



August 5, 2024

SUBJECT: A Letter of Invitation – ORVA’s 57th Annual Convention in West Monroe, Louisiana

Greetings:

I take this opportunity to invite you to the Ouachita River Valley Association's 57th Annual Convention, which will be held September 19-20, 2024 in West Monroe, Louisiana. The activities begin with registration at noon Thursday, September 19, 2024, at the West Monroe Convention Center in West Monroe, Louisiana, followed by a good, old-fashioned “Southern” fish fry at the Ike Expo Center (the “Ike”), just across town.

This year's convention promises to be a somewhat different but exciting event! In addition to several notable speakers and leaders who will present and discuss their perspectives concerning the Ouachita-Black Rivers Navigation Project (Project), we’ve built in several important panel discussions with key leaders in their field of expertise. We’ve assembled a slate of topics that we believe will be most interesting and informative. Our list of panelists and speakers includes government, industry, and professional leaders.

The convention is hosted by the City of West Monroe and supported by numerous sponsors. The Fairfield Inn and Suites, in very close proximity to the Ike and just across town from the Convention Center, has provided the government per diem lodging rate for our convention attendees.

This year’s convention provides an excellent opportunity to meet the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers leadership for the Project, learn and develop professionally, network, exchange thoughts and ideas, and discuss those economic, navigation, and other issues relevant to the Project.

I look forward to seeing you in West Monroe. You will not want to miss this conference!

Sincerely,

Randy Denmon
President

A River Basin of Opportunity...A Century Plus of Commitment



Registration Form

57th Annual Convention

September 19-20, 2024 West Monroe, Louisiana

ONLINE REGISTRATION: WWW.westmonroechamber.org/orva

REGISTRATION INFORMATION		
	Fee	\$ Total \$
CONVENTION (includes all convention activities, Thursday Night Fish Fry including beer and wine, Breaks, Friday Lunch and an indiv ORVA membership)		
Early Registration (ends September 5)	\$325	
Late Registration (after September 5)	\$350	
Spouse All-Access Pass (includes all Convention Activities, Thursday Night Fish Fry and Friday Lunch)	\$ 50	
MEALS (for those not attending the full convention)		
Thursday Night Fish Fry at the Ike (incl beer and wine.)	\$ 30	
Friday Lunch	\$ 20	
SPONSORSHIP (Gold, Silver, or Bronze) (Please see below.)		
TOTAL DUE		
DIET RESTRICTIONS: <input type="checkbox"/> Vegan <input type="checkbox"/> Vegetarian <input type="checkbox"/> Gluten <input type="checkbox"/> Lactose <input type="checkbox"/> Other		

Company _____ **Contact Person** _____
Address _____ **Phone** _____
Person Attending _____ **Email** _____
Indiv Membership _____ **Spouse Name** _____

Sponsorship. For years, our partners and stakeholders within the Ouachita River Basin have financially supported the mission and objectives of the Association and helped to ensure its success. We hope you will consider supporting the 2024 ORVA Convention with a sponsorship. Most importantly, we hope to see you in West Monroe at this year's convention which promises plenty of opportunities for learning, professional development, ideas interchange, networking, and discussion.

- I wish to support the ORVA 2024 Convention through a Sponsorship.
- Gold Level - \$1,000 (incl 2 free dinner tickets, program recognition and signage)
 - Silver Level - \$500 (incl program recognition and signage)
 - Bronze Level - \$250 (incl program recognition and signage)

Make checks payable to WMWO Chamber | Return Registration Form and payment to:
 ORVA, c/o WM Chamber, 112 Professional Drive, West Monroe, LA 71291
 Advance payment is required for planning purposes. No-shows are responsible for the cost of reservations.
 Inquiries regarding registration/payment: David Weeks, david.weeks.ORVA@outlook.com, 318-366-3834

Ouachita River Valley Association

57th Annual ORVA Convention

September 19-20, 2024

West Monroe, Louisiana

Thursday, September 19

- 11:00 - 12 Noon ORVA Board of Directors Meeting
- 12 Noon Registration Opens
- 12:00 - 12:30 PM **Coordination Meeting** – Meet and Greet with Corps staff from the Vicksburg District Corps staff and Stakeholders

West Monroe Convention Center **901 Ridge Avenue, West Monroe, Louisiana**

- 1:00 - 1:15 PM **Welcome** – Mayor Staci Mitchell, Mayor of the City of West Monroe
- Announcements** – Mr. Randy Denmon, ORVA President
- 1:15 - 1:40 PM Presentation, ***The Forgotten Expedition, 1804-1805***, Dr. Trey Berry, President, Southern Arkansas University at Magnolia (Tentative)
- 1:40 - 2:40 PM **Panel Discussion** – *“The Ouachita River as an Economic Driver”*
- 2:40 - 3:00 PM Break – Door Prize and Networking Opportunities
- 3:00 – 3:30 PM Presentation TBD
- 3:30 – 4:40 PM **Panel Discussion** – *“The Future of Navigation on the Ouachita”*
- 4:30 - 4:35 PM **Announcements and Closing Comments** – Mr. Randy Denmon
- 4:35 PM **Adjournment**

“The Ike” - Ike Hamilton Expo Center **501 Mane Street, West Monroe, Louisiana**

- 6:00 – 8:00 PM **Convention Social and Fish Fry**
- Welcome – Mr. Randy Denmon, ORVA President
- Social and Fish Fry
- Conclusion - Mr. Randy Denmon, President, ORVA

Friday, September 20

West Monroe Convention Center

- 8:00 – 9:00 AM Late Registration
Breakfast Items, juice and coffee will be available.
- 9:00 - 9:05 AM **Welcome and Announcements** – Mr. Randy Denmon, President, ORVA
- 9:05 – 9:35 AM ***The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Mississippi Valley Division*** –
- 9:45 - 10:15 AM ***The Ouachita-Black Rivers Navigation Project and River Operations***
COL Jeremiah Gipson, Commander and District Engineer, Vicksburg District,
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- 10:15 - 10:40 AM Break - Door Prize and Networking Opportunities
- 10:40 -11:40 AM **Panel Discussion** – *“The Future of the Ouachita-Black Rivers Navigation Project”*
- 11:40 - 12:00 Noon **Video Presentation** – Julia Letlow, U.S. Congresswoman representing the Fifth District of Louisiana
- 12:00 - 12:15 PM Break – Door Prize and Networking Opportunities
- 12:00 - 1:10 PM **Luncheon**
- 12:45 - 1:00 PM **ORVA: The Road Ahead** – David Weeks, ORVA Executive Director
- 1:10 PM Raffle Drawing
- 1:20 PM **Closing Comments** – Mr. Randy Denmon, President, ORVA
- 1:30 PM **Adjournment**

The Ouachita River Valley Association (ORVA), in existence now for more than 130 years, is a non-profit organization that represents the economy's private sector and derives its revenues from membership dues and fundraising activities, such as our annual convention.

The convention agenda represents a change from the traditional convention podium agenda. We've added several important topics which will be presented in a panel format featuring leading individuals in those fields of discussion.

Security

Security will be available on-site at the convention and during the reception and fish fry.

Parking

Ample parking is available at the West Monroe Convention Center, and at the Ike Expo Center.

Lodging

Special convention rates have been negotiated with our sponsor hotel: **Fairfield Inn & Suites West Monroe**, 606 Mane Street, West Monroe, Louisiana 71292. Please contact them at 318-582-1160 or register online at [Fairfield Inn & Suites West Monroe - Hotel With Pool & Free Breakfast \(marriott.com\)](https://www.marriott.com). The \$107 Convention Room Rate (the government per diem rate) will expire on September 5, 2024 so book early.

Displays

Our sponsors are encouraged to establish "vendor" booths. Please consider bringing business displays, handouts, brochures, and other reference materials. Please let us know if you wish to do so, and we will be happy to assist with the set-up of tables, etc. This was a tremendous plus at our last convention in West Monroe and we highly encourage it.

Registration/Payment

Make payment via mail to ORVA, c/o WM Chamber, 112 Professional Drive, West Monroe, LA 71291

You may also register online through the West Monroe West Ouachita Chamber of Commerce website at www.westmonroechamber.org/orva.

For inquiries regarding registration or payment, please contact Kris Kelley or a member of his staff at 318-325-1961.

Convention Attire

Business casual attire is encouraged for the convention but please leave your coats and ties at home for the Thursday night fish fry. And don't worry about the heat; the fish fry venue at the Ike is indoors and air conditioned! There's just nothing better than a good old-fashioned Southern fish fry, complete with all the trimmings and your favorite beverage!

COVID Concerns

ORVA will address COVID protocols and mitigation efforts, including sanitation stations and mask availability. (The wearing of masks will be an individual decision and we will respect those who choose to wear a mask.)

Other

Please address any questions, comments, or concerns to Mr. David Weeks, the ORVA Executive Director. He can be reached at david.weeks.ORVA@outlook.com or via mobile at 318-366-3834. A special "Thank You" to the staff of the West Monroe West Ouachita Chamber of Commerce, the West Monroe Convention Center, and the Ike Hamilton Exposition Center for their tremendous support in planning and orchestrating this annual convention.