

**News and Current Events :: This week New Orleans was to observe "Southern Decadence Day"**

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New Orleans, LA - Southern Decadence started thirty-four years ago as a simple going-away party. As a top gay Labor Day Weekend destination, it has evolved into one of our world's major annual events. One of the largest annual celebrations in New Orleans, it has become known as the "Gay Mardi Gras." People begin to arrive on the Wednesday before Labor Day, and generally don't even think about stopping or going home until the following Tuesday. With over 100,000 gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender participants last year, the economic impact on the city was estimated to be in excess of \$95 million. Mayor Ray Nagin has recognized its importance with an Official Proclamation to welcome the event. The city's wildest neighborhood gets even crazier as the French Quarter is packed for the entire event; however, the big day is Sunday. That's when the Grand Marshal leads the annual parade through the streets. Tradition dictates that the previous year's Grand Marshal choose their successor, a well guarded secret until the annual coronation ceremony in July. The new Grand Marshal will then select the official theme, colors and song, and will help to plan some of the event's particulars.