



[Home](#) [News](#) [Opinion](#) [Movies](#) [Music](#) [Events/Exhibits](#) [About Us](#)



NewsWatch

Shreveport illuminated Our tour of the Holiday Trail of Lights ends along the Red River

by Chéré Coen

This month Shreveport and Bossier City are lit up for the holidays as part of the annual Holiday Trail of Lights, with 118 acres glowing at the American Rose Center, and downtown Shreveport and surrounding areas bursting with special events.

If you plan a trip to our friends in Northwest Louisiana, both towns bookending the Red River offer lots of things to do, whether as special events or regular tourist attractions.

Shreveport has been home to the American Rose Center, with its 65 individual gardens and more than 200 rose varieties, since 1974. Every Christmas, 4 million lights are strung throughout the property, special displays are erected and entertainment is offered nightly. The result is stunning.

"It's the best kept little secret in Shreveport," said Marilyn Creswell, American Rose Center marketing director.

Another wonderful secret is the Robinson Film Center, a state-of-the-art film theater that showcases independent, international and classic cinema in a renovated building in downtown Shreveport. The facility also includes the eclectic Abby Singer Bistro, a delightful spot on the third floor with a balcony overlooking Texas Street.

Because Shreveport has drawn numerous film and television companies to the area



File photo

Holiday lights are on display at Shreveport's American Rose Center.

because of state tax incentives, big-name actors and directors have arrived, some of whom have visited the Robinson Center during screenings. Treat Williams, for instance, attended the screening of *Hair* recently, and Oliver Stone and Val Kilmer attended the screening of *The Doors*, said Chris Jay, director of marketing and programming.

On Dec. 19, the Robinson Center presents Arnold Schwarzenegger in *Jingle All The Way* as part of its "Movies and Moonbeams" outdoor family cinema. The free film will be shown at 7 p.m. at the A.C. Steere Recreation Center in Shreveport.



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Every third Thursday — this month that's Dec. 18 — the Thursday Nite Trolley travels throughout the Downtown Arts District offering tours of hot spots such as Artspace, which offers a juried art show and sale titled *Deck the Halls* and the SciPort Discovery Center, named one of the top 10 science centers in America by Parent magazine. Trolley tours begin at artspace, 710 Texas St., every 30 minutes from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Other holiday events include the Shreveport Symphony's Holiday Pops concert on Dec. 20.

Free things to do

There are plenty of free activities for families. Here are a few:

- RiverView Park, 601 Clyde Fant Parkway in Shreveport offers interactive water fountains and a waterfall for kids in the summer. It's a bit chilly for that now, but the river view, water features and the Barnwell Garden & Art Center with its domed botanical garden and outdoors Fragrance Garden for the blind make for a nice outing.
- Shreveport art museums that offer free admittance include the Meadows Museum of Art, the R.W. Norton Art Gallery and the Southern University Museum of Art.
- For sports lovers, check out the free Ark-La-Tex Sports Museum of Champions located inside the Shreveport Convention Center.
- The Louisiana Boardwalk in Bossier is only free if you don't shop -- the view and holiday displays are worth the trip. If you do decide to bring out the wallet, be sure and grab a "chocolate crocodile" at the shop of the same name. It's decadence at its best.

On the web

www.shreveport-bossier.org
www.shrevearts.org
www.moviesandmoonbeams.org
www.independencebowl.org

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