PUBLIC RELATIONS

February 2009

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Assistant Director

MEDIA VISITS, TRADE SHOWS, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

Mike Souter, Eastern Daily Press UK –February 21-23
VSPC's PR Team capitalized on a great opportunity to work with the Visit Florida tourist board to arrange a press trip for a journalist writing for the Eastern Daily Press (http://new.edp24.co.uk/) . The journalist, Mike Souter, is writing a feature focussing on 'Hidden Florida' and was here to explore and experience the more unusual and quirky sides to Florida. The Eastern Daily Press has a circulation of 100,000 and from his visit he will be experiencing many different parts of the State in order to write three dedicated travel articles from the end of April onwards. A special thanks to Pasa Tiempo for hosting Mr. Souter.

Toronto Media Luncheon & Mission – February 23-27
Senior PR Manager Mary Haban teamed up with VSPC's Director of Leisure Travel Rosemarie Payne to host a very successful media luncheon and trade dinner in the Toronto Market. Joining Mary and Rosemarie was Ms. Diane Dove of the Sirata Beach Resort & Conference Center, and Nicole Elko, Ph.D., Coastal Coordinator for Pinellas County, who was the keynote speaker. Both events were highly attended by some of the most talented media and tour operators in the region and received high scores in many respected trade publications. In addition, several personalized media visits were conducted during this week.

MEDIA ASSISTANCE PROVIDED:

February 2 – Assisted Ms. Cindy Cockburn of the Renaissance Vinoy Resort & Golf Club with the name of LoAnn Holden who visited the hotel in August 2008.

February 2 – Responded to an email request from Lee Koenig, Production Coordinator for Caputo Creative, Inc. in Largo, Florida who is requesting some stock footage of the destination for a video he is shooting on spec. and pitching to Bravo Networks and the Travel Channel.

February 2 – Assisted Sharon Parker of 970WFLA-Radio with information on post-Super Bowl numbers for visitors.

February 3 – Assisted Lisa Simundson, Florida/Caribbean Editor for Meetings South Magazine with information on the area that would be of interest to meeting planners for her Meetings South's Annual Central West Florida update.

February 9 – Responded to a request from Fred Shrum, a freelance writer, who was writing a column on Spring Break's effects on the beaches; such as how many visitors come, perhaps a financial impact to the local economy, historical vs. projected 2009 data, etc.

February 9 – Assisted Mr. Mike Brassfield, a reporter, St. Petersburg Times, on details for a story he was writing about low occupancy in the area during Super Bowl.

February 9 – Provided information on family-friendly activities in the area to Ms. Traci Suppa of www.TravelforKids.com for a feature piece she is writing.

February 10 – Provided an interview to Ms. Danielle Sessa of Bloomberg News. She needed Spring Training numbers (hotel occupancy); and how we are faring this year in light of the recession with numbers.

February 11 – Assisted Karen Gines, Executive Editor of MeetingNews, with a round-up of Florida destinations for the March 9th issue of MeetingNews and needed to include a brief, up-to-date profile on St.Petersburg/Clearwater.

February 12 – Assisted Ms. Patricia Letakis, Senior Editor/TASTES Editor, FLORIDA TRAVEL + LIFE with information on restaurants in the area she asked about.

February 12 – Received a request from Travel TV Plc -- a production company producing bespoke Travel Channels, which are shown on state-of-the-art 42inch plasma display systems placed within around 400 travel agencies across the UK.

February 17 – Assisted Phillip Hennessey of Meeting News with a request for information on the area for the March issue of the magazine.

February 17 – Provided an interview to Sharon Parker of 970WFLA-AM regarding a story that came across the state wires about tourism being down.

February 18 - Assisted a journalist writing a feature on Florida for the April edition of a publication called Selling Long Haul, is a monthly publication distributed to travel agents, tour operators, reservations agents, home workers, airlines etc. The magazine focuses on new products, new destinations, industry comment, new services etc. The magazine contains a 'Visit USA Now!' section every month.

February 19 – Assisted Allison Wood, a writer with Today's Parent Toronto with information on the area for an upcoming visit with her family.

February 19 – Phone call from Canadian Golf Writer Brent Long regarding the Toronto Media Luncheon and his attendance at that event.

February 19 – Assisted Sharon Parker, a reporter with 970 WFLA-AM, with her report regarding an article that came out on Travelocity regarding Spring Break travel and how it is basically on the upswing despite the economy. She says airfares have gone down so wanted to know if we are seeing more bookings; hotels dropping their prices; and if we expect a good crowd here in the Spring (on the beaches too.)

February 20 – Provided photo assistance to Mr. Jay Bemis of Tampa Bay Where Quick Guide.

February 22 – Assisted freelance writer Phyllis Steinberg with information on the area to update a report on Florida for Weissman Reports.

February 23 – Provided copy for an advertorial in the PowWow issue of Travelution Magazine.

February 24 – Provided an interview to Mike Deeson of WTSP-TV; CBS Tampa.

February 24 – Responded to an inquiry from Amy Ascherman, a freelance journalist who is currently working with NBC and New York University to do a piece addressing the effects that current economic state may have on Spring Break 2009 for college students.

February 25 – Assisted Mr. Vinny Bellucci of Miles Media with fact checking assistance for an article being produced for VISIT FLORIDA's website.

February 27 – Provided photo assistance to Mr. Izumi Goodwin, Branch Manager of JTB International, Inc. Orlando Office for a tour operator brochure he was producing.

ASSISTING VISIT FLORIDA:

February 2 – Assisted Jay Schleuning of VISIT FLORIDA's public relations team with media contact information in the Chicago market.

February 11 – Worked in conjunction with Henny Groenendijk of VISIT FLORIDA's Canadian office to gather names for the Toronto Media Luncheon and Mission.

February 12 – Assisted VISIT FLORIDA's public relations team with a request in helping them develop a PR campaign designed to highlight the importance of tourism to Floridians.

February 17 – Assisted Nate Long of VISIT FLORIDA's public relations team with a request for information to pitch story ideas to National Geographic Traveler.

February 17 – Provided editorial assistance to Denise Arencibia of VISIT FLORIDA's Latin America Office who was composing a newsletter to be distributed to the Mexican travel industry. The March issue will focus on Luxury in Florida.

February 27 – Responded to a Quick Lead from VISIT FLORIDA regarding Pet Friendly Travel.

ASSISTING THE INDUSTRY & THE CVB & OTHER COUNTY DEPARTMENTS:

February 16 – The PR Team participated in the Pinellas County in-service day at Sand Key Park.

SOCIAL MEDIA INITIATIVES:
VSPC'S PR Team is currently working on dedicated FaceBook, Twitter and YouTube pages to promote the destination in cyberspace.

PRESS RELEASES & INDUSTRY ALERTS:

February 5 – Send out a press release to the industry, local and national media entitled: "St. Pete/Clearwater Tourism Director to Testify before House Committee: *Minich to warn lawmakers of potential harm to beaches, tourism industry."*

February 10 – Send out an industry alert inviting partners to see the new VSPC Media Campaign.

February 20 – Send out a press release to the local media entitled: "St. Pete/Clearwater Comes Alive with College Ball This Weekend …*Big East/Big Ten Baseball Challenge Draws 18 Teams, Hundreds of Players to Area*."

February 23 – Press Release entitled: "The Ultimate Dog-Friendly Destination Welcomes Disney Defector: *Mickey-Marked Mascot Prefers St. Pete/Clearwater's Pet-Friendly Beaches, Paw Playgrounds"* was sent to local, national and international media.

February 24 – Press Release entitled: "Rays, Phillies Set the Stage for Clearwater's 'World Series Rematch' *Bright House Field to Host American, National League Champs in Spring Training Highlight"* was sent to local and national media.

New York PR Firm, UK PR Firm, and German Media Activities:
Please refer to separate reports from each office.

Outdoor/Nature PR Activities:
Bill AuCoin & Associates, Inc.

Here is our outdoor/nature PR report for February 2009.

- Five features about our # 1 beaches, shore fishing and shelling that dominated the January 18 travel section of the Detroit Free Press are gifts that keep on giving. Articles by travel editor Ellen Creager and outdoors editor Eric Sharp have been posted online by major media including USA Today, Newsday, Fort Worth Star Telegram, Orlando Sentinel, Ottawa Citizen, Fort Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel and more.

- Motorhome magazine posted a feature about Honeymoon Island State park on its website entitled *Working for a Campsite in Paradise*. It's about a state park program providing free RV campsites and hook ups to volunteers. It will appear in print in the April issue of Motorhome, which has a circulation of 150,000. The feature is just one of several that grew out of a hosted visit in January 2007 by the writer/photographer team of Pam and Guy Selbert.

- The outdoors/nature counsel provided information about Pinellas County's pet-friendly beaches and parks to Laura Daily for an article she is writing for AARP magazine.

- The outdoors/nature counsel provided information to Atlanta freelance Doc Lawrence for an article about kayaking, fishing, birding and other outdoorsy things baseball fans can do while visiting for spring training baseball games.

- The outdoors/nature counsel provided information about Pinellas County's environmental initiatives, including sea grass protection, to Diane Daniel, a North Carolina travel writer who writes for the New York Times, Boston Globe and other major publications. She owns a vacation condo in Indian Rocks Beach and is in our area periodically.

UPCOMING MEDIA VISITS - TRADE SHOWS - PRESS GROUPS:

1 – ITB, Berlin, Germany – March 9-15
2 – International Golf Press Trip with Disney World – March 17-23
3 – Pam Wright – Go Magazine – March 23-30