



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 2022

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Recovery update from Fort Myers - Islands, Beaches and Neighborhoods

Openings continue, how to help, holiday events

LEE COUNTY, Fla. (U.S.A.) –The Fort Myers area is recovering and rebuilding from the impact of Hurricane Ian. For information about the accommodations and attractions that are currently open, please visit visitfortmyers.com/open. As information is rapidly changing and there may be limited availability, hours and amenities, please check with the individual businesses on their status.

Support hospitality workers

Those who work in the hospitality industry to make sure our visitors have a great vacation are hurting. Many have lost homes, jobs, cars and more. Many of our guests from all over the world have contacted us asking for ways they can help.

Your contributions to the SWFL Relief Fund will directly support hospitality workers on Fort Myers Beach, Sanibel & Captiva islands, Pine Island, Matlacha, Boca Grande and the outer islands, and in Fort Myers, North Fort Myers, Bonita Springs, Estero, Cape Coral, Alva, Buckingham and Lehigh Acres. SupportFortMyers.org

More than half of guest rooms open

Since Hurricane Ian made landfall in Lee County, 62% of the county’s guest rooms have recently opened with more to come in the weeks and months ahead. With the Oct. 19 reopening of the Sanibel Causeway, this milestone of about 8,893 rooms opening throughout Lee County is another step in the right direction. Realizing that most of the available rooms are currently occupied by those helping with recovery and assisting displaced residents, we are confident that we will welcome our visitors back as soon as the area is ready.

In the news

Al Roker of NBC’s “**Today**” was live from Fort Myers Beach, meeting with first responders and residents. As part of Roker’s “Lend a Hand” series, watch how he brings much-needed help to many people, one month after Hurricane Ian. today.com/news/hurricane-ian-how-donate-help-t268185

Travel and food writer Chelle Koster Walton gives **TravelAwaits** readers an update on recovery, status and openings on Sanibel and Captiva Islands. The Sanibel Island resident offers an honest perspective with hopeful signs of progress while touching on the loss that her own family is dealing with following the hurricane.

travelawaits.com/2819723/sanibel-island-captiva-island-what-is-open-november-2022

Attractions and entertainment

Rockin' on the River continues

Luminary Hotel & Co. and the Rockin' on the River free concert series continues at the Caloosa Sound Amphitheater in downtown Fort Myers. The series presents a holiday show by contemporary swing revivalists [Big Bad Voodoo Daddy](#) on Dec. 12. Visit

CaloosaSoundAmp.com for ticket information.

Airport news

New air service at Southwest Florida International Airport (RSW)

Eurowings will resume Saturday flights to Frankfurt on Dec. 17 and continue through March.

Sun Country Airlines: Eau Claire EAU) weekly beginning Dec. 19.

Avelo Airlines Raleigh-Durham (RDU) beginning Feb. 16, 2023, Wilmington, Delaware, (ILG) weekly, beginning Feb. 3, 2023.

Keep in touch with the latest Shellcast episode

Fort Myers Beach shows its resiliency

Fort Myers Beach business owners and visitors talk about the recovery and cleanup efforts that continue weeks after Hurricane Ian, a Category 4 hurricane slammed into Southwest Florida on Sept. 28. Interviews with Peter Ennis, owner of Wahoo Willie's; Tom Fritz, resident of Fort Myers; Rebecca Henderson, general manager of Bayfront Bistro; Tom Houghton, owner of La Ola; Bill Ignatti, general manager of Wahoo Willie's; Jacki Liszak, president of Fort Myers Beach Chamber of Commerce; Cameron Roper, host at Bayfront Bistro; and Diane and Jeff Stone, visitors from upstate New York. Recorded Nov. 16. Shellcast is available wherever fine podcasts are downloaded, at VisitFortMyers.com/shellcast and at

youtube.com/watch?v=bbAqtI5xYL0

The Sanibel Captiva Guide Podcast

Sanibel residents Nick and Lori Adams, and son Max, interview the people who make Sanibel and Captiva special. They celebrate the history and experiences of the islands.

thesancapguide.com/category/podcast

Otocast audio guide features Fort Myers historic sites

Available in the App Store and Google Play, Otocast features a tour of more than 30 historic sites in Fort Myers. otocast.com

Holiday events

47th Annual Holiday Nights at Edison and Ford Winter Estates, Fort Myers

Through Jan. 1, 2023

“Holidays on the Riverfront”

EdisonFord.org

Holiday Stroll, downtown Bonita Springs

Through Jan. 1, 2023

Riverside Park sparkles with holiday lights and music from dusk to 9 p.m. nightly. Holiday-themed photo opportunities for the whole family.

On Dec. 9, bring a blanket or chair and enjoy a free showing of The Polar Express (rated PG). Begins at dusk. cityofbonitasprings.org

Broadway Palm Dinner Theatre, Fort Myers

Irving Berlin's "White Christmas" in the Main Theatre through Dec. 30;

"Ha! Ha! Ho! The Holiday Show" in Off Broadway Palm Dec. 10-25;

"Santa Claus the Musical" in the Children's Theatre through Dec. 24.

broadwaypalm.com

River District Holidays, downtown Fort Myers 2022

myriverdistrict.com/events

Holiday House, downtown Fort Myers

Historic Langford-Kingston Home

"Christmas in the Sunshine"

Dec. 9-18

fmwcc.net/house

Holiday Lights at Calusa Nature Center and Planetarium, Fort Myers

Dec. 9-11, 16-18, 21-24, 26-30. Each night 6-9 p.m.

The 1/3 mile nature trail is illuminated with lights and a holiday laser show.

calusanature.org

The Nutcracker, Barbara B. Mann Performing Arts Hall

Dec. 10 at 3 and 8 p.m.

Presented by the Gulf Coast Symphony and Gulfshore Ballet

bbmannpah.com/events

Southwest Florida Symphony Orchestra, Holiday Pops

7 p.m. each night: Dec. 12 at the Village Church in Shell Point; Dec. 13 at the First Presbyterian Church of Bonita Springs.

"In search of the perfect Christmas song" with guest artist Andrew Liptke

swflso.org

Santa at the Shell Factory, North Fort Myers

Dec. 18 Pancake breakfast with Santa, 9-11 a.m.

Visit Santa in Holiday House Dec. 11 (10 a.m.-2 p.m.) and Dec. 19 (10 a.m.-1 p.m.) and take your own photos.

shellfactory.com

Downtown Countdown

Dec. 31 beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Five stages with musical performances, a midnight ball drop and fireworks will welcome 2023.

myriverdistrict.com/event/downtown-countdown

Annual festivals and events 2023 (Dates subject to change, please confirm)**38th Annual Cape Coral Festival of the Arts, Cape Coral**

Jan. 14-15

capecoralfestival.com

ArtFest Fort Myers, downtown River District

Feb. 3-5

artfestfortmyers.com

21st annual Burrowing Owl Festival, Cape Coral

Feb. 25

Rotary Park

ccfriendsofwildlife.org/burrowing-owl-festival-2

Edison Festival of Light Grand Parade, Fort Myers

Feb. 18

edisonfestival.org

Spring training 2023**Boston Red Sox**

February-March

JetBlue Park, Fort Myers

mlb.com/redsox/tickets/spring-training

Minnesota Twins

February-March

Lee County Sports Complex/Hammond Stadium, Fort Myers

mlb.com/twins/tickets/spring-training

24th Annual Southwest Florida Reading Festival, Fort Myers

March 4

readfest.org

ECHO Global Food and Farm Festival, North Fort Myers

March 7-11

echonet.org/events/global-food-and-farm-festival

National Seashell Day

June 21

visitfortmyers.com/national-seashell-day

Island Hopper Songwriter Fest

Sept. 22-Oct. 1

IslandHopperFest.com

Sanibel Island Writers Conference

November TBD

fgcu.edu/siwc

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***EDITOR'S NOTE:** Fort Myers - Islands, Beaches and Neighborhoods include: Sanibel Island, Captiva Island, Fort Myers Beach, Fort Myers, Bonita Springs, Estero, Cape Coral, Pine Island, Matlacha, Boca Grande & Outer Islands, North Fort Myers, Alva, Buckingham and Lehigh Acres. For more information, go to visitfortmyers.com*