



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**April 2023**

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**What's New from Fort Myers - Islands, Beaches and Neighborhoods**

*Spring and Easter celebrations, attraction and accommodation openings*

**LEE COUNTY, Florida (U.S.A.)** – Spring gives us reason to celebrate the renewal and growth that the season brings. And we continue to welcome positive signs of recovery, new life and daily openings. As the Fort Myers area continues to recover from the impact of Hurricane Ian, 9,858 hotel rooms are open throughout Lee County.

For details about the accommodations and attractions that are currently open, please visit [visitfortmyers.com/open](https://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.

**Spring and Easter celebrations**

**All on Saturday, April 8:**

- **Veterans Park Lehigh Acres Ultimate Egg Hunt** will be held 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the park basketball pavilion, 55 Homestead Road S., Lehigh Acres. Activities include egg hunt, games, music, food truck, photo booth and more. Bring your camera and basket. The cost is \$5 per child. This event is co-sponsored by Lehigh Acres Rotary Club. Advance registration is required. Register at [leeparks.org/register](https://leeparks.org/register), at the Veterans Park Recreation Center or call 239-369-1521.
- **Estero EGGStravaganza** featuring an adaptive egg hunt will begin at 10 a.m. at Estero Recreation Center, 9200 Corkscrew Palms Blvd. Pre-registration is required by calling the recreation center at 239-533-1470 or [leeparks.org/register](https://leeparks.org/register). The egg hunt and the opportunity to meet the Easter Bunny are for children ages 12 and under. The cost is \$5 per child. Bring your camera and basket. The first egg hunt begins at 10 a.m. This is an outdoor event, weather permitting.
- **The Pine Island 6-8 Grade Golden Egg Hunt** will begin at 10 a.m. on the baseball fields at Phillips Community Park, 5675 Sesame Drive, Bokeelia. This free event is for middle school-age children. Participants will receive a candy bag and will have the chance to find golden eggs with special prizes. Registration begins at 9 a.m. at Phillips Park.

- **The Boca Grande Egg Hunt** will be held at 10 a.m. This free event is sponsored by The Friends of Boca Grande Community Center. Activities include an egg hunt for ages 11 and under, and a photo opportunity with the Easter Bunny. Bring your camera. Individually wrapped soft candy donations are welcome. For more information, call 239-533-2921 or visit [leeparks.org](http://leeparks.org). The Boca Grande Community Center is located at 131 First St., Boca Grande.
- **Spring Fest at North Fort Myers Community Park** will be held 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on the football field, 2000 North Recreation Park Way, North Fort Myers. Activities include music, yard games, photo booth, bounce house and food trucks. The free event is co-sponsored by Rotary Club of North Fort Myers. For more information, call the North Fort Myers Recreation Center at 239-533-7200.

**On April 9**, cruise San Carlos Bay to Picnic Island for an Easter egg hunt with **Adventures in Paradise**. Find fun, eggs and the Easter Bunny with cruises at 9 and 10 a.m. Reservations and details at [adventuresinparadise.com](http://adventuresinparadise.com)

### **Reopenings and new openings**

**CROW (Clinic for Rehabilitation of Wildlife)** on Sanibel Island has reopened and moved back into its hospital where it takes care of injured wildlife daily. As rebuilding continues, its gift shop has also reopened Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. [crowclinic.org](http://crowclinic.org)

**Diamondhead Beach Resort** on Fort Myers Beach is accepting reservations for stays beginning April 14 while the property works toward a full recovery. [diamondheadfl.com](http://diamondheadfl.com)

If you are dreaming of a Fort Myers Beach visit, the beach cam and pool cams at **Pink Shell Beach Resort and Marina** are back up and working again at [pinkshell.com/live-webcams](http://pinkshell.com/live-webcams)

**J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge** reopens Tuesday, April 4, and will include Wildlife Drive, narrated tram tours (limited schedule), Bailey Tract, most of Indigo Indigo Trail, Wildlife Education Boardwalk, Wulfert Keys Trail and the Visitor & Education Center, including the Nature Store. [dingdarlingsociety.org](http://dingdarlingsociety.org)

Also from the refuge, the **Tarpon Bay Explorers** recreation concession offers limited facilities, rentals, tours and hours. Visit [tarponbayexplorers.com](http://tarponbayexplorers.com) for hours, days of operation and reservations.

**Sanibel Historical Village** has reopened on a limited basis from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday. Guided tours are at 10:30 a.m. As assessment and repairs continue, four buildings are open as well as a Sanibel Lighthouse exhibit. [sanibelmuseum.org](http://sanibelmuseum.org)

**Prairie Pines Preserve in North Fort Myers** has reopened with 18 miles of hiking and equestrian trails and wildlife viewing. [leegov.com/parks/preserves/prairiepines](http://leegov.com/parks/preserves/prairiepines)

**Wa-Ke Hatchee Park** in Fort Myers has reopened from dawn to dusk daily with amenities that include its off-leash dog park, pickleball and tennis courts and other amenities. The recreation center and playground remain closed. [leegov.com/parks/centers/wake](http://leegov.com/parks/centers/wake)

### **Airport News**

Southwest Florida International Airport (RSW) was named No. 1 of the 10 best airports in the U.S. by Travel Lens, an online travel publication. Fifty of the busiest U.S. airports were ranked by wait time, passenger satisfaction and Google review ratings. [flylcpa.com](http://flylcpa.com)

### **New air service at RSW:**

**Breeze Airways:** Hartford (BDL) and Providence (PVD) begin this summer. The RSW-BDL flights will operate twice weekly on Wednesday and Saturday starting May 17; and the RSW-PVD service will start July 13 and operate three times a week on Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday.

**Sun Country Airlines:** Eau Claire (EAU), weekly.

**American Airlines:** Austin (AUS), daily.

**Avelo Airlines:** Raleigh-Durham (RDU) weekly; Wilmington (ILG), weekly.

### **Attractions and entertainment**

#### **J.N. ‘Ding’ Darling Day Conservation Carnival returns to Lakes Park**

In its 34<sup>th</sup> year, the event returns to Lakes Park in Fort Myers on April 22. The celebration also observes Earth Day and LeeTran’s Free Transportation Day. WoW (Wildlife on Wheels) will be at the center of the free “Ding” Darling Day at Lakes Park. Besides tours of the mobile, interactive nature experience, a full day of Conservation Carnival activities are planned from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Free outdoor activities include carnival games, prizes, archery, a dunk tank, a rock-climbing wall, Earth Day crafts, artist-in-residence programs, guided bilingual birding walks, a biking tour, guided mindfulness programs, live music, food and educational interactions with other local conservation organizations. [dingdarlingday.com](http://dingdarlingday.com)

While the **Bailey-Matthews National Museum** on Sanibel continues its limited hours and exhibitions Tuesday through Friday from 11 a.m.-3 p.m., there is an opportunity to get involved in a citizen science project: Snail Search of Lee County. To learn about biodiversity walks and how to participate, visit [shellmuseum.org/snail-search](http://shellmuseum.org/snail-search)

#### **Cape Coral Quest: win prizes and explore**

The City of Cape Coral and Fort Myers - Islands, Beaches and Neighborhoods have teamed up to launch the new Cape Coral Quest app for a fun way to explore the area and a chance to win prizes through Nov. 30. Follow the directions at [visitfortmyers.com/cape-coral-quest](http://visitfortmyers.com/cape-coral-quest) to collect a Cape Coral Quest Pass to participate on any mobile device.

**Sun Splash Family Waterpark** in Cape Coral has opened and plans to extend its season through Thanksgiving. [sunsplashwaterpark.com](http://sunsplashwaterpark.com)

### **Restaurant news**

Sweets treats are back with the reopening of **Boops by the Bubble Room** on Captiva Island. The daily menu returns with ice cream, cakes and coffee, while the Bubble Room and Emporium are under repair. [bubbleroomrestaurant.com](http://bubbleroomrestaurant.com)

**Jordan's Wine Bar and Cellar** opened in Cypress Lake Plaza in Fort Myers.  
[facebook.com/jordanswinebar](https://facebook.com/jordanswinebar)

**Rosalita's Cantina** has opened in the former 400 Rabbits location on Captiva Island.  
[rosalitascantina.com](https://rosalitascantina.com)

**Bonita Bills Waterfront Café**, Fort Myers Beach has reopened. [bonitabills.com](https://bonitabills.com)

### **Annual festivals and events**

**34<sup>th</sup> Annual "Ding" Darling Day Conservation Carnival, Lakes Park**

April 22

[dingdarlingsociety.org/articles/ding-darling-days](https://dingdarlingsociety.org/articles/ding-darling-days)

**13th Annual Fort Myers Film Festival**

May 17-21

[fortmyersfilmfestival.com](https://fortmyersfilmfestival.com)

**11<sup>th</sup> Annual "Ding" Darling and Doc Ford's Tarpon Tournament**

May 19

[dingdarlingsociety.org/articles/tarpon-tournament-1](https://dingdarlingsociety.org/articles/tarpon-tournament-1)

**Captiva Pride Weekend**

June 2-4

[tween-waters.com/captiva-pride-weekend](https://tween-waters.com/captiva-pride-weekend)

**National Seashell Day**

June 21

[visitfortmyers.com/national-seashell-day](https://visitfortmyers.com/national-seashell-day)

**Island Hopper Songwriter Fest**

Sept. 22-Oct. 1

[island-hopperfest.visitfortmyers.com](https://island-hopperfest.visitfortmyers.com)

**Sanibel Island Writers Conference**

November TBD

[fgeu.edu/siwc](https://fgeu.edu/siwc)

**39th Annual Cape Coral Festival of the Arts, Cape Coral**

January 2024 TBD

[capecoralfestival.com](https://capecoralfestival.com)

**ArtFest Fort Myers, Downtown River District**

Feb. 2-4, 2024

[artfestfortmyers.com](https://artfestfortmyers.com)

**21<sup>st</sup> annual Burrowing Owl Festival, Cape Coral**

February TBD

Rotary Park

[ccfriendsofwildlife.org/burrowing-owl-festival-2](http://ccfriendsofwildlife.org/burrowing-owl-festival-2)

**Edison Festival of Light Grand Parade, Fort Myers**

February TBD

[edisonfestival.org](http://edisonfestival.org)

**Spring training 2024, February and March**

**Boston Red Sox**

JetBlue Park, Fort Myers

[mlb.com/redsox/tickets/spring-training](http://mlb.com/redsox/tickets/spring-training)

**Minnesota Twins**

Lee County Sports Complex/Hammond Stadium, Fort Myers

[mlb.com/twins/tickets/spring-training](http://mlb.com/twins/tickets/spring-training)

**25th Annual Southwest Florida Reading Festival, Fort Myers**

March TBD

[readfest.org](http://readfest.org)

**ECHO Global Food and Farm Festival, North Fort Myers**

March TBD

[echonet.org/events/global-food-and-farm-towardl](http://echonet.org/events/global-food-and-farm-towardl)

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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](http://visitfortmyers.com)*