Chamber Reports
March 2010

Clearwater Beach Chamber of Commerce

The Clearwater Beach Chamber of Commerce participated in the Grand Opening for the new Hyatt Regency on the Beachwalk and welcomed this great new addition to our tourism industry.

We also attended the ribbon cutting and Grand Opening of the Gallery at the Sandpearl, a new upscale art gallery that fronts right on Mandalay Avenue and sure to become popular with our visitors.

In conjunction with the Regional Chamber and the City of Clearwater the final proofing and editing was done on our new 2010 Visitor's Guide which should be available any day now.

We were inundated with requests for visitor's guides and information packages to be available for several groups visiting our area in the near future. These packages that we provide have become extremely popular as a way to promote our businesses and attractions.

Our Restaurant Week event has been scheduled for the week of May 12. This new event to our area is anticipated to bring many locals as well as those outside our immediate area to enjoy the flavor of our destination.

The Chamber's new website is under construction and is expected to make it faster, easier, and more informative for prospective visitors to plan their vacations. We expect the website to go live in April.

We participated as a sponsor in the Homeless Emergency Project geared to addressing the negative impact of panhandling and homelessness on our tourism businesses. This program is based on the St. Petersburg model of "A Hand Up Not a Hand Out" to help those in need.

Our member, Knology, brought many hundreds to our area to enjoy the "SeaBlues Festival" during a 3 day event at Coachman Park. Area hotels and businesses enjoyed the boost this event brought to our destination.

Several of our member hotels received prestigious awards which only reinforced our destination.

Clearwater Regional Chamber of Commerce

This report highlights recent additions of entertainment options for our visitors and residents. It also recaps the summit held on the challenge of the homeless situation which affects us all.

- Sandpearl Resort offers Clearwater's newest fine art gallery. On February 18, The Gallery at Sandpearl opened its doors. It features mostly Florida artists each conveying different themes and styles.
- Florida's longest running comedy club, Coconuts, has a new home at Shepard's Beach Resort. This is in addition to an already extensive array of entertainment choices at Shepard's. Comedy acts will be taking place a few times each week at this newest location for Coconuts.
- The Clearwater Chamber of Commerce sponsored a Homeless Summit on February 24th. Carlen Peterson, Clearwater City Councilmember and TDC Board Member, moderated the event. Strategies for management of the chronically homeless, which affect businesses throughout the city, were discussed. The summit also addressed the rapidly growing numbers of children, adults and families who are finding themselves homeless do to current economic conditions. In attendance were 54 business leaders from Clearwater and Pinellas County.
- The 2009 National League Champions are back in town and can be seen practicing at Carpenter Complex. The annual Phillies Phanfest will be held on February 26 when a few hundred community leaders and Chamber Members meet with the Phillies owners, coaches and players signifying the start of Major League Spring Training in Clearwater. The Phillies opening game is March 3 vs. FSU and spring training at Bright House Field continues through April 1.

Dunedin Chamber of Commerce

~ No Report

Largo/Mid-Pinellas Chamber Report

~ No Report

Palm Harbor Chamber of Commerce

~ No Report

Safety Harbor Chamber of Commerce

~ No Report

Seminole Chamber of Commerce

The Seminole Library and Recreation Center parkinglots and programs are filled! Good sign of people using these state of the art facilities!

We are working on the Seminole Stampede April 3, vacationers, snowbirds and locals all love it! This is our 17th annual 5k and 1 mile run at Walshingham Park, combined with Easter Egg Hunt. Last year we had 4 countries represented.

The Seminole Chamber also is involved in the annual Seminole Pow Wow parade and festival March 13 to 15.that will draw thousands of people.

Continuing to assist visitors to the Chamber daily as well as with inquiries over the phone and through e-mails and faxes. Most of our walk-ins are from Canada.

Something unique our community offers (for rainy days when visitors need inside attractions) is the Panama Canal Museum at 7985 113th St. , Suite 100, Seminole. There also is a family fun center on Seminole Blvd. that is very popular with kids who play video games.

St. Petersburg Chamber of Commerce

The St. Petersburg Area Chamber continued to promote Pinellas County area destinations throughout the month of February.

The Visitor & Information Center was busy in February promoting and providing information for several events including:

- Blithe Spirit
- Anything Goes
- Coffee with a Curator
- St. Pete Shuffle
- Dali Family Fun Saturdays
- Kayak Demo Day
- Albert Whitted Airport Pancake Breakfast
- Weekends at Weedon Island
- Walking Tour of Downtown St. Petersburg
- Florida Orchestra—Masterworks
- Tampa Bay Rays Fan Fest
- Big Ten/BIG EAST Baseball Challenge
- Wine Tasting at the HUB—Hands United in Business
- “Zombie St. Pete” comes to The Pier
- And more!

The 2010 Official Visitors Guide is currently at the printer. The new guide will be available after March 10, 2010 and is free. The Chamber distributes 80,000 of the guides on an annual basis to tourists (via requests and walk ins), to accom-modations and other points of interest and visitor information spots across the county.

The Chamber spent much of 2009 planning and organizing for a reconstitution of its former Tourism Council. The first meeting is now scheduled for Friday, April 16, 2010 . More to come following the first meeting.

Chamber Tourism Staff will be attending the upcoming Arts Tour of Downtown on Friday, March 12.

- Staff continues to work on several initiatives including:

- The visitor information side of www.stpete.com
- Visitor Information Center improvements
- Transportation efforts

The Chamber continues to work with area partners and the City on a commu-nity branding initiative for St. Petersburg. The task force will be meeting with the City of St. Petersburg to discuss ways to promote the city, good news stories and activities to both visitors and residents alike.

Tampa Bay Beaches Chamber of Commerce

Activity this past month to encourage promotion of our individual destinations include, not limited to:
*Set date for our first Sales Mission to Orlando Saturday, May 1st
*Our annual Spirit of Hospitality Beach Games are scheduled for
*National Tourism week, annual Tourism luncheon set for Thursday, May 13th at the Hilton Carillon with guest keynote speaker Duncan Wardle, VP of Public Relations, Walt Disney
*New Visitor Guides will be dropped at headquarters by this week's end and distributed
*Working with a 700 person group staing on St. Pete Beach, the Association for Chemoreception Sciences (AChemS) (April 21-25). We will be implementing a program to track referral to local businesses from this group.
*Details are being finalized for our Co-op partnership marketing program
All Welcome Centers are now staffed and open 7 Days a week, numbers are growing day by day.

Tarpon Springs Chamber of Commerce

~ No Report

Upper Tampa Bay Regional Chamber of Commerce in Oldsmar

All four hotels in the area are reporting they are at the height of their busy season this time of year. Most of their business during the week comes from business travelers and on weekends most of the business comes from Florida residents traveling from the interior of Florida to attend special events within the Tampa Bay Region.

During this time of the year, the City of Oldsmar continues to draw pedestrian traffic into the Downtown Redevelopment District where the city conducts a weekly Farmers Fresh Market event on Wednesdays of each week. This event runs from 9 AM until 1 PM and occurs next to city hall located at 100 State Street West in downtown Oldsmar.

To further enhance the economic development and tourist development of the new downtown center we are trying to attract an upscale restaurant chain to open up in the downtown area.

The major focus of the chamber has now shifted to our biggest community event of the year within the City of Oldsmar. This event is the Annual Oldsmar Days three day weekend event and Annual Oldsmar Days Parade. This year it will be the 49th Annual Oldsmar Days weekend event and it will take place on March 26th, 27th and 28th at R. E. Olds Park along the north shores of the Upper Tampa Bay. This year we expect to draw close 20,000 visitors over the three day time period.

The Oldsmar Days event will include live bands playing Classic Rock N Roll Music, will also feature 3 days of Car Shows, arts, crafts and food vendors, carnival rides, wing wars and beer tents. This 3 day event is fun for the whole family and takes place right along the shore line of the Upper Tampa Bay. Additionally, the Annual Oldsmar Parade will take place at 11 AM on Saturday, March 27th. This year we will have two (2) of the Great Grandsons of Ranson Eli Olds (R. E. Olds, founder of the Oldsmobile and founder of the City of Oldsmar) who will both jointly serve as Grand Marshalls of the 49th Annual Oldsmar Parade.

All of these events and long range plans are expected to enhance the Tourism Development opportunities within the Oldsmar and Upper Tampa Bay Regional Area.