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## **Lee County attractions awarded grant funding**

*\$350,000 awarded to local organizations*

**LEE COUNTY, FL.** – The Lee County Tourist Development Council (TDC) awarded \$350,000 in grant funding to more than 40 area attractions.

Since 2000, the TDC has provided more than \$3.6 million for attractions marketing in Lee County. The grants provide marketing support to nonprofit local attractions that produce art, culture or offer other unique experiences. The funding comes from a 5 percent “bed tax,” which is a tourist tax on short-term accommodations.

“It’s nice to find out there are other people encouraging your ideas,” said Warren Van Kirk, president of Matlacha Mariners, a nonprofit working to make a difference in the lives of young men and women in the Matlacha community. Matlacha Mariners received a \$2,500 grant funded through the Lee County Visitor & Convention Bureau (VCB).

Susan Bridges, president of the Center for the Arts of Bonita Springs, received a \$15,000 grant to support marketing for an arts program. Erin White, executive director for the Lakes Park Enrichment Foundation, will use its \$8,000 grant to help promote the park.

“This money will help us print brochures, buy Facebook ads, and promote fundraising so people will come and want to contribute,” White said.

The attractions that receive grants are expected to help advance tourism, enhance visitor experiences and encourage repeat visitation to Lee County, said Nancy MacPhee, program director, noting that the funding must be used for marketing and advertising.

In 2004, the TDC partnered with the Alliance for the Arts and the Southwest Florida Community Foundation to provide financial assistance to not-for-profit arts and attractions organizations and to strengthen awareness of local arts and cultural venues that enhance the tourism opportunities in Lee County.

This joint effort enhances the visitor experience, encourages repeat visits through promoting and disseminating information regarding cultural offerings within the destination.

For more information and to see this year’s grant recipients, click [here](#).