Report to the Industry

November 12, 2026

July-September 2026 Statistics

From July through September 2026, the Fort Myers area hosted more than 895,000 visitors who spent an estimated $739 million while visiting – a 14.8% increase in direct visitor spending year-over-year. Visitors staying in paid accommodations spent an estimated $501 million (68% of the total). Lee County's lodging industry experienced a year-over-year increase in overall occupancy (+5.0%, even with 8.4% more units available) and an increase in overall average daily rate (ADR; +6.4%) resulting in an 11.7% increase in overall revenue per available room (RevPAR).

Paid Accommodations Summary

Paid Accommodation Types	Average Occupancy Rate		Average Daily Rate		RevPAR	
	2025	2026	2025	2026	2025	2026
Hotel/Motel/Resort/B&B	50.5%	52.4%	$133.63	$133.51	$67.48	$69.96
Condo/Cottage/Vacation Home	29.1%	32.3%	$214.49	$255.13	$62.42	$82.41
RV Park/Campground	59.0%	59.0%	$80.00	$85.00	$47.20	$50.15
OVERALL	***45.3%***	***47.5%***	***$139.90***	***$148.83***	***$63.32***	***$70.74***

Visitation and Visitor Origins

Total Visitation				
Visitor Types	%		Visitor Estimates	
	2025	2026	2025	2026
Paid Accommodations	68%	64%	514,100	568,600
Non-Paid Accommodations	30%	34%	231,900	308,900
Day Trippers	2%	2%	16,800	18,000
Total Visitation	***100%***	***100%***	***762,800***	***895,500***

Visitor Origin Regions	%	
	2025	2026
United States	90.2%	90.6%
Canada	4.2%	4.0%
Germany	2.1%	2.3%
United Kingdom	1.0%	0.9%
Other Europe	1.3%	1.1%
Other International	1.2%	1.1%
Total	***100.0%***	***100.0%***

Top 5 Visitor Origin Markets	%	
	2025	2026
New York City	7.5%	5.9%
Chicago	4.4%	5.1%
Atlanta	4.1%	3.7%
Cleveland-Akron	2.2%	3.5%
Philadelphia	2.7%	3.4%
Total	***20.9%***	***21.6%***

September 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
44.3%	46.8%	+ 5.8%	$117.73	$125.64	+ 6.7%	$52.10	$58.83	+ 12.9%

September 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
11.8%	13.3%	+ 12.7%	$198.64	$221.20	+ 11.4%	$23.60	$29.00	+ 22.9%

Bed tax collection

The preliminary tourist development tax collected for September 2026 was $2,407,808, a 21.7% increase over preliminary September 2025 collections of $1,979,026. For fiscal year 2026, the final tourist tax collections are $56,949,838, an increase of 21.6% year-over-year, making it the second-highest tourist tax collection in Lee County's history.

Airport news

During September 2026, 551,322 passengers traveled through Southwest Florida International Airport (RSW), an increase of 0.2% compared to September 2025. Calendar year-to-date, passenger traffic is down 0.5% compared to the same period last year.

Communications report

Matthew Cummings, VCB communications director, presented the communications report. The communications team reported 80 articles, more than 600 million potential impressions and 124 distinct partners featured during the fourth quarter of FY 2025-26. Full-year results totaled 700 articles, 17.7 billion potential impressions, 22 press trips, 43 hosted journalists and 235 distinct partners mentioned. Sports Illustrated contributed substantially to full-year impressions.

Press trips last quarter included "What's New on the Water," welcoming writers representing Cosmopolitan, Mental Floss and StyleBlueprint; a multigenerational visit by The Sunday Post's Thomas Hawkins; Southbound Magazine's Kevin Benefield, whose visit produced a four-page feature; and a family-focused visit by German journalist Robin Zabler of The Frankfurter. Coverage showcased wildlife, history, dining and year-round experiences. The team also supported Island Hopper previews, festival publicity and Sizzle Dining.

Upcoming efforts include Taste & Travel and Sixty & Me visits and VISIT FLORIDA's Canada media mission. Annual PR measurement will expand from three metrics to six, adding influential outlet coverage, AI visibility and article counts. Cummings also recognized the staff and industry partners whose collaboration makes destination storytelling possible.

Sales report

Charm Evans, VCB global sales manager, provided an update on domestic and international sales activities for the fourth quarter of FY 2025-26. Evans reported strong year-end performance, achieving or exceeding four of five annual sales goals, reflecting continued success in generating group business, expanding destination awareness, and strengthening industry relationships. The team secured 47,360 group room nights, hosted 66 FAM/site visit attendees, conducted 68 destination education engagements, and participated in 64 community engagement activities.

Highlights included participation in key domestic and international industry events and the Professional Fraternity Association Conference, which generated three RFPs representing 1,984 anticipated room nights. Evans concluded by highlighting continued efforts to convert industry relationships and business opportunities into future bookings, increased visitation, and economic impact for Lee County.

Visitor Services report

Simone Behr, VCB director of visitor services, reported that the Tourism Ambassador volunteers assisted a record 976,613 visitors and residents during FY26. In August, Visitor Services hosted the 26th Annual Elaine McLaughlin Outstanding Hospitality Service Awards at the Hyatt Regency Coconut Point Resort & Spa, honoring hospitality employees. On September 19, VCB volunteers celebrated National Talk Like a Pirate Day at RSW by handing out stickers and pirate favors to the traveling public. Visitor Services has recruited a number of new volunteers who are currently in training. Thank you to the many industry partners hosting our volunteers for their fall destination education training.

July-September DSG quarterly research report

Joseph St. Germain, DSG, presented an overview of July-September 2026 visitor research. Lee County welcomed 895,500 visitors during this time, an increase of 17.4% compared to 2025, resulting in direct visitor spending exceeding $739 million, an increase of 14.8% compared to 2025. He reported that the international market accounted for 9.4% of visitors during the July through September timeframe, with Canada representing the largest share at 4.0%. Find the full report here.

2026 Island Hopper Songwriter Fest recap

Alison Giesen, VCB destination development coordinator, reported estimated attendance for the 2026 Island Hopper Songwriter Fest was 13,186, with 56 singer-songwriters performing at 102 shows across 25 venues. There were 1,046 reported room nights, representing a 35% increase over last year. Of the 425 attendee surveys collected, 42.2% of respondents were visitors from outside Lee County, and 39% reported staying in paid lodging with an average stay of three nights. Save the date: The 2027 Island Hopper Songwriter Fest will take place September 17-26, 2027.

New business

The TDC voted unanimously to recommend that the Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) approve a $381,586 funding request from LeeTran for the Bonita Beach trolley. The request will go before the BoCC at a future meeting.

Next TDC meeting

The next regularly scheduled TDC meeting will be held at **9 a.m. Thursday, Dec. 10, 2026**, at the Lee County Administration East Building, Room 118, 2201 Second St., Fort Myers. To view a complete tax collections report, go to www.LeeVCB.com. Contact: Pamela Johnson, PJohnson@leegov.com, Lee County VCB, 239-338-3500.