

## Report to the Industry

October 12, 2017

### July Smith Travel Research Summary

Average Occupancy Rate			Average Daily Rate			RevPAR		
2016	2017	% Change	2016	2017	% Change	2016	2017	% Change
72.7%	68.6%	-5.7%	\$131.79	\$132.98	+0.9%	\$95.79	\$91.18	-4.8%

### August Smith Travel Research Summary

Average Occupancy Rate			Average Daily Rate			RevPAR		
2016	2017	% Change	2016	2017	% Change	2016	2017	% Change
57.7%	55.7%	-3.6%	\$112.83	\$114.95	+1.9%	\$65.12	\$63.99	-1.7%

### Bed tax collection

The preliminary resort tax collected for July 2017 was \$2,736,243, an increase of 0.6 percent over July 2016 preliminary collections of \$2,718,942. The preliminary resort tax collected for August 2017 was \$1,727,998, an increase of 5.4 percent over August 2016 preliminary collections of \$1,639,587. Fiscal year-to-date preliminary tourist tax collections are \$38,504,891, a decrease of 0.1 percent year-over-year.

### Airport news

During July, 530,428 passengers traveled through Southwest Florida International Airport (RSW). Figures represent an increase of 9.6 percent compared to July 2016. During August, 481,185 passengers traveled through RSW. Figures represent an increase of 11.5 percent compared to August 2016. Year-to-date, passenger traffic is up 3.3 percent from the same period last year.

### The newest CGSP participants of Guests First recognized

Dr. Nicole King-Smith, tourism & hospitality training manager, announced 33 new certified guest service professionals (CGSP), bringing the total to 524 CGSP graduates in Lee County.

### VCB Departmental Reports

**Domestic and International Sales update:** Jill Vance, director of sales, reported on sales goals from 2016-2017 including a 13 percent increase in group meeting room nights booked year over year. She also presented upcoming sales activities including two new shows with focus on corporate business. Stefanie Zinke, international tourism sales manager, described the success of the Eurowings Influencer fam and Brand USA Germany Lufthansa Megafam. She reported on a recent sales and PR mission to three Canadian cities with four industry partners, which garnered extensive media coverage in both travel trade and traditional media.

**Visitors Services Update:** Judi Durant, director of visitor services, reported that the fourth-quarter calendar year showed 30,193 visitors assisted at RSW, bringing the year-to-date total to

169,081. She presented plans to launch an interactive kiosk at the airport later this month that allows visitors to plan their vacation activities and have a customized itinerary emailed to them. **Communications update:** Francesca Donlan, communications director, presented media highlights that included domestic and international coverage in major publications. She reported on post-Irma communication efforts and shared upcoming media visits and initiatives.

## **New Business**

### **Post-Hurricane Irma Marketing Plan**

Tamara Pigott, executive director, presented an overview of the proposed post-hurricane Irma marketing plan and associated costs. The TDC approved recommending additional funding for BoCC approval as follows: \$500,000 for marketing efforts and \$175,000 to promote the new Eurowings flights from Cologne and Munich that are set to begin in May 2018. The funding source comes from tourist tax reserves.

### **Emergency Beach Nourishment Request**

The TDC approved an emergency funding request from the Captiva Erosion Prevention District for \$25,000. The money, which comes from the reserve fund, will pay for a post-storm beach survey and impact assessment.

### **Events Marketing Subcommittee Nominations**

The following TDC Members were nominated to serve on the FY18-19 events marketing subcommittee: Pamela Cronin, Chair; Kevin Ruane, Colleen DePasquale, Bill Waichulis, and Fran Myers.

### **Fort Myers Beach Tram Proposal**

Steve Myers, transit director, LeeTran, and Katie Meckley, marketing manager, LeeTran, presented a proposal to implement a seasonal tram that would run along Fort Myers Beach between Bowditch Point and Matanzas Pass Preserve. The proposal requests 85 percent of the cost of the tram be funded from tourist tax dollars. The TDC requested additional information before voting on the proposal.

### **Save the Date!**

The Team Tourism Annual Sales and Marketing Summit will be held on Thursday, October 26, at 10:30 a.m. at Sanibel Harbour Marriott Resort and Spa in the Palms Ballroom. The keynote speaker is Kindra Hall, an award-winning columnist, author, and national champion storyteller. The VCB will unveil its 2017-18 Sales & Marketing Plan.

### **Next TDC meeting**

The next TDC meeting will be held at 9 a.m. on **Monday, November 13, 2017** 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](http://www.LeeVCB.com). Contact: Tamara Pigott, [TPigott@leegov.com](mailto:TPigott@leegov.com), Lee County VCB, 239-338-3500.