

CCA Louisiana Receives \$500,000 donation from Raising Cane's Owner and Founder Todd Graves to Build Five Artificial Reefs, Starting with "Raising Cane's Hotel Sid" Reef off the Coast of Grand Isle, Louisiana

Todd Graves received Grand Isle's Medal of Honor today for his generous donation and avid participation in Louisiana's conservation efforts as he committed to sponsoring five reefs for CCA Louisiana: "This is the American Dream – it's not about what you make, it's about what you give"

GRAND ISLE, La. (August 14, 2024) – As an avid conservationist and native Louisianan, Raising Cane's owner and founder Todd Graves knows firsthand the importance marine conservation plays in the livelihood of Louisiana. On Wednesday, August 14, Graves joined dignitaries from CCA Louisiana, the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Danos, and Natrx as well as State Representative Dr. Joseph Orgeron, Grand Isle Mayor David Camardelle, and former Louisiana Congressman Charlie Melancon at the Grand Isle Marina to officially kick off the installation of Raising Cane's Hotel Sid reef – the first of five reefs Graves is sponsoring. Through a \$500,000 donation to CCA Louisiana on-site at the installation of the first reef, Graves spoke to the significance of the new Raising Cane's Hotel Sid reef – aptly named after well-known Hotel Sid reef, which was decommissioned last year – and what it meant to give back to the waters that hold a special place in his heart.

"As a native Louisianan, I grew up fishing in these waters and know first-hand the importance marine conservation plays in the livelihood of this state. I've had many great times here at Grand Isle and fishing at Hotel Sid, and I'm so proud to help restore the reefs that not only our marine ecosystem depends on, but local businesses and anglers as well," said Graves. "These reefs will be around for generations to come and I'm looking forward to taking my grandkids out here one day. This is a huge step in marine conservation and Raising Cane's Hotel Sid will enable future generations to enjoy and benefit from the great fishing this area is known for."

Grand Isle – known as a year-round "sportsman's paradise" – is located about two hours south of New Orleans on a narrow barrier island spanning just under eight miles in the Gulf of Mexico. What it lacks in landmass it more than makes up for through its access to hundreds of productive waterways and more than 280 fish species. Among the hundreds of species ranging from offshore to shallow waters are yellowfin tuna, marlin, red snapper, redfish, tarpons and speckled trout.

"I was born and raised here and come from a fishing family," said Grand Isle Mayor Camardelle. "I remember going fishing with my dad and this gift from Todd will enable future generations to do the same. I'm proud to award him Grand Isle's Medal of Honor for his avid conservationism and dedication to restoring our waters and reefs."

David Cresson, executive director of CCA Louisiana, and Rad Trascher, executive vice president of CCA Louisiana, were on site for the dedication from Graves and spoke to the importance and gratitude they had for Raising Cane's and Graves' partnership ahead of boarding boats with the larger group to witness the reef installation.

"Restoring Hotel Sid was made possible by Todd and Raising Cane's," said Cresson. "Todd is a great friend and incredible conservationist and outdoorsman, and having him here with us today is an honor. I have no

words to describe how thankful we are not only for Raising Cane's Hotel Sid, but Todd's commitment to sponsoring four additional reefs. That's huge!"

The much-needed reef replaces an oil and gas platform called Hotel SID, which was located just east of the Barataria Waterway that connects the Gulf and Grand Isle to Lafitte and New Orleans. The platform served as a living reef for many years that attracted anglers from all areas as it was known to hold plenty of speckled trout until it was decommissioned and removed in 2023 due to low production. A void in that area of the bay has existed ever since, making the new reef a welcomed gift for local businesses and fisherman alike.

"Hotel Sid is an iconic place not only for the town of Grand Isle but for anglers and sportsmen who have been coming here for years," said Trascher. "Todd's decision to preserve and honor the history of the reef by naming it Raising Cane's Hotel Sid is special to all of us."

Raising Cane's Hotel Sid is made of "Cajun Coral," which is a highly flexible type of 3D printed concrete by Natrx that's safer and faster to install than traditional methods, promotes habitat growth and ecological benefits, and gets stronger over time. The reef will consist of four areas and utilize more than 500 coral modules – each weighing more than 400 pounds – to create more than 10,000 square feet of living reef, in turn providing a home for all marine species up and down the food chain.

"Louisiana is a sportsman's paradise and this is another great opportunity to get anglers out here and enable kids, grandkids, and generations to come to continue enjoying our waters," said the secretary of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Madison Sheahan. "It's an honor to be here today as we help Louisiana's conservation efforts, and we wouldn't have this opportunity without the help of Todd and Raising Cane's."

Following closing remarks from former Congressman Melancon, attendees boarded boats to head out and watch the installation of the reef.

"This is our 52nd reef and what makes this reef special is that Raising Cane's and Todd are Louisiana success stories on a national and local level," said Melancon. "To have Todd come back here and give back to Louisiana by building our culture and contributing to the future fisherman is remarkable."

With a mission to protect and preserve marine resources for the enjoyment of future generations, CCA Louisiana has built and installed more than 50 reefs over the past 20 years. Due to several factors including coastal erosion, hurricanes, and the removal of old oil and gas platforms, Louisiana is losing an alarming amount of habitat every day. Artificial reefs play an important role in replenishing and conserving the state's marine life and ecosystem by also creating habitats for healthy fisheries, which impact the entirety of coastal towns like Grand Isle that depend on thriving fisheries to survive. As one of Louisiana's main marine conservation organizations, CCA's efforts span artificial reefs, floating islands, tagging, and more.

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