



Report to the Industry

April 13, 2023

February STR summary

STR reports hotel data in Lee County.

Average Occupancy Rate			Average Daily Rate			RevPAR		
2022	2023	% Change	2022	2023	% Change	2022	2023	% Change
88.9%	84.1%	-5.4%	\$260.41	\$243.87	-6.4%	\$231.44	\$205.09	-11.4%

February Key Data summary

Key Data reports vacation rental data in Lee County.

Average Occupancy Rate			Average Daily Rate			RevPAR		
2022	2023	% Change	2022	2023	% Change	2022	2023	% Change
75%	45%	-49.6%	\$321	\$282	-12.3%	\$289	\$128	-55.8%

Bed tax collection

The preliminary resort tax collected for February 2023 was \$4,343,495, an 46.2% decrease over February 2022 preliminary collections of \$8,074,002. Fiscal year-to-date preliminary tourist tax collections are \$16,863,117, a 42.5% decrease year-over-year.

Airport news

During February 2023, 967,416 passengers traveled through Southwest Florida International Airport (RSW), a decrease of 15.8% compared to February 2022. Year-to-date, passenger traffic is down 13.4% from the same period last year.

Communications update

Ray Sarracino, VCB communications director, presented an overview of the communications team’s second-quarter activities, including press trips, overall impressions, top-tier coverage and upcoming press visits and projects. In March, nearly 1.8 billion impressions were made in earned media resulting in more than 4 billion impressions in the second quarter. Top projects include hosting a high volume of domestic and international press visits focusing on recovery efforts following Hurricane Ian and what is currently available to visitors. As a result of hosting journalists, the destination has received coverage in the Orlando Sentinel, UK Sun, Fox Weather and the Weather Channel. The communications team produced a spring training episode of the Shellcast podcast and several videos as part of the Road to Recovery and Partner Spotlight series. The team is also organizing an upcoming UK press trip along with individual press visits from domestic and international journalists in Canada, UK, Germany and domestic writers. Staff will attend IPW in May. The team is working to promote National Travel and Tourism Week, also in May.

Research update

Roberta Atzori, VCB research & analytics manager, presented the results of the first wave of an online survey conducted among Lee County’s loyal visitors. The survey was embedded on the VCB consumer website, visitfortmyers.com, and 692 responses were collected from the end of January to the end of February. The survey data showed high visitation intentions among loyal visitors, with those who visited both before and after Hurricane Ian planning to come back to Lee County sooner than those who visited

only before Ian. Actionable insights based on the study include tailoring messages based on previous visitation and continue to inform visitors about the recovery of the destination, so that they are reassured that the destination is ready to welcome them back.

Sales update

Jill Vance, VCB sales director, reported that the team is ahead, or on pace, for four of the six sales goals for FY22-23. She shared highlights of successful second-quarter, post-Hurricane Ian meetings messaging and sales activities. The sales team attended a variety of in-person meeting planner and travel trade shows, including RCMA Emerge, ConferenceDirect APM, Florida Peninsula Shows and Florida Encounter. Vance also presented upcoming sales activities for April through June, comprised of in-person meeting planner appointment shows, travel trade sales missions and trade shows. Charm Evans, global sales manager, presented an update on the international sales activities along with upcoming travel trade events such as the Eurowings Discover Florida Roadshow, Spoiled Agent Spring Networking Event and IPW.

Visitor Services update

Simone Behr, VCB visitor services director, reported that the VCB's tourism ambassador volunteers assisted 119,143 visitors during the second quarter of FY23. Additional community support included tourism ambassadors helping at ArtFest Fort Myers and USA Men's Gymnastics State Championships, greeting Avelo Airlines inaugural flights and participating in the Port Authority's Mass Casualty Incident Exercise. On March 29, visitor services celebrated National Manatee Appreciation Day with the manatee mascot and volunteers handing out celebratory stickers to travelers at RSW. Visitor services looks forward to hosting the 23rd annual Elaine McLaughlin Outstanding Hospitality Service Awards on Aug. 24. To learn more or to nominate, visit EAwards.org.

Beach & Shoreline update

Nancy MacPhee, VCB product development manager, provided an update in preparation for reviewing fiscal year 2023-24 Beach & Shoreline funding requests. There are 17 eligible requests totaling \$12,531,472. The TDC will discuss and recommend funding at the April 26 Beach & Shoreline Review Workshop to be held at 2 p.m. in Room 118 of Admin East. To view requests and documentation related to the review workshop [click here](#).

Next TDC meeting

The next TDC meeting is scheduled for at **9 a.m., Thursday, May 11, 2023**, at the Lee County Administration East Building, 2201 Second St., Room 118, Fort Myers. To view a complete tax collections report, visit LeeVCB.com. Contact: Tamara Pigott, TPigott@leegov.com, Lee County VCB, 239-338-3500.