



## Report to the Industry

*April 9, 2026*

### February STR summary

STR reports hotel data in Lee County.

Average Occupancy Rate			Average Daily Rate			RevPAR		
2025	2026	% Change	2025	2026	% Change	2025	2026	% Change
78.4%	80.9%	+ 3.2%	\$233.89	\$234.85	+ 0.4%	\$183.34	\$190.01	+ 3.6%

### February Key Data summary

Key Data reports vacation rental data in Lee County.

Average Occupancy Rate			Average Daily Rate			RevPAR		
2025	2026	% Change	2025	2026	% Change	2025	2026	% Change
56.5%	71.2%	+ 25.9%	\$327.96	\$348.66	+ 6.3%	\$185.43	\$248.13	+ 33.8%

### Bed tax collection

The preliminary resort tax collected for February 2026 was \$7,475,818, a 23.0% increase over February 2025 preliminary collections of \$6,080,446. Fiscal year-to-date preliminary tourist tax collections are \$25,842,953, an increase of 24.7% year-over year.

### Airport news

During February 2026, 1,190,070 passengers traveled through Southwest Florida International Airport (RSW), an increase of 1.4% compared to February 2025. Calendar year-to-date, airport traffic is up 0.5% compared to the same time last year.

### Special presentation

Bryan Griffin, President and CEO of VISIT FLORIDA, spoke about emphasizing his goal of maintaining Florida’s position as the top U.S. tourism destination while expanding international visitation. He reported Florida still leads the nation in domestic market share at 14.6%, ahead of California, and highlighted strong hotel performance, including record room sales in 2024 and continued growth in 2025 despite a brief dip early in the year. International travel showed strong momentum, especially from South America, with Brazil now the state’s top overseas market and significant growth from the U.K., Argentina, Spain, and Italy; Canada showed signs of recovery as well. VISIT FLORIDA is focusing on dispersing visitors across the state and encouraging longer stays through marketing and partnerships with local DMOs. Major marketing efforts include the “Live More Floridays” brand refresh, winter and family travel campaigns, co-op streaming advertising, and the “One Fun Day” content series featuring destinations like Sanibel and Captiva to support post-hurricane recovery. Griffin also highlighted new international trade shows and the America250FL.com initiative as opportunities to further drive visitation and statewide tourism growth.

### Communications report

Miriam Dotson, VCB communications manager, reported a total of 4.6 billion coverage impressions for January and February. The communications team credits the spike in February numbers (3.9 billion) to the coverage following the first Sports Illustrated digital release showcasing the “Wives and Girlfriends” (WAGS) photoshoot. Dotson reported successful press trips with Glen Turk from Midwest Golfing Magazine who produced an article featuring five Lee County golf courses.

Dotson also reported press trips with German travel writer Holger Jacobs and Allison Arthur with Dishing Park City and Dishing Jackson Hole along with a VISIT FLORIDA partnership press trip with Andrew Couthinho and Marcella Thompson from Brazilian outlet Band TV. Jackie Parker, VCB communications manager, reported on the successful Minnesota Twins Spring Training partner promotion where 5 partners were interviewed and featured live in the broadcast booth at Lee Health Sports Complex/Hammond Stadium. Parker shared plans of upcoming April press trips, including one with outdoor writer and fly fisherman Robert Annis with Go RVing and an upcoming group press trip with Canadian journalists. Plans for a pre-IPW press trip in May called Gulf Coast Getaway were shared to incorporate multiple journalists from the UK and Canada ahead of IPW in Fort Lauderdale, May 17-21. In addition, two national group press trips are planned focused around the idea of a Girls Gone Mild theme in June and a Guys Getaway in July.

### **Sales report**

Natalie Duran, VCB sales director, reported that group and domestic sales are performing well for FY 25-26, with strong conversion rates and group room nights ahead of pace despite a decline in RFP volume. The sales team participated in key meeting planner and travel trade shows, including Florida Encounter, RCMA, the Travel & Adventure Shows, and the Peninsula Tradeshow, generating qualified leads and reinforcing advisor relationships. Upcoming priorities include HelmsBriscoe, ASTA, and PCMA's Business Events Summit, all focused on driving future group and travel trade business. Charm Evans, VCB global sales manager, provided an update on international travel to the destination, marketing initiatives and travel trade activities. The international sales team engaged in various trade and consumer events such as VISIT FLORIDA's FL Huddle and ITB Berlin in Germany. Additionally, Evans presented on upcoming activities such as the Icelandair Nordic Fam in May and U.S. Travel Association's IPW international appointment show in Fort Lauderdale, May 17-21. These efforts support international travel demand and reinforce Lee County's position in priority international markets

### **Visitor services report**

Simone Behr, VCB visitor services director, reported that the VCB's tourism ambassador volunteers assisted a record number of 461,842 visitors and residents during the second quarter of FY26. Additional community support included tourism ambassadors helping at ArtFest Fort Myers and Project Cookie 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 26<sup>th</sup> annual Elaine McLaughlin Outstanding Hospitality Service Awards on Aug. 20. To learn more or to nominate, visit [EAwards.org](http://EAwards.org).

### **Beach and shoreline report**

Nancy MacPhee, VCB destination development manager, provided an update on the program which included noting \$220 million in TDT funds have been allocated to Beach & Shoreline projects since fiscal year 2000. The TDC has begun their review of Beach and Shoreline projects submitted for fiscal year 2027 funding. \$31.6 million has been requested for 24 projects. The TDC will conduct their annual Beach & Shoreline Workshop on April 23 at 2:00pm. Recommendations made at the workshop will be considered for approval by TDC at their May meeting.

### **Staff update**

Executive Director Tamara Pigott announced she will be retiring. Assistant County Manager, Amanda Condominda announced Pamela Johnson will lead the VCB.

### **Next TDC meeting**

The next TDC meeting will be held at **9 a.m. Thursday, May 14, 2026**, at the Lee County Admin East Building, Room 118, 2201 Second St., Fort Myers. To view a complete tax collections report, go to [www.LeeVCB.com](http://www.LeeVCB.com). Contact: Tamara Pigott, [TPigott@leegov.com](mailto:TPigott@leegov.com), Lee County VCB, 239-338-3500.

