

## Report to the Industry

July 12, 2018

### May Smith Travel Research Summary

Average Occupancy Rate			Average Daily Rate			RevPAR		
2017	2018	% Change	2017	2018	% Change	2017	2018	% Change
64.7%	65.0%	+0.4%	\$131.07	\$133.97	+2.2%	\$84.83	\$87.07	+2.6%

### Bed Tax Collection

The preliminary resort tax collected for May 2018 was \$2,441,883, a 7.4 percent increase over May 2017 preliminary collections of \$2,272,660. Fiscal year-to-date preliminary tourist tax collections are \$33,388,127, an increase of 8.5 percent year-over-year.

### Airport News

During May 2018, 668,665 passengers traveled through Southwest Florida International Airport (RSW). Figures represent an increase of 6.3 percent compared to May 2017. Year-to-date, passenger traffic is up 5.4 percent from the same period last year.

### Sales update

Jill Vance, director of sales, reported on sales results for the first three quarters of FY 2017-18. Three of the five goals have been already been achieved for the fiscal year. She reported upcoming sales activities for the fourth quarter and rolled out the VCB's first meetings video.

Stefanie Zinke, international sales manager, reported that her team hosted over 100 trade professionals from five countries on familiarization (FAM) tours in the destination. In May, the international team, together with the international contractors and Lee County Commissioner and TDC Chairman Cecil Pendergrass, attended IPW in Denver, and conducted 145 meetings with tour operators, online travel agents, media and airlines. Looking ahead, she will conduct a sales mission in September to Germany and Netherlands together with two hotel partners.

### Visitor Services update

Judi Durant, director of visitor services, VCB, reported 38,385 visitors assisted at Southwest Florida International Airport (RSW) for the second three months of 2018. The Top 3 information requests for the second quarter were Drury Inn & Suites Fort Myers at Gulf Coast Town Center, J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge and canoeing/kayaking. Visitor Services volunteer Tourism Ambassadors were also busy promoting the destination at the Lee County Travel Rally, welcoming the Eurowings inaugural flights from Dusseldorf, Munich, providing support to the 2018 First Responder Games and the Team Tourism Summer Lecture Series, featuring Shawna Suckow.

### **Communications update**

Francesca Donlan, director of communications, VCB, presented media coverage highlights that included 1.1 billion impressions in the third quarter. She reported on the VCB hosting the very successful Society of American Travel Writers (SATW) Eastern Chapter Annual Meeting with about 75 media and attendees June 4-7 at the Westin Cape Coral Resort at Marina Village. Coverage from hosting four journalist/anglers at the “Ding” Darling & Doc Ford’s Tarpon Tournament was also presented. Upcoming PR initiatives include a July 24 Island Hopper preview event in Nashville, Southeastern Outdoor Press Association Conference in Florence, S.C., Oct. 3-6, Eurowings media press trip Oct. 23-26 and more. She also shared water quality resources on both the consumer and industry pages, [www.fortmyers-sanibel.com](http://www.fortmyers-sanibel.com) and [www.leevcb.com](http://www.leevcb.com). The latest updates on water conditions are available on both of those pages.

### **Marketing update**

Brian Ososky, director of marketing, VCB, presented highlights from the June 21 National Seashell Day event hosted by the VCB. We broke the Guinness World Records title for Largest human image of a seashell with 1,093 participants. The event was held at the Outrigger Beach Resort on Fort Myers Beach and he thanked everyone involved in the execution of the event. Total earned media impressions were 82.6 million. Tied into this event was the Easy Summer Escape sweepstakes that received 93,587 entries. Lee County Day June 3 at Target Field was a successful promotion again as we continue building on our positive relationship with the Minnesota Twins. Total entries were 194,557 for the National Geographic Traveler sweepstakes to win a trip for two to the destination and a photo tour with a NatGeo photographer. Our March-August 2018 marketing program with Beyond the Beach content series with Afar has estimated impressions at more than six million.

### **New Business**

The Tourist Development Council (TDC) recommended that seven events marketing funding requests totaling \$101,500 be approved for FY18-19.

### **Next TDC Meeting**

The next TDC meeting will be held at 9 a.m. Thursday, Aug. 9, 2018, 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](http://www.LeeVCB.com). Contact: Tamara Pigott, [TPigott@leegov.com](mailto:TPigott@leegov.com), Lee County VCB, 239-338-3500.