

PUBLIC RELATIONS

August 2010

Prepared by:

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MEDIA VISITS, TRADE SHOWS, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

Toronto Media Mission & Beaches and Baseball Event – August 2-7

Mary Haban teamed up with VSPC's Rosemarie Payne for another successful partnership in the Canadian market. The 8th Annual Beaches & Baseball event attracted nearly 70 members of the media and key tour operators/agents; and provided a prime opportunity to work with many of our partners to promote St. Pete/Clearwater to this important international market. Scores of articles, a television segment, and dozens of desk side meetings with consumer/trade media helped make this venture one that will continue to reward our destination for many years to come.

Simon Veness Visit, Brit's Guide UK – August 3-5

Travel writers Simon and Susan Veness, authors of one of the best-selling Florida travel guides in the UK, visited our area to update their guidebook and were hosted by the Hyatt Regency Clearwater Beach Resort & Spa. Mr. and Mrs. Veness also write travel for a wide range of publications and online sources, including *The Sun and Daily Express newspapers*. The Sun is the largest newspaper in Europe with a daily circulation of almost 4 million copies. Their exclusive Brit's Guide Newsletter is also read by thousands of keen subscribers every month. While in the area, they visited Clearwater Marine Aquarium, Caladesi Island State Park, Dolphin Landings and ventured into downtown St. Pete to explore the burgeoning arts scene.

ESTO Conference, Savannah, Georgia – August 7-10

David Downing represented VSPC at the US Travel Association's annual Educational Seminar for Tourism Operators (ESTO) Conference in Savannah, Georgia. Downing, who is on the US Travel Association's Communications Committee, joined DMO representatives from around the country in two days worth of seminars designed to provide the latest developments in all aspects of the tourism industry, including technology and new media, marketing, brand management and various best practices for DMO executives.

New York City PR Team Immersion Tour – August 10-13

VSPC's recently appointed New York City Public Relations agency (Nancy J. Friedman PR) participated in a three day immersion tour that allowed them to visit with key partners, see a variety of hotels and attractions, and experience all our area has to offer. Since they will be an integral part of helping us promote the area to national and NYC travel media, the visit proved extremely successful in helping us accomplish the goal of getting the St. Pete/Clearwater area in the national press.

John O'Hagan visit - *TeaTime Magazine* Photographer – August 16-19

The Island's End Resort in Pass-a-Grille played host to *TeaTime Magazine* photographer, John O'Hagan, as he visited on assignment in August. Mr. O'Hagan was in the area to shoot photographs for a story written by the magazine's editor, Lorna Reeves, about tea rooms she discovered on her recent trip to St. Pete/Clearwater. In addition to those shots, John planned to snap photos of the Island's End and beach scenes in Pass-a-Grille, for a sidebar story in the same issue.

VISIT FLORIDA Public Relations Manager Immersion Tour – August 19

VSPC's Public Relations team rolled out the red carpet to show VISIT FLORIDA's new PR Manager all the amazing things to see and do in our area. While his time here was brief, Kenneth Morgan from VF explored downtown St. Pete, saw the new Dali Museum, toured the Chihuly Collection, sampled delicious food, and watched the most incredible sunset on Clearwater Beach. His visit will help him promote our area to the scores of media that visit the sunshine state.

VSPC's 3rd Annual Social Media Summit – August 25

VSPC's Public Relations department hosted industry partners for their 3rd Annual Social Media Summit, discussing timely and relevant topics pertaining to all things Social Media. While defining what Social Media means to the hospitality industry, the PR team helped attendees determine whether Facebook and Twitter are appropriate avenues for their business. Melissa Bartalos, Lead Editor with Miles Media, provided the event's keynote, citing the five most important 'Must-Dos' and 'Never-Dos' while maintaining a Social Media presence. VSPC staff also discussed the importance of utilizing video and monitoring messages through free tools like Google Alerts.

Christine Marks Visit – *I-75 & the 401 Book* – August 28-31

Canadian Travel Editor Christine Marks, who is a regular visitor to our area, was back to update the 4th edition of her ever-popular guidebook called, "Interstate-75 and the 401: A Traveler's Guide between Toronto and Miami." While here, she explored all the area had to offer, including the hip new Stand Up Paddleboarding craze. A special thanks goes out to Oliver Kugler and the team from Sunset Vistas on Treasure Island for their kindness and generosity in hosting Ms. Marks for this trip. To learn more about this guidebook, visit:

<http://www.fireflybooks.com/bookdetail&ean=9781550465266#>

MEDIA ASSISTANCE PROVIDED:

August 2010 Media Assistance:

August 2 – Provided photos of the area to Heather Turk of *Sun Seeker Magazine*.

August 2 – Interview with Steve Huettel of the *St. Pete Times* regarding the additional 5 Million Dollars VSPC has requested from BP.

August 3 – Send link to online image gallery to Sara Lichtenfeld of *AOL Travel* for their City Guide Editor's Picks.

August 3 – Fielded call from producer of "*On the Case with Paula Zahn*" regarding b-roll footage; informed her that video is available for content that promotes tourism.

August 6 – Correspond with Jacquelyne Froeber of *Coastal Living Magazine* about the publication pulling a story from our area; informed her that the area is oil free.

August 6 – Provided quote to Fleishman-Hillard PR UK Office for inclusion in a story about Robbie Williams getting married and honeymooning on Honeymoon Island.

August 6 – Provided on camera interview to *Bay News 9* photojournalist Josh Gauntt for a story on the airport contest.

August 9 – Communicate with Lorna Reeves of *TeaTime Magazine* about sourcing accommodations for her photographer.

August 9 – Spoke with Mike Baginski of *Baxter Publications* in Canada for an update on our area in light of the oil spill. Referred me to Mike Dunbar in the Montreal office who was writing the story.

August 9 & 12 – Send Heather Turk of Allegiant Airlines’ *Sun Seeker Magazine* a link to the CleanPix online image gallery. Also sent her a link to our beach listings community on www.VisitStPeteClearwater.com.

August 9 – More discussions with Jacquelyne Froeber of *Coastal Living Magazine* about St. Pete/Clearwater area remaining oil-free; also mentioned Book with Confidence, our webcams and the pelican release.

August 10 – Fielded email from travel writer Michael Andre Adams regarding rescheduling his trip to our area.

August 10 – Fielded email from Marlane Bundock, Managing Editor *Convention South Magazine*, for an article she was writing on our area.

August 10 – Responded to call from Mike Dunbar from *Canadian Travel Press* regarding the latest on our area with regard to the oil spill in the Gulf.

August 11 – Provided interview and follow up information on area to Cindy Sosroutomo, a staff writer with *TravelWeek* in Toronto.

August 12 – Follow-up emails/calls with Sarah Lichtenfeld of *AOL Travel* about updating their City Guide Editor’s Picks with new restaurants and attractions.

August 12 – Fielded call from Philip Boccaccino of *Broward Lifestyle Magazine* about his interest in our area and to his request for complimentary dining.

August 12 – Call from Marcia Biggs who is the new insider for *VisitSouth.com* and who will cover the St. Pete/Clearwater area. She wants to know about accessing images of the area.

August 12 – Correspondence with Renee Roos, Publisher of *Paradise NEWS* regarding the travels of a local from Pass-a-Grille.

August 13 – Fielded call from Andy Schrader of *Southern Living Magazine*, looking for ideas on up and coming artists in the area.

August 13 – Sent information on unique spa treatments to Rochelle Lash of the *Montreal Gazette* for an upcoming article.

August 13 – Provided feedback and follow-up information to Beth Caulfield of *AOL Travel* for the Editor’s Picks section they are arranging.

August 17 – Responded to a last minute request from Andy Schrader, Florida correspondent for *Southern Living Magazine*, on great dessert places.

August 18 – Provided updated info on the area, as well as recommendations for accommodations to Emily Cyr Marks, one of the co-authors of *I-75 & the 401* guidebook.

August 19 – Send images of Clearwater Beach to Jeff Nall of *Coming of Age Magazine*.

August 19 – Provided photos of the area to Chantal Piret of *Roularta Media Group* for an article she is writing on our area. She visited the area earlier in the year.

August 21 – Lucy Tobias, freelance travel writer, called looking for information on the Dali Museum and the top 10 things to do in the area.

August 23 – Fielded request from Florida blogger Rori Paul about a visit to the Clearwater Marine Aquarium during the filming of the Dolphins Tale movie.

August 23 – Fielded call from Christine Marks, a Canadian guidebook travel writer about a potential visit to our area to update the book.

August 24 – Follow-up email with Rochelle Lash of the Montreal Gazette on spa story.

August 31 – Sent photos of downtown St. Pete and the Dali Museum to Sarah Veit, Editor of *Successful Meetings Magazine*.

ASSISTING VISIT FLORIDA:

During the month of August the Public Relations Team continued to work hard to provide timely information about the oil spill situation. In addition to this urgent situation, we continued to also provide editorial assistance to Visit Florida Offices in Canada, South America, and the domestic office located in Tallahassee. The Public Relations team was also actively involved in several partnerships, including public relations and media relations initiatives, to lure top notch media to the area. We received and respond to, on a regular basis, Quick Lead's and writer inquiries to promote both the destination and the State of Florida as a whole. We also participated on several committee conference calls, and webinars to keep up to date on the latest news and upcoming events to assist in our strategic planning.

August 13 – Provided fact checking assistance to Christine LaPlaca on her entries for VISIT FLORIDA.

August 24 – Responded to a quick lead from VISIT FLORIDA regarding stories that were off the beaten path and 100 miles or less from Orlando. We pitched several stories to Sarika Chawla and she liked the Tarpon Springs angle.

August 24 – Provided ideas and information on Rooftop bars/lounges to Paul Love, Photo Editor of *Florida Travel + Life Magazine*.

August 30 – Provided detailed information on new properties and meeting spaces to Ed Schmidt, Contributing Writer, *Successful Meetings Magazine*.

ASSISTING THE INDUSTRY & THE CVB & OTHER COUNTY DEPARTMENTS:

August 1 – Coordinated with Anita Treiser of Clearwater Regional Chamber of Commerce in supplying photos of Clearwater and Clearwater Beach to *Sun Seeker Magazine* for Allegiant Airlines.

August 4 – Sent a link to the Underwater Updates and the Oil Free Logos to Nicholas Stees Linda Kinsey at the City of St. Petersburg.

August 5 – Gave a presentation on social media to a variety of arts & culture business reps in downtown St. Pete.

August 9 – Sent link to Caladesi Island State Park to Pete Krulder.

August 13 – Responded to query from Amanda Russo at Zimmerman Agency regarding area occupancy stats and information on Beach Walk.

August 13 – Correspondence with Jeff & Stef Schorr at the Florida Craftsman Gallery regarding a photo to use in a FaceBook post to promote a gallery walk.

August 18 – Fielded call from Cyndy Pemberton of Dolphin Landings in St. Pete Beach. She was looking to speak with Jennifer Parramore about filming in the area.

August 24 – Tour and visit to Safety Harbor Resort & Spa.

August 25 – Hold Social Media Summit for industry partners.

August 30 – Emailed David Connelly at the Museum of Fine Arts regarding photos for the upcoming American Impressionism exhibition so we can promote it on FaceBook.

SOCIAL MEDIA INITIATIVES:

Throughout the month, the VSPC Public Relations Team continued to monitor and post updates on Facebook, Twitter, PressSuite and YouTube pages to promote the destination to our ever-growing fan base. We are also monitoring news coverage on a daily basis, and forwarding positive coverage to our industry partners via email.

We posted the following press releases on Facebook, PinellasCVB.com, PressSuite, and FloridasBeachMedia.com: **Underwater Updates, Industry Updates.**

Worked with CleanPix on uploading “Oil Free” logo into VSPC’s image library and sent out a notice to all industry partners on how to access and use this link.

Corresponded with Nate Huff of Miles Media to plan and produce key elements and talking points for the social media summit.

Gave a social media presentation to downtown St. Pete arts and culture business reps.

Uploaded VSPC’s commercials to City of St. Pete’s FTP for their site.

Work with VSPC’s I.T. division to create new email signatures.

We continue training on the new SimpleView system, updating partner and media information, as well as designing a variety of headers. We are also preparing to migrate from Q-Tools to Simpleview for press release distribution. Training on Exact Target.

PRESS RELEASES & E-NEWS & INDUSTRY ALERTS:

August 2 – Industry Update titled, “Royalty-Free ‘No Oil’ Logos Now Available for Download,” was sent to media and the industry.

August 6 – An update on VSPC’s advertising, marketing and PR efforts designed to combat the continuing negative perceptions about our area caused by the BP oil spill was sent to both the industry and to the media.

August 10 - Press release titled, “*Ten Miles Out, 50 Feet Down, Veteran’s Reef Blossoms New Underwater Update shows hogfish, grouper thriving in crystal-clear Gulf*,” was sent to the media and industry.

August 18 – Press Release titled, “**Underwater Expert: Fish Population in “Excellent Condition:** *Dr. Heyward Mathews narrates latest update from Veterans Reef off Clearwater Beach,*” was sent to the media and the industry.

August 20 – The latest edition of E-News featuring Canadian Blitz, and a Hollywood Film Keeping our Area in Summer Spotlight was sent to media and the industry.

August 24 – The last of three reminders to attend VSPC’s 3rd Annual Social Media Summit was sent out to the industry, inviting them to attend this interactive session focused on enhancing their social media skills.

UK & German Public Relations Firms Media Activities:

Please refer to separate reports from each office.

NYC PR Firm Activities:

Please refer to separate reports from each office.

Outdoor/Nature PR Activities: August 2010

Bill AuCoin & Associates, Inc.

- Visits by four outdoor newspaper writers in July continued to reward the St. Petersburg-Clearwater area in print. David Sikes of the Corpus Christi Caller-Times (Circ. 60,000) published a very positive article with color pictures about our tarpon fishing that appeared in Sunday, August 1 editions. It measured 170 column inches. This followed two other major articles in July, one by Bryan Hendricks of the state's major newspaper, *Arkansas Democrat Gazette* (Circ. 275,000), and another, by Gary Garth, in the *Louisville Courier-Journal* (Circ.270,000.) All articles let readers know there is no oil in the water surrounding St. Petersburg-Clearwater. CVB and hotel contact information was also included.
- Explored potential fall angling visits by major newspaper writers. Sent invitation offers to Dale Bowman for the Chicago Sun-Times, Steve Waters of the South Florida Sun-Sentinel, and Jim Sutton of the *Jacksonville Times-Union*.
- Researched a proposal by the Fish Buzz TV to produce sport-fishing videos.

UPCOMING MEDIA VISITS - TRADE SHOWS - PRESS GROUPS:

- 1 – Tin Thomas, Editor-in-chief, *Cruise and Travel Lifestyles Magazine*, September 13-15
- 2 – VISIT FLORIDA Governor’s Conference on Tourism, Orlando, Sept. 26-28
- 3 – Ashley Gibbins, Chief Executive of International Travel Writers Alliance, Sept. 29-Oct. 2