

## **ORVA 2024 Convention A Success!**

ORVA held its 57th Annual ORVA Convention in West Monroe at the West Monroe Convention Center on 19-20 September 2024. The convention, sponsored in part by the City of West Monroe, the West Monroe/West Ouachita Chamber of Commerce, and numerous partners was reported a success!



Notable speakers included Col Jeremiah Gipson, the US Army Corps of Engineers' Vicksburg District Commander and District Engineer, Dr. Patrick Scott, Professor of Economics at Louisiana Tech University, Mr. Brandon Allbritton and Ms. Megan Hilburn of Graphic Packaging International West Monroe Paperboard Manufacturing Facility, Mr. Jacob Brister, the Vicksburg District Deputy Chief of Programs and Project Management and a video presentation from Julia Letlow, representing Louisiana's Fifth Congressional District.

COL Gipson addresses the audience during his presentation.



Highlights of the convention included panel discussions focusing on the topics: "The Ouachita River as an Economic Driver", The Future of Navigation on the Ouachita", and "The Future of the Ouachita-Black Rivers Navigation Project". Mr. Brandon Waggoner, ORVA's

Vice President and Executive Director of the Tensas Basin Levee District, served as panel moderator with numerous government, industry, and professional leaders as panel members. The panel format, a change from the traditional podium agenda, was well received by the audience. Door prizes were available throughout the convention.

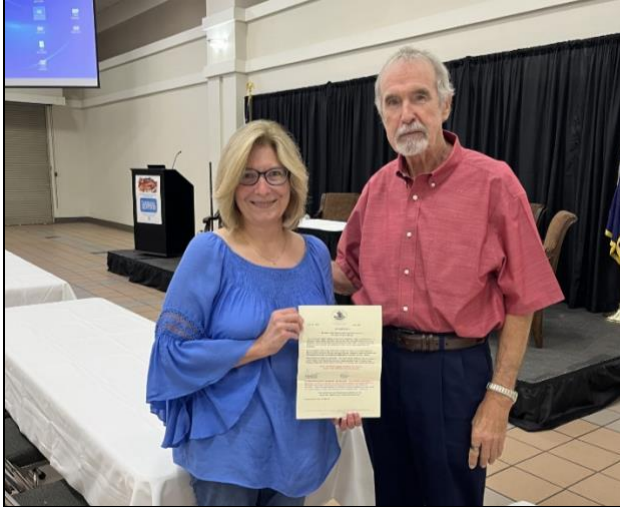


Panel discussions were both educational and informative. Mr. Brandon Waggoner (above right) addresses a question from the audience.



Another high point of the convention was a traditional "Southern" fish fry with all the trimmings held in the air-conditioned comfort of the Ike Hamilton Expo Center. Besides the catfish filets provided by the Louisiana Seafood Promotion and Marketing Board, Catahoula's restaurant from Monroe, Louisiana provided their famous coleslaw. The catfish fry was certainly a hit and enjoyed with the diner's favorite beverage.

Mr. David Weeks, ORVA Executive Director, introduces a convention speaker.



At the conclusion of the convention, winners were drawn from ORVA's annual raffle. Mr. Cody Brumfield won the 4-burner gas grill, Mr. Neil Martin won the Stoeger 12 GA Model 3500 shotgun, and Ms. Janice Richardson was the raffle grand prize winner which consisted of a "weekend getaway package" from Mountain Harbor Resort and Spa.

Mr. John Stringer, long-time ORVA officer and member, presents Ms. Richardson with the grand prize documentation from Mountain Harbor.