

Report to the Industry

April 12, 2018

February Smith Travel Research Summary

Average Occupancy Rate			Average Daily Rate			RevPAR		
2017	2018	% Change	2017	2018	% Change	2017	2018	% Change
83.9%	88.1%	+5.0%	\$199.91	\$217.06	+8.6%	\$167.68	\$191.21	+14.0%

Bed tax collection

The preliminary resort tax collected for February 2018 was \$5,323,507, an 11.4 percent increase over February 2017 preliminary collections of \$4,777,710. Fiscal year-to-date preliminary tourist tax collections are \$19,088,378, an increase of 11.2 percent year-over-year.

Airport news

During February 2018, 1,053,817 passengers traveled through Southwest Florida International Airport (RSW). Figures represent an increase of 11.4 percent compared to February 2017. Year-to-date, passenger traffic is up 9.8 percent from the same period last year. For the first time in the airport's 35-year history, more than 1 million passengers traveled through the RSW in the month of February.

The newest graduates of Guests First recognized

Dr. Nicole King-Smith, training and development manager, VCB, awarded certificates to the newest certified guest service professionals, (CGSPs) bringing the total to 588 CGSP graduates.

Sales Update

Jill Vance, director of sales, VCB, reported on sales results for the first six months of FY 2017-18. Group meeting room nights booked are ahead of pace by 11,297 room nights. She reported on upcoming sales activities in cities including Boston, Las Vegas, Orlando. Stefanie Zinke, international tourism sales manager, talked about events she has attended in the last three months in Iceland, Ireland, Norway and Germany. In March, she and VCB Executive Director Tamara Pigott attended ITB in Berlin and the Eurowings Launch Media Event in Munich. Upcoming events include Visit Florida Canada Roadshow in Toronto/Montreal and IPW in Denver.

Visitor Services Update

Judi Durant, director of visitor services, VCB, reported 84,933 visitors assisted at Southwest Florida International Airport (RSW) for the first three months of 2018. Visitor Services volunteers were also busy promoting the destination during spring training at JetBlue Park at Fenway South and CenturyLink Sports Complex.

Communications Update

Francesca Donlan, director of communications, VCB, presented media coverage highlights that included 1.3 billion impressions in the second quarter. Successful media missions to New York City and Boston's Fenway Park were presented. The P.R. team will host more than 75 top media at the Society of American Travel Writers (SATW) event in June.

Marketing Update

Brian Osofsky, director of marketing, VCB, reported year-to-date goals for website, paid media, and social media. He also presented current Lee County marketing strategies. These include new initiatives with the Islandology campaign, a regional Allegiant Air partnership and a look-ahead at National Seashell Day. He also introduced resident artist Shayne Wolfe, who presented some of the photos he has taken of the destination.

Beach & Shoreline Update

Nancy MacPhee, product development manager, VCB, shared an update of the TDC Beach & Shoreline program funding since fiscal year 2000. The TDC will begin reviewing 21 project requests for 18/19 fiscal year funding. The total requested is \$9,677,813 while estimated funding available is \$10,623,032. The TDC Beach & Shoreline workshop will be held on Wednesday, April 25, 2018 at 2 p.m.

New Business

The TDC recommended that the BoCC approve the City of Sanibel's request for a transfer of \$200,000 in Beach and Shoreline funds. The request would allow funds from the Bowman's Beach Park Boardwalk project to fund the construction of a new restroom at Tarpon Bay Beach Park.

Holly D. Smith, the newest TDC member, was nominated to serve on the Events Marketing Subcommittee. Current members include Pamela Cronin, Fran Myers, Colleen DePasquale and Bill Waichulis.

Next TDC meeting

The next TDC meeting will be held on Thursday, May 10, 2018 at 9 a.m. at the Lee County Admin East building, first floor conference room 118, 2201 Second Street, Fort Myers, FL 33901. To view a complete tax collections report, go to www.LeeVCB.com. Contact: Tamara Pigott, TPigott@leegov.com, Lee County VCB, 239-338-3500.