

Chamber Reports

July 14, 2010

Clearwater Beach Chamber of Commerce

The Chamber welcomed Darlene Kole as the new Executive Director. Darlene has been in the tourism industry for over 20 years and has experience in public relations and planning special events. She was the creator of The Taste of Clearwater and chaired that event for 12 years. She is very excited to be working with the Chamber.

The Chamber held their 15th Annual Award Dinner on June 10th at the Sandpearl Resort. This elegant affair was enjoyed by 200 members and guests, a record attendance. Retired Congressman and U.S. Representative Michael Bilirakis was the guest speaker and delivered a strong message that was received well by all.

The awards went to:

- Clearwater Marine Aquarium – Large Business of the Year
- ClearSky beach café – Small Business of the Year
- Russ Kimball, Sheraton Sand Key Resort – Tourism Person of the Year
- Deborah Pauley, CEA Marketing – Volunteer of the Year
- Bob Longenecker, Jolley Trolley – Citizen of the Year

Sunsets at Pier 60 started running free movies on Friday and Saturday nights in June and will run them through the end of August. These are all PG rated movies for the families with kids, and this event has turned out to be very successful.

Our Chamber promoted and was involved in Hands Across the Sand on Saturday June 26th.

We continue to field calls from people inquiring if there is oil on our beaches. We also have received a number of calls from people who were originally going to stay in the Panhandle and called our Chamber looking for accommodations here. We referred them to our properties and have learned that they have booked these guests.

June 27th was Gulf Beach Day with the Tampa Bay Rays. Our Chamber sold tickets and our beach Jolley Trolley took 32 people to the game. It was a great event and a good time was had by all!

The Chamber has hired Liz LaJoy and she comes to us with years of experience in graphic design, photography and event planning. We are thrilled to have Liz on board.

The Chamber has attended a number of webinars, and meetings all to do with the Oil Spill crisis, so to inform our members of the ongoing marketing efforts being done by Visit Florida and Visit St. Petersburg/Clearwater; and also, helping our members with the filing-of-claims process.

Clearwater Regional Chamber of Commerce

The prime focus for this past month continues to be countering the misperception that there is oil on the beaches in Pinellas County. A BP claims office did open on Drew Street in Clearwater this past month.

- The Chamber partnered with the Clearwater Arts Foundation and hosted an event, Artistic Tastings, at the Hyatt Clearwater Beach. Ten artists participated, displaying and selling their artwork. Both the silent and live auctions went well. This will be an annual event.
- Peter I. Rose, a travel journalist and participant in the Chamber's Spring 2009 travel writers' fam, recently published his book - *With Few Reservations, Travels at Home and Abroad*. He devoted one of his 48 commentaries to Clearwater and entitled it *White Sands, Red Sunsets and Clear Water*.

- The most recent issue of Allegiant Airlines in-flight magazine, *Sunseekers*, features 5+ pages on Clearwater.
- A digital billboard promoting Pinellas County Gulf Beaches will be up in Brandon starting July 26. This promotion is a partnership between the Clearwater and Tampa Bay Beaches Chambers and 6 beachfront hotel partners. The goal is to encourage in-state vacations.
- The 2nd Annual Clearwater Super Boat offshore National Championship and Festival will return September 30 – October 3, 2010. The event has grown to include three Poker Runs, over 100 boats, and concerts at both Clearwater Beach and Coachman Park. The Sunday championship race will include 40 boats.

Dunedin Chamber of Commerce

~No Report

Largo/Mid-Pinellas Chamber Report

Mid-Pinellas Business Showcase

Several hundred people from throughout Tampa Bay participated in 6th Annual Mid-Pinellas Business Showcase held at the Largo Cultural Center. The event featured more than 50 business vendors including several area hotels and restaurants. Among several the event sponsors were Bright House Networks and Tampa Bay Business Journal which provided advertising across the region.

Business-to-Business and Visitors Guide

Advertising sales for the Chamber's 2011 Business-to-Business & Visitors Go-to-Guide are now underway. This year's publication will feature a special tab for Accommodations/Hospitality spotlighting Chamber member hotels, restaurants and attractions. Distribution date is December.

Palm Harbor Chamber of Commerce

~No Report

Safety Harbor Chamber of Commerce

The weather was wet and wild, and the elements were threatening, to say the least. As my Father used to say..."It's the Old Indian Sign of bad weather....raining all around, and pouring down in the middle!" .

The City of Safety Harbor, the Chamber of Commerce, the American Legion, the Downtown Business Committee, plus many other sponsors had been preparing for weeks .They bought beads, to throw to the crowds, lined up a covey of Corvettes, found flags, and booked a big bunch of bagpipers. Then....the rains came, on the very morning of July 4th...fulfilling the Old Indian Sign.

The would-be parade participants milled around, hoping for a rain remission, but, none came. However, they all opted to go forth and make loud noises with sirens, horns, march music, hundreds of Horses Powers, and the kilted bagpipers. And the heavens relented somewhat, and it was good.

Mothers and Fathers creating a memory with their children, sheltered by humongous umbrellas, catching beads, waving flags, and gentle old folks, middle aged men smartly saluting as the flag bedecked vehicles crawled past, a cross section of what's so good about America....a small town, opening the festivities to all, while getting goose bumps of proud patriotism as we heard Stars and Stripes Forever.

Then everybody went home to eat hot dogs and burgers, Mom's apple pie, and rest up for the spectacular fireworks at 9 pm at the Marina. That Event, with it's dramatic displays, draws and entertains sight seeing audiences from surrounding counties, and also the myriads of visitors from near and far who reserve accommodations at the Spa, as they observe the time honored tradition of displaying our love of this country, oil slick or not!

Seminole Chamber of Commerce

About 50 people visited the Chamber this month for tourist-related info.

We are working with Seminole Mall on July activities for tourists and locals alike

- Celebration of America's birthday, Thursday, July 1, 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.
- Fresh Market - foods, plants, etc. Thursday, July 8, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Combating oil spill news, with information on our Chamber web site: <http://www.seminolechamber.net> including web cam from <http://www.baynews9.com/Sky9.html>

A huge upcoming event - our Sustainability Conference Oct. 22 & 23 at St. Petersburg College and the Doubletree Resort in Clearwater Beach is expected to draw several hundred participants who will be using hotels, restaurants, etc.

St. Petersburg Chamber of Commerce

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

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

- Coffee with a Curator
- St. Pete Shuffle
- A Taste of Pinellas
- Tampa Bay Home Show
- Dali Family Fun Saturdays
- Tampa Bay Rays home games
- Weekends at Weedon Island
- Albert Whitted Airport Pancake Breakfast
- Flower & Garden Show
- Tampa Bay Caribbean Carnival
- Restaurant Week
- And more!

The Chamber watched and continues to monitor the information regarding the Oil Spill in the Gulf of Mexico. Currently, we have online information with links for more information. We are also fielding calls to concerned residents and visitors alike. We are utilizing the CVB's statement of information to remain consistent with our area partners. Additionally, we are utilizing messaging, commercials and photos for our social media outlets and website.

We continue to distribute the Official Visitors Guide.. The Chamber distributes 80,000 of the guides on an annual basis to tourists (via requests and walk ins), to accommodations and other points of interest and visitor information spots across the county.

Tampa Bay Beaches Chamber of Commerce

The TBBCoC has been involved in nonstop messaging to areas outside of our local destination that there is NO OIL on our beaches. Including but not limited to: On air interviews with news outlets, CNN, Various radio stations including the Bill Press Show in broadcast in DC. This messaging continues. Additionally, we walked capitol hill to speak to our elected officials regarding clean energy policy.

Our ad campaign has begun the first tier is Allegiant Airlines in-flight piece and will then spawn to print and online media in three key markets: Plattsburg, NY, Des Moines, IA and Allentown, PA. This is an exciting program and we look forward to its success.

Our Sales Mission to Orlando was a success with over 100 participants combined (both destinations).

Our billboard campaign in the Hillsborough area will launch in one week 6 partners in a joint effort with the Clearwater Regional Chamber of Commerce.

Chamber President is now scheduling meetings with each beach communities to discuss finite marketing efforts.

July 24th is our 2nd Annual Sizzling Summer Bash with over 15 restaurants, and over 50 Silent Auction packages including stays and vacation all over Florida.

Tarpon Springs Chamber of Commerce

- Through the Chamber's TDC, we are continuing to work on a Marketing Plan for the city's merchants to bring local residents to Tarpon Springs to play throughout the summer.
- July 10th was Christmas in July at the Sponge Docks with 30 Santas and Mrs. Claus's for breakfast and lunch with Santa, a parade and lots of games.
- The City, through a grant, has started its second year of the Summer Solstice events. These include and are all on the City's website:
 - Night in the Islands – Dining under the stars with our famous restaurants and Greek music and dancing, on July 10th.
 - Almost Maine – Play by John Cariani at the Cultural Arts Center.
 - Actors workshops with Rick Bronson.
 - Orpheus & Eurydice by the New Century Opera Company on June 25th.
 - Turtle Island Quartet – the music of John Coltrane on June 26th.
 - The Opera Chorus on June 27th.
 - The Music Man – 16-18 and 23-25th
- Brooker Creek Preserve has ongoing events for all ages. Check their website for their schedule.
- The Tarpon Springs Castle Winery their Hot July Days event on July 3rd and Ooo La La Be French for a Day on August 7th.
- The Historic Downtown Art & Antique District and the Sponge Docks, plus all of our other businesses welcome everyone to be a tourist in Tarpon Springs and see why the snowbirds flock here.

Upper Tampa Bay Regional Chamber of Commerce in Oldsmar

We have formed a committee with the goal of attracting one or more state delegations to our community for the Republican National Convention in August 2012. We will work closely with the local organizing committee in this effort.

We will hold our first annual City/Chamber softball game against the Pinellas County Sheriff's Department on July 24 at Bright House Field. The event known as Christmas in July is a benefit to raise funds for the Holiday Sharing program.