



Report to the Industry

August 9, 2018

Spring 2018 Statistics

During the spring of 2018, The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel hosted about 1.34 million visitors who spent an estimated \$755 million while visiting – a 3.8% increase in spending year-over-year. Expenditures among paid accommodations guests amounted to \$526 million (70% of the total). The Lee County lodging industry saw average occupancy rates up 6.2% over last spring, with a drop in average daily rates, leading to a slight decline in revenue per available room (RevPAR).

Occupancy Summary

	Average Occupancy Rate		Average Daily Rate		RevPAR	
	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018
Hotel/Motel/Resort/B&B	70.2%	71.4%	\$155.03	\$148.11	\$108.77	\$105.75
Condo/Cottage/Vacation Home	71.5%	70.8%	\$204.71	\$197.98	\$146.41	\$140.12
RV Park/Campground	36.8%	50.2%	\$46.64	\$49.46	\$17.17	\$24.84
AVERAGE	61.7%	65.5%	\$149.73	\$138.26	\$92.37	\$90.63

Visitation and Visitor Origins

Total Visitation				
	%		Visitor Estimates	
	2017	2018	2017	2018
Paid Accommodations	64%	64%	853,367	865,503
Friends/Relatives	36%	36%	476,082	479,694
Total Visitation			1,329,449	1,345,197

Visitor Origin – Paid Accommodations Visitors				
	%		Visitor Estimates	
	2017	2018	2017	2018
United States	79%	84%	677,585	728,439
Germany	7%	7%	61,599	60,062
Canada	7%	3%	63,101	29,261
UK	2%	2%	19,531	16,940
Other International	4%	4%	51,081	30,801

Top DMAs (Paid Accommodations)		
	Spring 2018	
Boston (Manchester, NH)	7%	53,890
Chicago	6%	40,882
New York	5%	33,449
Tampa-Saint Petersburg (Sarasota)	5%	33,449
Cleveland-Akron (Canton)	4%	31,590
Miami-Fort Lauderdale	3%	24,157
Indianapolis	3%	24,157
Milwaukee	3%	22,299
Minneapolis-Saint Paul	3%	22,299
Detroit	3%	20,441

Sports Development Update

Jeff Mielke, Sports Development director, reported April-June 2018 highlights, including a record-breaking number of hotel room nights booked in April, with 10,115 room nights. During this time period, more than 51,000 sports tourism visitors generated direct visitor spending of \$14,759,687. Mielke is excited to welcome four NCAA basketball teams to the destination's first Fort Myers Tip-Off to be held at FSW's Suncoast Credit Union Arena Nov. 19-21, 2018. The field includes Boston College, Loyola Chicago, University of Richmond, and University of Wyoming. Games will be broadcast live on FS1.

June Smith Travel Research Summary

Average Occupancy Rate			Average Daily Rate			RevPAR		
2017	2018	% Change	2017	2018	% Change	2017	2018	% Change
66.2%	68.8%	+3.8%	\$127.62	\$133.47	+4.6%	\$84.54	\$91.77	+8.5%

Bed tax collection

The preliminary resort tax collected for June 2018 was \$2,948,364, an 11.7 percent increase over June 2017 preliminary collections of \$2,638,772. Fiscal year-to-date preliminary tourist tax collections are \$36,362,113, an increase of 8.6 percent year-over-year.

Airport news

During June 2018, 546,159 passengers traveled through Southwest Florida International Airport (RSW). Figures represent an increase of 3.4 percent in passenger traffic compared to June 2017. Year-to-date, passenger traffic is up 5.2 percent from the same period last year.

Marketing Trends

Clayton Reid, CEO, MMGY Global, reported a softening in the leisure travel market for the next one to two years. Price is the most influential factor with leisure travel. Business travel is on the rise, as is "bleisure" travel, a combination of business and leisure travel. Major leisure travel themes include culinary with a focus on authentic food and drink experiences; and road trips are becoming more popular. Out of the Millennial cohort, MMGY recommends targeting millennial families. This group spends more money than other millennials, who tend to take short-haul trips. Reid mentioned that in the next 12 to 24 months, it is possible that Amazon will get into the travel business, curating travel experiences as packages. This entry could threaten OTAs and Google. MMGY will continue to monitor and alter plans to short-term challenges at the destination.

2nd Quarter Research Report

Bob Domine, DPA, reported on visitor statistics and both visitation and visitor spending is up. Four out of ten domestic visitors staying in paid accommodations during the spring of 2018 came from the Midwest. Boston and Chicago were the top domestic feeder markets for Lee County. Germany delivered the largest share of international visitation in the spring season at seven percent. Guest satisfaction remains high at 95 percent.

New Business

The Tourist Development Council (TDC) recommended the BoCC approve the purchase of two Surf Rake machines to be used for beach and shoreline cleanup.

The council also gave approval for the funds necessary to cover emergency beach cleanup expenses through the end of FY 2017-18 (Sept. 30) in an open-ended amount. The council also asked the County to set aside \$1 million for a marketing campaign to be used when the destination's water quality has improved. All three items will be funded from tourist tax reserves.

The TDC also unanimously approved the VCB third-quarter budget report.

Attractions Marketing funding requests approved

The TDC formalized recommendations for FY 2018-19 Attractions Marketing funding as follows: \$400,000 awarded to the Southwest Florida Community Foundation, and \$50,000 awarded to the Edison & Ford Winter Estates.

Mark your calendars for the upcoming E-Awards celebration

The annual E-Awards will be held on Aug. 30 from 8 - 11 a.m., at the Hyatt Regency Coconut Point Resort & Spa. The popular recognition awards program is one of the area's most prestigious industry awards events, drawing 677 nominations this year for outstanding service providers in Lee County.

FY 2018/2019 Co-op Buy In set for 8/21

The VCB's FY 18/19 Co-op Advertising Program was unveiled last week at an industry meeting. The presentation and plan details are available at <https://www.leevcb.com/>. Partners may begin placing their orders on Tuesday, Aug. 21 at 10:30 a.m. on a first-come, first-served basis by logging onto <http://coop.leevcb.com/>.

Next TDC meeting

There is no scheduled TDC meeting for September. The next TDC meeting is Thursday, Oct. 11, 2018 at 9 a.m. The meeting will be held in conference room 118, at 2201 Second Street, 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.