Located in the northwest corner of Louisiana, Shreveport-Bossier has established itself as a popular regional Mardi Gras destination for locals and visitors alike. Over the course of Shreveport-Bossier's Mardi Gras season - which officially begins with the annual 12th Night Celebration on Saturday, Jan. 5, and closes following the Fat Tuesday Bridge Closing Ceremony at midnight on Tuesday, Feb. 12 - an estimated 400,000 people from throughout the region will experience Mardi Gras in Shreveport-Bossier.

The two largest evening parades in Shreveport-Bossier are the Krewe of Centaur, 4:30 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 2, and the Krewe of Gemini, 5 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 9. Both parades will begin at the corner of Clyde Fant Parkway and Lake Street in downtown Shreveport, proceed down Clyde Fant Parkway and turn onto Shreveport-Barksdale Highway, ending at the intersection of Preston Avenue and East Kings Highway near Duck Pond Park.

The Krewe of Centaur parade, "Centaur's Parade of Festivals," will be led by Grand Marshals and Academy Award® winners William Joyce and Brandon Oldenburg of Moonbot Studios. Among the float themes will be the Roswell UFO Festival, Navy Fleet Week, and the Running of the Bulls. This year's parade will feature 31 floats, 10 marching bands and 600 krewe members throwing more than 2 milllion beads, cups, stuffed animals, doubloons, and toys. The Krewe of Centaur Float Loading Party will be held at the Krewe of Centaur Den, 948 North Market in Shreveport, 6 p.m., Friday, Feb. 1. Float-loading parties are free opportunities for the public to get a "sneak peek" of the floats, socialize and take photos with krewe royalty.

The Krewe of Gemini parade theme for 2013 is "Gemini Loves Television". Individual float themes will include "The Simpsons", "Cheers", and "Happy Days". The Krewe of Gemini Float Loading Party will be held at the Krewe of Gemini Den, 2101 East Texas St. in Bossier City, 6 p.m., Friday, Feb. 8.

Shreveport-Bossier's annual Mardi Gras celebrations also include a number of smaller, quirkier parades and events. The Krewe of Barkus and Meoux's Pet Contest and Mardi Paw Pet Parade provides a chance for festive pets to celebrate Mardi Gras in their own parade on Sunday, Feb. 3 at Riverview Park in downtown Shreveport. Activities begin at 1:30 p.m. and the Mardi Paw Pet Parade rolls at 3 p.m. The Krewe of Aesclepius Children's Parade will take place at Pierre Bossier Mall in Bossier City, Tuesday, Feb. 12 at 6:30 p.m. The Krewe of Aesclepius Children's Parade emphasizes families and children, featuring up to 50 floats and an alcohol-free, kid-friendly environment. The Krewe of Aesclepius also marks the finale of Mardi Gras celebrations in Shreveport-Bossier with their Fat Tuesday Bridge Closing Ceremony on the

Texas Street Bridge at 11:30 p.m. The Fat Tuesday Bridge Closing Ceremony, one of Shreveport-Bossier's most unusual Mardi Gras season events, features a blessing of the neon-adorned Texas Street Bridge led by Monsignor Provenza of Holy Trinity Catholic Church, as well as a final round of revelry leading up to midnight.

Celebrating 18 years in 2013, the Krewe of Highland parade is one of Louisiana's largest neighborhood parades. It is scheduled to roll at 2 p.m., Sunday, Feb. 10 through the historic Highland neighborhood located off Kings Highway between Byrd High School and Centenary College. The parade begins at the corner of Creswell Avenue and Kings Highway and winds through the neighborhood. The Highland parade has become well-known for its unique throws, which usually include hot dogs, SPAM sandwiches and Moon Pies, and for the krewe's diverse membership. After the Krewe of Highland parade ends, parade-goers gather to continue the party at celebrations hosted by Highland's Columbia Park, 2900 Creswell Avenue in Shreveport, and Marilynn's Place Restaurant, 4041 Fern Avenue in Shreveport.

For more information about Mardi Gras in Shreveport-Bossier, visit www.shreveport-bossier.org/mardi-gras or select the "Mardi Gras" page at www.shreveportbossierfunguide.com.

Weekend Entertainment Calendar

Ongoing:

- Bossier Parish Student Art Show

Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. through Jan. 15
@East Bank Gallery, 630 Barksdale Blvd., Bossier City

The Bossier Arts Council East Bank Gallery is thrilled to announce an exhibition of Bossier Parish Student Art. Their works will be on display at the gallery from Dec. 4 to Jan. 15.

An opening reception and award ceremony will be Tuesday, December 11th at 5:30pm. The show features a variety of mediums and styles all produced by the extremely talented students

of Bossier Parish. The Bossier Parish Student Art Show is supported by a grant from Target Corporation (NYSE: TGT.) The grant is part of Target's ongoing efforts to build strong, safe and healthy communities across the country. These efforts include Target's long history of giving 5 percent of its income to communities, which today equals more than $3 million every week. As part of this commitment, Target is on track to give $1 billion for education by the end of 2015 to help kids learn, schools teach and parents and caring adults engage.

The East Bank Gallery is a project of the Bossier Arts Council is committed to promoting art work of regional artists. It is located in BAC headquarters at 630 Barksdale Blvd. right off of I-20. You can visit the gallery Tuesday-Saturday from 11:00am-6:00pm or by appointment. For more information about the Bossier Arts Council feel free to call us at 741-8310 or visit our website at www.bossierarts.org

Monday, Dec. 31:

- Bowl in the New Year

9 p.m.
@ Holiday Lanes, 3316 Old Minden Rd, Bossier City
$15-$25
Call 318-746-7331 for more information

Make Holiday Lanes your place to BOWL in the New Year. Last year we were completely sold out so we've decided to give a few more options. We are going to ROLL in the New Year!

Our fantastic New Year's Eve party package gives you: - Unlimited Intergalactic Glow-in-the-Dark Bowling all night (9 pm - 2 am) - Breakfast Platter (2 eggs, hash browns, sausage, bacon, toast and a soft drink) - Party Favor Pack (for first 100 people) - Glass of bubbly at midnight (or a fountain drink served in a champagne glass, which is also provided for under 21's) $25 per person for adults & $15 per person ages 12 and under. Minimum 4 people per lane - - -

- - AND FOR ALL YOU WHO LOVE TO PARTY IT UP BUT DON'T WANT TO STAY OUT TOO LATE: 11:00 am - 4:00 pm $13 per hour special lane rates from 11 am - 4 pm on New Year's Eve. It's the perfect venue for kids too because it's a fun, safe family night out. All you need is a minimum of 4 bowlers per lane. ID's will be required for anyone who chooses champagne.