

Chamber Reports

April 14, 2010

Clearwater Beach Chamber of Commerce

The Clearwater Beach Chamber of Commerce surveyed our lodging members comparing the occupancy, revenue, guest statistics of this Spring Break compared to last year.

We are excited to announce that the new 2010 Visitor's Guide is now available and we will be sending it out to visitor's who have been signing our guest book to help them plan future vacations.

We were again, inundated with requests for visitor's guides and information packages to be available for groups, as many as 300 attendees. The packages that we provide are obviously popular with guests visiting Clearwater Beach. We seem to have made an impressive reputation for ourselves as the "go to" people for information on Clearwater Beach.

Not far behind is our newly acquired reputation as to who to contact for assistance in wedding planning on Clearwater Beach.

We have been busily signing up restaurants for Restaurant Week and although this may event may not, of itself, create overnight stays, it will certainly bring people from the surrounding areas to the beach. Not only bringing more patrons to our businesses but possibly encouraging future vacationers. A new website has been created specifically for this event.

In April we are helping to promote both the Pink Power Walk to benefit the Mary Kay Foundation in helping to fight cancer and domestic violence, and the Hospice Beach Stroll which is taking place on Clearwater Beach and the St. Petersburg Pier.

On April 28th the Regional Chamber has joined us in helping to promote our Vote No on Amendment 4 Forum which will be open to the public and will held at the Holiday Inn & Suites on Clearwater Beach.

Clearwater Regional Chamber of Commerce

The Izod Indy Car Pit Stop Challenge came to downtown Clearwater as part of the 4th Friday Celebration on March 26th. Two Indy Cars with drivers, crews, pit equipment and a grandstand were set up on Cleveland St. Three thousands spectators, many tourists, from Northern cities, witnessed and participated in the event. The roar of the engine, tires spinning and crews performing pit stops set the stage for an exciting evening in the Cleveland St. District of Clearwater. Two live bands performed on stage as street vendors provided food, art work and refreshments. The St.Pete Grand Prix came to Clearwater.

Talento 2010 has started their work to create a Mural District in the East Gateway Area of Clearwater. The first mural was completed the weekend of March 27 & 28. The next mural will be done the weekend of April 24 & 25. Talento 2010 is a collaboration of Pinellas Opportunity Council Inc., City of Clearwater, businesses and other community groups including the Clearwater Regional Chamber of Commerce. The goal of the group is to stimulate economic turnaround in the East Gateway Area. Talento 2010 will create a destination for authentic Latino and Hispanic goods and services which would be attractive to residents and tourist.

The USF Under Armor Invitational College Softball Tournament had another successful year in Clearwater. The event is the largest Division 1 event of its kind in America. Significant bed tax revenue

and economic impact is a direct result of this event. The event runs several weekend during the month of March.

The Clearwater Sun & Fun Festival will run from April 23 to May 2. Please go to the city web site, www.myclclearwater.com for a full schedule of events.

The 50th Anniversary of Clearwater's Sister City relationship with Nagano, Japan will be celebrated with special events April 22 thru 25. The delegation will include 9 officials and 8 citizens. They will be experiencing the beauty of Clearwater and its Island Beaches.

Dunedin Chamber of Commerce

Dunedin was fortunate to host the Bay Area Concierge Association members on a visit to the downtown area on April 6. The group started at the Beso Del Sol Resort then came by boat, courtesy of Phil Henderson and the Caladesi Connection, to Dunedin's marina. From there they visited Bon Appetit, Sea Sea Riders, Kelly's and Blur, Café Alfresco and The Living Room on Main. It was a good introduction to Dunedin's downtown eateries and nightlife. Many of the concierges were already very familiar with Dunedin but it reinforced the fun activities it offers for Bay Area hotel guests.

The Chamber's Visitors Center has been open Saturdays from January through now to assist visitors to Dunedin. Our staff and volunteers have been able to assist almost 1,000 additional visitors this year because of the Saturday hours.

The Chamber is also enhancing the experience visitors and residents have at the April Friday Films in the Park. Each Friday a different film is shown at dusk in Pioneer Park for all to enjoy. The Chamber operates a family friendly concession of popcorn, hot dogs, soft drinks and candy. The films are free to all. Just bring a blanket or chair and come enjoy the films through the month of April.

Island Earth Days will be celebrated at Honeymoon Island State Park on Saturday and Sunday, April 16 and 17. The event includes live music, food, vendors, Osprey Village – a nature education area, guided walks and much more. Plus a Hawaiian Outrigger Race will take place on Saturday and the Shark Bite Challenge will take place on Sunday. Everyone is welcome.

The popular Casa Tina's Restaurant Cinco de Mayo celebration will take place on Wednesday, May 5. Main Street in front of the restaurant will be closed and live music, great food and drinks will be available.

Largo/Mid-Pinellas Chamber Report **Chamber Hospitality Task Force Update**

The Largo/Mid-Pinellas Chamber's Hospitality Task Force is working to enhance the visibility of hospitality businesses in its service area. This includes new links on the chamber's web site for Mid-Pinellas Dining/Attractions/Accommodations to spotlight its member businesses from those categories. A "Heritage Pinellas" cooperative ad campaign is also in the works.

4th Annual Largo Artists' Market Half/Half

More than 100 artists from around the country were featured at the 4th annual Largo Central Park Artists' Market on March 20 and 21. While fortunately, Saturday saw blue skies and a pleasant day with hundreds of people in attendance, a rainy Sunday proved a washout. However, there was a silver lining. Artists surveyed by event organizers said the bad weather was predicted well in advance, and made for a very busy and profitable Saturday. The majority of vendors were very happy and planned to return next year.

Largo Cultural/Recreation Centers Going Strong

Reasonable tickets prices and a wide-variety of plays and musical acts continues to make the Largo Cultural Center a destination for visitors and locals. Among the most recent performances were the musicals Gypsy and Bullyproof and stage performances by The Kingston Trio, jazz guitarist Al Di Meola, The Peking Acobats, acoustic guitarist Peppino D'Agostino, The Four Freshman and several children's shows. Largo's Recreation Center's have also attracted many from outside the region serving as the hosts of several high school and intercollegiate competitions.

Palm Harbor Chamber of Commerce

Our 2010 Community Guide/Membership Directory which serves Palm Harbor, Crystal Beach, Ozona and East Lake is completed and available for residents and visitors to pick up at our office at 1151 Nebraska Avenue, Palm Harbor.

Our Palm Harbor Citrus Festival was held for the 2nd year in our downtown area. This is a wonderful event for community and visitors to our area. It is a family oriented, community minded event that *celebrates the heritage of Palm Harbor* and embodies the pieces of our history that began in 1864. Our Greater Palm Harbor Area Chamber of Commerce and Old Palm Harbor Main Street, Inc. have partnered in this venture as a means to raise funds to support and promote Palm Harbor at large. We celebrated from March 18-21 with a 4 day carnival with 2 days of other activities: Dancing with the Palm Harbor Stars, 2nd Palm Harbor Citrus Festival Queen Pageant, sponsor and vendor tables, great food, games, activities, a pet event, music- showcase historical displays, Citrus Market and Citrus displays and the Palmsbury Bake-Off.

The month of April includes planning for community and chamber activities.

Safety Harbor Chamber of Commerce

The Safety Harbor Chamber partnered with the City of Safety Harbor and the Kiwanis Club March 6th and 7th on one of our most successful annual events, the Seafood Festival. Literally thousands of people attended from miles around, including neighboring counties.

Live bands were playing noon to 10 PM on Saturday, and noon to 6 PM on Sunday. Dozens of vendors were serving fried, broiled, roasted, and creamed seafood specialties, as well as smoothies, colas, beer and wine. The location was at the Safety Harbor Marina and park, with band stand, and picnic tables. The crowds enjoyed strolling along the pier where families of manatees put on unscheduled shows!

March 27... the Bloomin' Garden and Chalk Art Festival...the Safety Harbor Garden Club works all year on cultivating beautiful potted plants, and then sells them in the downtown Gazebo.

On the same day, artists from the far corners of the U.S. come to town, and draw gorgeous, whimsical, classical, abstract, and whatever style subject you can think of.....done in chalk on Main Street Sidewalks. Thousands of visitors came, stayed for hours, bought merchandise and fell in love with Safety Harbor and Pinellas County.

If you've never attended one of these events, we issue a hearty invitation to come, browse, and enjoy. Call 727-726-2890 for more information from Safety Harbor!

Seminole Chamber of Commerce

Our Seminole Chamber organized several events designed to help businesses stay afloat and to be of interest to our residents and tourists alike:

The Seminole Pow Wow Family Festival - the weekend of March 12, 13, and 14, featured 70-unit parade, carnival, food and live entertainment - very successful and well attended

The 17th Annual Seminole Stampede 5k run and 1 mile fun run - April 3 at Walshingham Park - About 300 runners attended, volunteers included all facets of the community. The event included an Easter Egg Hunt for the little ones sponsored by Seminole First Baptist Church. Most of the runners were local, but there were a few out-of-stators (from Wisconsin) and also from Canada and England.

Day to day operations - numerous visitors to the Chamber office looking for area information, phone calls, e-mails.

We had a record month in March in terms of web site statistics. The last three months shows increasing activity

Here is a summary that compares 2009 average to the last three months. I would say that we are cruising along...

	2009 Avg/8 mos	Jan	Feb	Mar	
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Unique Visitors	1431		1666	1905	2393
Totals Visits	2703		2768	3211	3726
Total Pages	20357		19357	20698	25446
Member Profiles Accessed			6928	5040	7363

St. Petersburg Chamber of Commerce

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

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

- The Baroque World of Fernando Botero
- Driving Miss Daisy at American Stage
- Honda Grand Prix of St. Petersburg and associated events and activities
- Festival of States Night Parade
- Festival of States Coronation Ball
- St. Pete Shuffle
- Weekends at Weedon Island Preserve
- Dali Family Fun Saturdays
- Little Everglades Steeplechase
- Seuss-tacular Sleepover at Great Explorations
- Art in Bloom 2010
- 2010 Transitions Championship—PGA Tour
- Florida Orchestra—Masterworks
- Boyd Hill Nature Preserve Guided Tram Tours
- St. Pete Pier Monthly Activities
- Kosher Food Fest
- Special Olympics—Area 6 Summer Games
- Florida Antiquarian Book Fair
- Abilities Wine Festival

- Walking Tour of Downtown St. Petersburg
- Saturday Morning Market
- 1st Annual Shuffleboard Tournament presented by Bright House Networks
- Tampa Bay Boat Show and more!

The 2010 Official Visitors Guide is here, made available March 10, 2010 and is free. The Chamber distributes 80,000 of the guides on an annual basis to tour-ists (via requests and walk ins), to accommodations and other points of inter-est and visitor information spots across the county.

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

The Chamber sponsored and hosted the Honda Grand Prix of St. Petersburg's Green Flag VIP Luncheon on Thursday, March 25 at the Vinoy. This event starts the weekend of race activities.

Chamber staff and Board members were present during the RNC visit at the end of March.

Staff continues to work on several initiatives including:

- The visitor information side of www.stpete.com
- Visitor Information Center improvements
- Transportation efforts — The Chamber hosted the Pinellas County Transit Summit on March 22, 2010.

The Chamber continues to work with area partners and the City on a community 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

In the month of February the TBBCoC has solidified its partnership with Clearwater Regional Chamber for a Digital Co-Op marketing plan for partners that are members of both chambers. This plan will launch in the drive market (most likely Brandon area) for the Month of August. This is the first of future opportunities. Additionally, the Tourism committee has firmed up the date for the Spirit of Hospitality Beach Games, May 2nd, Treasure Island behind the Bilmar Beach Resort; this is a sports competition with sand sculpting; previous champions include the joint team of the VSPPC/Sirata and the Bilmar.

The 2010 Sales Mission to Orlando will take place on June 22, 2010. This will change from prior years to be a more exclusive sales event. Details will follow and will be posted at tampabaybeaches.com

Finally, our Save the Date has been distributed for the Annual Tourism Luncheon on Thursday, May 13th at the Hilton Carillon. Our guest speaker will be Duncan Wardle with Disney.

Visitor statistics are up in both welcome centers (now open 7 days a week); this Years Visitors Guide is complete and distributed. (A copy will be provided for each TDC Member).

Tarpon Springs Chamber of Commerce

Fortunately, our winter visitors are slow to leave this year and they are still coming in asking for tourist information.

We have begun our new Visitor & Relocation Guide. This will be the third one and they have been very well received. Our thanks to the Clearwater Beach Chamber and both airports for distributing them for us.

Our Night in the Islands – dinner and Greek dancing in the street at the Sponge Docks has started up again after a cold weather/Easter break. Join us the first Saturday in May, the 1st, starting at 6:00 pm.

Our 36th Annual Fine Arts Festival brought people from all over the country to Tarpon Springs and Pinellas County. Saturday was the biggest day ever.

April 24 is the Chamber's Family Wellness Fair in the Historic Downtown from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. It is co-sponsored by Helen Ellis Memorial Hospital.

The Leepa-Rattner Museum of Art's 2010 fundraising event *Cirque du Musée* will be held in the Museum on Saturday, April 17, 2010 from 6:30 – 10:30 pm.

Sponge Docks Merchants Festival on the Docks, April 17th and 18th. 10:00 am to 5:00 pm.

Pet Lover's Expo on May 8th in Craig Park from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm.

11th Annual Gavel & Grapes in Historic Downtown Tarpon Springs 5:00 to 11:00 pm. Auction, wine tasting, music & car show.

Through the Chamber's TDC, we are working on a Marketing Plan for the city's merchants to bring local residents to Tarpon Springs to play throughout the summer.

Upper Tampa Bay Regional Chamber of Commerce in Oldsmar

We held our 49th annual Oldsmar Days March 26-28 which included our only annual parade. Weather on Sunday curtailed event success.

Two of Ransom Eli Olds great-grandsons attended the event and rode in the parade.