



## Report to the Industry

April 11, 2024

### February STR summary

STR reports hotel data in Lee County.

Average Occupancy Rate			Average Daily Rate			RevPAR		
2023	2024	% Change	2023	2024	% Change	2023	2024	% Change
83.4%	80.9%	-3.0%	\$244.03	\$234.29	-4.0%	\$203.42	\$189.49	-6.9%

### February Key Data summary

Key Data reports vacation rental data in Lee County.

Average Occupancy Rate			Average Daily Rate			RevPAR		
2023	2024	% Change	2023	2024	% Change	2023	2024	% Change
47%	67%	43.0%	\$283	\$305	7.6%	\$133	\$205	54.2%

### Bed tax collection

The preliminary resort tax collected for February 2024 was \$5,714,467, a 31.6% increase over February 2023 preliminary collections of \$4,343,495. Fiscal year-to-date preliminary tourist tax collections are \$20,038,912, an 18.8% increase year-over-year.

### Airport news

During February 2024, 1,223,761 passengers traveled through Southwest Florida International Airport (RSW), an increase of 26.5% compared to February 2023. Year-to-date, passenger traffic is up 22.7% from the same period last year.

### Communications update

Ray Sarracino, VCB communications director, reported that second quarter coverage and UVM numbers remained strong with a large spike in March. This was due to two articles being distributed by Yahoo and Google. Total quarterly impressions were 3,195,183,083. Jan-March brought 14 domestic and international journalists to the destination. Focus moving forward is on what's happening and available now, and less on Hurricane Ian recovery. Highlights of FAM articles include: The Points Guy, Thrillist, Readers Digest, AFAR, Forbes, and The Toronto Sun. Upcoming media visits include: Canada, Brazil (via Visit Florida), UK and domestic.

### Sales update

Jill Vance, VCB director of sales, reported that the team is ahead of pace for all six sales goals for FY23-24. She shared highlights of successful second-quarter group media buys and sales activities. The sales team attended a variety of in-person meeting planner and travel trade shows, including RCMA Emerge, Visit Florida's Florida Encounter, and Travel & Adventure Shows.

Vance also presented upcoming sales activities for April through June including ConferenceDirect Annual Partners Meeting, HelmsBriscoe Annual Business Conference and Travel Advisors of the Mid-South Annual Conference & Tradeshow. Charm Evans, global sales manager, provided a recap on the sales activities including Visit Florida's Florida Huddle and ITB Berlin. Evans also presented an update on the international sales activities taking place in the coming months such as the UK Sales Mission with Visit Florida, U.S. Travel Association's IPW, and Brand USA's inaugural Canada Connect event.

### **Visitor Services update**

Simone Behr, VCB visitor services director reported that the VCB's tourism ambassador volunteers assisted 222,841 visitors during the second quarter of FY24. Additional community support included tourism ambassadors helping at ArtFest Fort Myers, Southwest Florida Ag Expo and a Global Entry Enrollment event at RSW, as well as staffing the VCB baseball booths at all spring training games. Tourism Ambassadors attended various destination education training sessions compliments of our industry partners. Visitor services looks forward to hosting the 24th annual Elaine McLaughlin Outstanding Hospitality Service Awards on Aug. 23. To learn more or to nominate, visit [EAwards.org](http://EAwards.org).

### **Beach & Shoreline update**

Nancy MacPhee, VCB product development manager, gave an update of the Beach & Shoreline Program. The TDC will review requests for FY25 funding at a workshop on April 24, 2024 at 2PM. All requests and supporting documentation can be viewed [at this link](#).

### **Beach Renourishment update**

Steve Boutelle, Lee County Natural Resources, presented an overview of the beach renourishment projects in Lee County. Lee County has more than 40 miles of sandy beaches, and the focus of these projects is on critically eroded beaches and those with public beach access. Boutelle reported that virtually all Lee County beaches reached condition IV levels of erosion following Hurricane Ian, which is categorized as "major dune erosion." The County has strategically sequenced the renourishment projects to occur in a cost-effective manner by having the vendor remain in the County rather than loading and unloading machinery, equipment, and personnel at different time intervals.

### **Next TDC meeting**

The next TDC meeting is scheduled for at **9 a.m., Thursday, May 9, 2024**, at the Lee County Administration East Building, 2201 Second St., Room 118, Fort Myers. To view a complete tax collections report, visit [LeeVCB.com](http://LeeVCB.com). Contact: Tamara Pigott, [TPigott@leegov.com](mailto:TPigott@leegov.com), Lee County VCB, 239-338-3500.