



THE BEACHES OF
**FORT MYERS
AND SANIBEL**

TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Report to the Industry

April 10, 2014

February Smith Travel Research Summary

Average Occupancy Rate			Average Daily Rate			RevPAR		
2013	2014	% Change	2013	2014	% Change	2013	2014	% Change
83.5%	88.3.%	+5.8	\$159.39	\$172.22	+12.3	\$128.07	\$152.08	+18.8

Tourism resort tax collection continues record-breaking increases

After unprecedented double-digit increases during the first four months of the fiscal year, the preliminary resort tax collections continue to rise to record levels. For the month of February 2014, a preliminary total of \$4,097,842 was collected, a 16.9 percent increase over the preliminary collections in February 2013. FYTD collections increased 17.7 percent with \$13,876,746 collected.

Spring training attendance rises during 2014 season

Spring training attendance rose during the 2014 season. Out of 211 spring training games that took place in Lee County this year, the average attendance per game was 6,882 fans, a 4 percent increase from 2013, according to the Florida Sports Foundation, which tracks spring training attendance. This year's turnout threatened the record of 6,965 per game, set in 2012, but rainouts for key games, including the March 6 matchup between the Minnesota Twins and St. Louis Cardinals, put a slight damper on the numbers. The Red Sox drew an average of 9,845 fans per game, and the Twins drew an average of 7,700 per game.

VCB to receive the Internet's highest honor

The VCB will be recognized as an honoree at the 18th Annual Webby Awards for its video "Awaken" in the category of Best Travel & Adventure Online Film & Video. Hailed as the "Internet's highest honor" by *The New York Times*, The Webby Awards, presented by the International Academy of Digital Arts and Sciences (IADAS), is the leading international award honoring excellence on the Internet. "Awaken" is a five-minute digital experience that celebrates the exceptional ecological diversity found along The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel while immersing potential visitors in the destination's natural beauty. At the forefront of digital innovation, the first-of-its-kind film, was shot in a 4K Ultra High Definition (UHD) format, using the latest photo, video, slow motion and time-lapse techniques. It can be viewed on an enormous scale - IMAX-sized - as well as shared on PCs and smartphones. The full-length film can be viewed at <http://www.fortmyers-sanibel.com/awaken>.

Airport news

Traffic at the airport continues to rise as the destination's visitor count remains strong. During February 2014, 832,899 passengers traveled through Southwest Florida International Airport, an increase of 4.3 percent compared to February 2013.

Register for the May 15th Chrysalis Awards

Presented by the VCB and Greater Fort Myers Chamber of Commerce, the annual Celebration of Business and Tourism event will kick off on May 15th at 10:30 a.m. with a trade show and culminate with a luncheon honoring the 2014 Chrysalis Award winners. Tickets are \$40 for general admission and \$400 for a VIP table of eight. The cost of a trade show booth is \$225, which also includes two tickets to the luncheon. The Chrysalis Awards will be presented in seven categories: business development, eco-innovation, cultural achievement, education, sports, sustainability, and sales and marketing. In addition, the VCB will present the prestigious Junonia Award. To RSVP for the event, [register here](#), and for more information, contact Christine Davlin at cdavlin@leegov.com.

Forbes highlights the best attributes of two Lee County cities

Recently, *Forbes* magazine named Bonita Springs in the “25 Great Places To Follow Your Passions in Retirement” and Cape Coral in “The 25 Best Places to Retire in 2014.” Bonita Springs was described as a “Boating and water recreation paradise along Florida Gulf Coast near 50 golf courses.” Among other things, the magazine lauds Cape Coral’s Gulf of Mexico frontage, warm climate, above average air quality and low crime – all factors that attract overall visitation to the destination as well.

Next TDC meeting

The next TDC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 8, 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.