



THE BEACHES OF
**FORT MYERS
AND SANIBEL**

TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Report to the Industry

March 13, 2014

January Smith Travel Research Summary

Average Occupancy Rate			Average Daily Rate			RevPAR		
2013	2014	% Change	2013	2014	% Change	2013	2014	% Change
65.5%	71.4%	+9.0	\$122.88	\$129.42	+5.3	\$80.48	\$92.38	+14.8

Record-setting, double-digit increase for tourism resort tax collection

The preliminary resort tax collected for January 2014 was \$3,163,195, an impressive 19 percent increase over January 2013 and a record-setting collection for the month of January. The FYTD collections were \$8,912,401, a 15.6 percent over FY12/13.

Airport news

During January 2014, 778,163 passengers traveled through Southwest Florida International Airport (RSW), an increase of 3.0 percent compared to January 2013.

TDC approves VCB budget increase

The TDC approved a \$1.35 million budget increase for the Lee County Visitor & Convention Bureau (VCB) for fiscal year 2014, bringing the budget total to \$15.35 million. The budget decision will now go to the Lee County Board of County Commissioners for approval. The additional funds, which come from bed tax dollars, will be used mainly for advertising and promoting the destination in key markets and internationally, as well as to bolster staffing at the Bureau.

TDC lobbies to increase state funding for beach nourishment projects

The TDC today approved sending a letter from the TDC Board chairman requesting increased state funding of beach nourishment projects in FY 2014/15, pointing out the importance of beach quality to the tourism industry and the projected return on investment in Lee County and throughout Florida. The letter urges state leaders to consider the Governor's \$25 million budget as "a starting point for a renewed discussion" about the value of healthy beaches, calling them the "engine that drives Florida's tourism economy." The letter cites the \$55 billion economic impact of beach tourism and almost \$1 billion in annual sales tax paid by beach tourists in 2012. Since 1998, the state has allocated \$30 million annually for beaches, which if merely adjusted for inflation over 25 years would be \$43 million. The Department of Environment Protection (DEP) has identified almost \$90 million in recommended projects for FY 2014/15. The TDC encourages tourism partners to join them in sending letters and educating state leaders about the necessity and urgency of providing more adequate state funding for beach projects.

Manatee Park receives emergency funding for shoreline stabilization

The TDC today approved an emergency funding request for \$51,000 from Lee County Construction and Design to stabilize the southern shoreline of the canal at Manatee Park due to rapid erosion. The funding will be added to the existing \$129,000 already allocated to stabilize the northern shoreline at Manatee Park. The TDC also directed staff to determine whether there could be cost savings if scheduled work for 2014/15 was funded in this FY and completed during the same construction timeline in 2014.

Next TDC meeting

The next TDC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 10, 2014 in the Admin East Building located at 2201 Second Street, First Floor Conference room #118, Fort Myers, 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.