



Report to the Industry

April 11, 2019

February Smith Travel Research Summary

Average Occupancy Rate			Average Daily Rate			RevPAR		
2018	2019	% Change	2018	2019	% Change	2018	2019	% Change
88.2%	86.1%	-2.4%	\$216.40	\$213.46	-1.4%	\$190.89	\$183.83	-3.7%

Bed tax collection

The preliminary tourist development tax collected for February 2019 was \$5,394,964, breaking the record for the highest bed tax collected during February. Figures represent a 1.3 percent increase over February 2018 preliminary collections of \$5,323,507. Fiscal year-to-date preliminary tourist tax collections are \$18,443,742, a decrease of 3.4 percent year-over-year.

Airport news

During February 2019, 1,117,409 passengers traveled through Southwest Florida International Airport (RSW). Figures represent an increase of 6 percent compared to February 2018. Year-to-date, passenger traffic is up 7.3 percent from the same period last year.

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 763 CGSP graduates.

Summer Campaign update

During her Executive Director's report, Tamara Pigott presented two new TV spots and the first of two in-state newspaper inserts, featuring our humorous 2019 summer campaign, "You can't choose your family, but you can choose your family vacation." Out-of-state TV runs from April 8 to May 12, while in-state TV is scheduled from May 13 to June 16. In-state radio will run June 3-24. Overall, our summer marketing campaign will yield more than 100 million impressions

Sales update

Jill Vance, VCB director of sales, reported that the majority of the FY2018-19 sales goals are ahead of pace for attainment. She also presented highlights of second-quarter activities for the domestic group, travel agent and consumer sales including ConferenceDirect APM and the Boston Globe Travel Show. Vance also presented upcoming sales activities for third quarter including Connect NYC and the West Coast Florida Travel Agent Sales Mission.

Stefanie Zinke, VCB international tourism sales manager, said January through March had a strong focus on consumer activations in core international markets. The largest consumer activation occurred in Toronto, in partnership with Visit Florida, and gained 25.5 million impressions. Our presence at ITB in Berlin, the largest tourism and travel show in Europe, included radio interviews, TV programs and live broadcasts. Commissioner and TDC Chairman Cecil Pendergrass participated in many of these interviews. We initiated a new partnership with West Coast Florida DMO partners to target the Latin

American market. The first road show, completed at the end of March, included meetings with 720 trade professionals in three cities. Our May lineup includes our partner Canada road show in Toronto and Montréal. In June, we will be at IPW in Anaheim, California, with five hotel partners and our international contractors participating in over 100 appointments.

Visitor Services update

Judi Durant, VCB director of visitor services, reported that the volunteer Tourism Ambassadors assisted 88,274 visitors, a 3.9 percent increase over 2018. Additional community support examples volunteers participated in included staffing the VCB baseball booths at all spring training games, and assisting United Airlines with greeting a passenger celebrating her 100th birthday. Lee County Travel Rally will be held May 1 at Lakes Park, in support of National Travel and Tourism Week and the U.S. Travel Association.

Communications update

Francesca Donlan, VCB director of communications, presented successful, post-red tide strategies, including a satellite media tour and national press release. The PR team hosted 36 domestic and international journalists this quarter, attended media events and fostered a relationship with Vineyard Vines resulting in a production shoot on Captiva that has been included in several of the brand's email marketing campaigns.

Beach & Shoreline update

Nancy MacPhee, VCB product development manager, shared an update on Beach & Shoreline projects funded during the last two years. \$133.9 million in tourist development tax funding has been allocated through this program since FY2000. Looking ahead to FY2019-20, 23 funding requests in the amount of \$10.2 million are currently being reviewed by the TDC in preparation for the annual Beach & Shoreline workshop at 2 p.m. April 25, 2019. Please [click here](#) for more information.

New Business

The TDC approved the City of Cape Coral's request to move the location of an observation boardwalk previously funded in FY2016. The proposed boardwalk will move from the east side to the west side of the park and provide shoreline protection and wildlife viewing opportunities along the spreader canal.

The TDC unanimously approved to shift the May TDC meeting date to Friday, May 10, 2019.

Next TDC meeting

The next TDC meeting will be held at 9 a.m. **Friday, May 10, 2019**, at the Lee County Admin East building, Conference Room 118, 2201 Second St., 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.