous Creole cuisine that is found only in the Crescent City and is an outgrowth of the city’s unique blend of nationalities and cultures. Prior to Katrina, the St. Charles Avenue Streetcar was the oldest continually operating streetcar line in the world.

Without New Orleans, the United States would have to find alternative suppliers for many of the country’s important consumer products.

Louisiana’s natural resources are crucial to the operation of the United States, and include:
Petroleum, Chemical and Mineral Industries
• 11 percent of U.S. petroleum
• 19 percent of the country’s reserves of natural gas.
• Louisiana is a primary source of the nation’s crude oil
• Second in production of the nation’s natural gas
• Second in total energy production
• Second largest refiner of petroleum for consumer use as gasoline and plastic
• 25 percent of America’s petrochemicals, including basic chemicals, plastics and fertilizers
• The largest producer of salt in America
• Second-highest mineral producer in the U.S.

Seafood
• Louisiana’s fishing industry has been the second-largest in America, accounting for 26 percent of all seafood landed in the country and 40 percent of all seafood consumed by Americans each year.

Cash Crops
• Top 10 largest producer of cotton, sugarcane and rice in the U.S.

One of the World’s Most Important Ports
More than 6,000 vessels move through New Orleans annually along the Mississippi River, making it the world’s busiest waterway and integral to the country’s economic stability.
In 2004, more than 380,000 jobs in the United States were related to the cargo activity at the Port of New Orleans’ marine terminals, and these job holders received $16.9 billion in combined personal income. The marine cargo activity at the port supported $37 billion of output in the nation, and generated $2.8 billion in tax revenue.

Key Statistics
• A leading port for the movement of imported steel
• Top port for imported natural rubber
• The nation’s premier coffee-handling port
• An important port of call for the cruise industry, servicing more than 700,000 passengers

Tourism a Key to Jump Starting City’s Economy
Tourism is the second-largest industry in New Orleans, employing more than 85,000 in 2004 and generating $5.5 billion in visitor spending. More than 10.1 million visitors came to New Orleans in 2004, and without tourism, the city had an average of $15.2 million per day in direct income. The city is holding an abbreviated eight-day Mardi Gras celebration in 2006 – the 150th anniversary of Carnival parading – to celebrate the city’s spirit and heritage and provide a much-needed revenue boost to the economy.

Key Mardi Gras statistics according to a 2000 University of New Orleans study
• Mardi Gras generated a $1.056 billion
• Carnival generates a more than 4-to-1 return on investment in direct tax revenues for New Orleans, producing $20.5 million and costing $4.6 million for city services.
The New Orleans Tourism Marketing Corporation promotes the city as a leisure tourism destination throughout the year. Annually, NOTMC’s marketing campaigns include strategic print, broadcast, and Internet advertising and public relations. Web sites:


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