



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Louisiana Spirits Announces New Rum Distillery

**I-10 Corridor Gains Visitor Destination and World Class Rum Expected in 2012**

**LACASSINE, La., January 3, 2012**— Louisiana Spirits LLC is building a new state of the art distillery to create world-class rum crafted with Louisiana sugar cane in Lacassine, La, along the South Frontage Road of Interstate 10. The Jefferson Davis Police Jury voted unanimously on December 28, 2011 to re-zone Louisiana Spirit's 22.77 acre site for distilling operations. Construction is underway on the 18,000 square facility which will house the full distillery, barrel storage, bottling line, offices, a gift shop and a viewing room that explores the state's historic role as a sugar cane producer and rum distiller with memorabilia and curated exhibits. A historic 1903 farmhouse (*the first home built in Iowa, La*) is being relocated to the site which features the buildings in a natural setting complete with ponds, cypress trees and a sugar cane field. Local architect Randy Goodloe and contractor Miller & Associates are developing the site along with support of Louisiana Economic Development (LED). Louisiana Spirits is gearing up to offer its first rum in 2012!

“Our vision for a world class rum distillery in Louisiana is a natural fit for the Lacassine area. Our Louisiana rum will represent the best the state has to offer in the way of local sugar cane, molasses and raw sugar. We're committed to delivering products that honor Cajun heritage and are worthy of the 'Made in Louisiana' label,” said Trey Litel, President of Louisiana Spirits LLC. Besides utilizing Louisiana sugar cane as its primary ingredient, and investment in an appealing cultural visitor destination, the company is creating 17 to 20 direct full-time jobs and additional economic opportunities for Louisiana contractors, partners, and suppliers.

Rum is a hugely popular spirit and it is interesting to note that few choices are actually produced in the United States. “The growth of artisan distilling in the USA has been inspiring, and so has the trend toward local 'farm to table' products made in the USA. We plan to do that here. We believe Louisiana enthusiasts and consumers will recognize and switch to an authentic Louisiana rum now that they have a worthy choice,” Trey Litel added.

The local Jeff Davis Parish Economic Development and Tourist Commission office has supported the project since site selection by providing legislative and program support. “Louisiana Spirits is important to the economic engine of Jeff Davis Parish providing a new tourist attraction and adding value to area agriculture products. Because I-10 is a major transportation artery for the Southern United States, the Louisiana Spirits Distillery will be easily accessible and visitors will likely spend more time and dollars in our parish,” said Marion Fox, Executive Director of Jeff Davis Economic Development, Tourist, and Film Commissions. “The owners are sincere, experienced entrepreneurs and marketers who wisely chose Jeff Davis Parish as the location of this new venture, and our team strongly supports their new distillery!”

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Tim Litel, Skip Cortese, and Trey Litel founded Louisiana Spirits in May 2011. The Litel brothers are from the Lake Charles area and have teamed with Skip Cortese of Baton Rouge for the venture. “The idea came out of a duck blind conversation near the Lacassine Wildlife Refuge and some sugar cane fields. So, it was natural to select our site near the sugar mill at Lacassine,” said Tim Litel. “We could not be happier with the local government’s reception and support from LED, and we look forward to getting the distillery up and running.”

"We have visited many distilleries in other states, but they do not have the fascinating history of the Louisiana sugar cane industry to work with. We plan to celebrate that history with our distillery and our rum. We have researched the origins of rum and its introduction in Louisiana," said Skip Cortese. “In Spanish Colonial Louisiana, around 1770, a settler named Manuel Solís built a rum distillery and a small mill to grind cane. Rum was produced in Louisiana even before Étienne Bore perfected sugar production! This practice continued in most plantation sugar houses until the Civil War. We thought with abundant sugar cane fields in south Louisiana; why not revive rum distilling here today?”

With Louisiana being the fourth largest producer of sugar cane in the United States, there is a big opportunity here for the state to shine and add its unique value to the spirit.

#### **About Louisiana Spirits LLC**

Louisiana Spirits LLC members Tim Litel and Skip Cortese have worked together over the past 12 years to build and sell environmental service companies. Tim brings his environmental expertise with specialties in operations, compliance and general management. Skip is a successful entrepreneur with an environmental engineering background and specializes in construction and startup management. Trey Litel brings over 25 years of sales and marketing expertise, with over 10 years in the distilled spirits and beverages industries. For more information, visit [www.laspirits.net](http://www.laspirits.net).

#### **Randy M. Goodloe, AIA, APAC**

Headquartered in Lake Charles, Louisiana, Randy Goodloe and his firm of architects have been providing quality architectural services since 1990. Goodloe brings extensive experience from his creative projects and has left his mark on numerous public and commercial buildings. For more information, visit [www.goodarch.com](http://www.goodarch.com).

#### **Jeff Davis Economic Development, Film & Tourism Commissions**

This Jeff Davis Parish Office provides professional assistance to the current expanding businesses, as well as, prospective new business opportunities for the entire parish. The mission is to enhance the ability of our rural communities to develop, grow, and improve the overall quality of life by targeting financial and technical resources in areas of greatest need through activities of greatest potential to create opportunities, to leverage government resources, and to promote private sector development. For more information, visit [www.jeffdavis.org](http://www.jeffdavis.org).

#### **Miller & Associates Development Company, Inc.**

Headquartered in Iowa, Louisiana, Chris Miller and his team make up a full-service engineering and construction contracting company. For more information, call Gena Miller at (337) 582-3516.

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