



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Billy Kirkland honored by Lee County VCB for community contributions at Annual Meeting *Billy's Bike Shop & Segway of Sanibel owner receives 2019 Junonia Award*

LEE COUNTY, Fla. – The Lee County Visitor & Convention Bureau (VCB) presented its annual Junonia Award to Billy Kirkland, owner of Billy's Bike Shop & Segway of Sanibel, at its Annual Sales and Marketing Meeting today at Sanibel Harbour Marriott Resort & Spa.

Created in 2006, the VCB's Junonia Award recognizes individuals who positively impact Lee County's tourism community by demonstrating unique capabilities, leadership, commitment and dedication. The award, named for the junonia – a treasured shell known for its rarity and exceptional quality – was selected as the symbol of the VCB's annual award.

Kirkland, an Army veteran and Georgia native, got his start in Lee County in the 1970s renting sailboats and beach chairs on Fort Myers Beach. He moved to Sanibel and began working with island resorts to rent chairs, bicycles and sailboats. With business booming, Kirkland and his wife, Salli, opened the first Billy's Rentals, providing surreys, beach cruisers, wheelchair bikes and beach equipment. They later opened Billy's Bike Shop for high-end rentals and repairs.

In 2004, when Hurricane Charley hit, they helped the community by opening Billy's Tractor Business, offering brush removal and maintenance of parking lots and private roads.

Throughout the years Kirkland has given time, resources and monetary support to organizations and businesses across the islands. For example, they hosted an annual bicycle safety rodeo at The Sanibel School to educate kids on the rules of the road when bicycling.

Kirkland has won multiple Elaine McLaughlin Outstanding Hospitality Service Awards, received the Southwest Florida Blue Chip Community Business Award in 2016 and the Florida Senate Medal of Excellence for dedication to the community.

“Billy's company motto describes him perfectly – ‘to give back to the community you live and work in,’ ” said Tamara Pigott, executive director of the Lee County VCB. “We are proud to

award him our 2019 Junonia for his exceptional dedication and love for Lee County and the islands.”

Last year’s recipient was Capt. Brian Holaway, a Florida Master Naturalist with a U.S. Coast Guard captain’s license, who pilots private shelling charters.

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Photo caption: Billy Kirkland, owner of Billy's Bike Shop & Segway of Sanibel, is the 2019 recipient of the Junonia Award.

Photo credit: Lee County VCB