

**Pinellas County TDC Chamber's Report**  
**July 8, 2009**

**Clearwater Regional Chamber:**

The Travel Writers FAM the Clearwater Regional Chamber hosted last month has generated several media articles via internet and print. Clearwater has already been featured in the *Oklahoma City Travel Examiner* and will be featured in July in a Quebec publication *Circulation Quebec*, another article in *Oklahoma City Travel Examiner* in August in *Columbus Parent Magazine* plus 2 e-zines and in September in *Sojourns Magazine*. Additional print and on-line articles, photos and the Thomas Cook travel guide will also be written based on this FAM. Many thanks to all of our tourism partners that assisted us with hosting this FAM.

The Chamber will be advertising in the Visit St Pete/Clearwater Visitation Guide with a new exciting promotion.

As we continue to improve our website which is receiving a high number of unique visitors at [www.visitclearwaterflorida.com](http://www.visitclearwaterflorida.com) we will be adding blogs and twitter.

We are planning to advertise in Chicago, New York, D.C. and Canada when it begins to get cold and are speaking with Travelocity or Expedia about advertising possibilities.

Gerri and Anita are working on some ideas for Florida Huddle, being hosted in Clearwater January 2010. We will be working with Visit St Pete/Clearwater to make sure it is a success.

The Chamber is looking forward to the Power Boat Races on Oct 2-4. We will be working with the community and the organizers to help to promote this exciting event.

The 30<sup>th</sup> JAZZ Holiday is also coming soon and promises to be a great success for Clearwater and the entire Pinellas County.

**Clearwater Beach Chamber:**

The Clearwater Beach Chamber of Commerce held its 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Awards Banquet on June 11, 2009 at Shephard's Beach Resort with a sellout attendance. This year's theme was a tongue in check reference to "Tacky Tourists." The festivities began at 6:00 p.m. with cocktails and hors d' oeuvres on "The Wave" Tiki Deck. Entertainment was provided by Ron and the Classics. Anna Aliaga, Clearwater Harbor Realty, won the grand prize vacation package drawing, and Guy Balson, Visit St. Pete Clearwater won a mini vacation for winning the Tackiest Tourist outfit contest!

The highlight of the evening, accompanied by a magnificent sunset, was the annual awards presentation. The Clearwater Beach Chamber of Commerce awarded local businesses for excellence. The award winners include Holiday Inn Hotel and Suites Clearwater Beach for "Large Business of the Year," Frenchy's Restaurants for "Small Business of the Year," and Martin Cole, Red Roof Inn for "Volunteer of the Year". Humanitarian of the Year went to Tommy Duff, Tommy Duff's Irish Aviation Pub, and Betty Furniss, Mary Kay Cosmetics, for all their charitable fundraising work. Special VIP Awards were presented by Lisa Chandler of Barefoot Beach House and Pier 60 Concessions to Terry Schmidt, Clearwater Parks and Recreation Department, and Joe Lain, Clearwater Lifeguard Director, who are both be retiring after many years of serving the City and ultimately our citizens and visitors.

Provided tourist info brochures, post cards and bags to the local champion baseball team traveling to the Fossil Park Baseball World Series to be held in Georgia. Each child from the opposing team will receive a "goody" tourist bag. In addition, Clearwater Beach and surrounding area information will be displayed on the local team's table for all participants in this World Series to pick up.

The Chamber provided tourist information pamphlets, coupons and maps of the Clearwater Beach and surrounding area that were distributed to attendees to Oncology Consultants seminar.

#### **Greater Palm Harbor Area Chamber**

The Greater Palm Harbor Area Chamber of Commerce reports the following:

Many events continue in our downtown area. All events include music, food and beverages, children's activities and display tables of arts and crafts. The downtown hosted the Annual Parrot Head Party on June 6. It was open to the public and brought many residents and tourists to our area.

We have begun sales for our official Community Guide/Membership Directory available to all residents, visitors, relocation inquiries, etc. It will be available toward the end of the year.

The summer months of July and August will be filled with many social, networking and tradeshow events open to the public. Tourists are welcome and encouraged to attend.

#### **St. Petersburg Area Chamber**

- The St. Petersburg Area Chamber continued to promote Pinellas County area destinations throughout the month of June.
- The Visitor & Information Center was busy in May promoting and providing information for several events including:
- The Rays home stands in June, including the Summer Concert Series
- The 17th Annual Caribbean Carnival
- Saturday Morning Market in St. Petersburg
- Florida Orchestra
- Weekends in Weedon Island
- Monthly activities at the Pier, including the Fourth of July weekend festivities
- Chamber Visitor Information Center, Tourism and Sales Staff attended a CVB Tourism Training Chamber staff on Monday, June 8. The training covered customer service and destination awareness.
- The Chamber hosted two orientation and training sessions for volunteers of the Caribbean Carnival on June 6 and June 10. Staff also volunteered for the event.
- Staff attended the "Sponsorship 911" workshop held on June 25 geared for Arts and other non-profits. Many good skills were learned and enforced during this session to help marketing efforts during challenging economic times.
- Staff is designing itineraries for specific markets and interests.

#### **Dunedin Chamber**

Dunedin's Tourism Marketing Committee, "Visit Dunedin," is finishing the commercial that will air in the Tampa Bay throughout July and August. The ad focuses on the many activities and reasons to visit Dunedin and is designed to draw those looking for a "Staycation" to consider Dunedin. This effort is in partnership with the CVB and the cooperative marketing dollars.

Dunedin's shops are open late and wine samples abound during the Second Friday Wine Walk event that continues through July and August. Attendees purchase a \$10 wristband at participating merchants and have the opportunity to sample wines offered by many shopkeepers. Entertainment starts at 5:30 p.m. in Pioneer Park, downtown, and goes on until sunset. Door prizes are awarded throughout the evening with the grand prize drawn at 7:30 p.m.

Due to its popularity, Dunedin's Green Market will be open the second Saturday of the month, June through September, 7:30 a.m. to noon, at Pioneer Park.

The Dunedin Rotary Club's Sprint Triathlon drew a sell out crowd on Honeymoon Island on June 14 and the Kiwanis Midnight Run was expecting a good turn out for their July 4<sup>th</sup> event.

### **Tampa Bay Beaches Chamber of Commerce**

The Tourism Committee is completing the final touches for the Appreciate the Beaches Sales Mission to Orlando. This will be held at The Vines Restaurant on Wednesday, July 8<sup>th</sup>. The cost is \$150 to attend the event or \$50.00 to send over brochures for distribution. This is a member's only event.

The Chamber's President has met with all Mayor's and City Managers for the various beach communities from St. Pete Beach to Sand Key. The goal of these meetings was to get an understanding of how the Chamber can work more closely to help promote each beach destination in a specific way. Each town has some different to offer the visitor. Also, visitor guides were distributed to each town hall.

The Chamber successfully raised the funds necessary so that St. Pete Beach could have a 4<sup>th</sup> of July fireworks show. This is a vital event to the tourism economy for our destination.

### **Tarpon Springs Chamber**

- We are still looking for the anticipated slow-down in Tarpon Springs! We have two new restaurants opening on Tarpon Avenue, plus we welcome the new Crabby Bill's on S. Pinellas Avenue.
- The business public is invited to attend the North County Chambers' Business-to-Business Expo tomorrow evening at Ruth Eckerd Hall from 5:00 to 8:00 pm. Cost is \$5.00 at the door.
- The Tarpon Springs Chamber of Commerce is holding a week-long Business Enhancement week, July 20 – 24. It will include 17 workshops on business and marketing to help businesses get through the recession. The public is invited to attend, particularly those starting new businesses. Information and registration is available on the Chamber website, [www.tarponspringschamber.com](http://www.tarponspringschamber.com).
- NBC in Ft. Myers, sent a news crew to Tarpon Springs for their One Tank Trip series, which aired in early June.
- Key Lime Yummies, a local bakery, won a national contest for the best key lime pie, beating out Sara Lee and other top brands. Charlie Belcher of FOX News, featured them for an entire morning on June 4<sup>th</sup>.
- Danny's Carpet Cleaning, also a Chamber Partner, was featured on Power Breakfast on Fox 13.
- A new film, Red Tide, was filmed in Tarpon Springs and features the sponge divers and their lives.
- Cultural Affairs kicked off their six-week Summer Solstice program with dinner and dancing in the street at the Sponge Docks. If you invite people for Greek food and dancing, you have an instant success – and it was!
- Watch for the rest of the Summer Solstice events in the newspapers, which will include music, theater and dance through August 1<sup>st</sup>.
- The Chamber of Commerce has a new Intern & Apprenticeship program with St. Petersburg College. We're currently on a trial program and the full program will start with the fall semester.
- The Chamber of Commerce is now set up on Face Book, MySpace and Twitter, so look for tweets!

### **Upper Tampa Bay Regional Chamber (Oldsmar)**

During the month of May, The Upper Tampa Bay Regional Chamber of Commerce in Oldsmar, in coordination with the City of Oldsmar and Full Throttle Magazine conducted the first ever "**Oldsmar Freedom Fest**". This new event took place on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, of Memorial Day Weekend, May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>. One of the major objectives of this event was to create pedestrian foot traffic and to show off the new Downtown Redevelopment District and town center along State Street in Downtown Oldsmar. (State Street was only open to pedestrian foot traffic and for motorcycle parking). We estimate we had **over 12,000 visitors** attend this first year event. This event was a family oriented event which also had a motorcycle theme and a patriotic Memorial Day theme. Other features of this event included carnival rides, arts, crafts and food vendors, beer tents, two band stages with 10 different Classic Rock Bands, motorcycle shows, motorcycle stunt driving, a Memorial Service at Oldsmar's Veteran Park along the north shores of Tampa Bay and great business and visitor exposure for the Oldsmar businesses in and around the new Downtown Redevelopment District. Based on this year's success, we are already planning to host the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Oldsmar Freedom Fest during Memorial Day Weekend in 2010.

The city's new "Beach Park" along Shore Drive is now fully operational along the north shores of Tampa Bay. New Picnic shelters, picnic tables, Pavilions, Bar-B-Q Grills and Public Restroom facilities have all been completed. Additionally, white beach sand has been placed along the entire beach front. This new park is truly helping to enhance tourism development into the Oldsmar area.

Most recently, a prominent hotel owner in Oldsmar, showed members of the chamber staff his blueprints for the development of a new "Hampton Inn and Suites to be built in Oldsmar. Although in finalized, this planned hotel has the potential to become a new landmark for the city of Oldsmar. This facility is tentatively planned to be 7 stories tall with up to 125 hotel rooms, a conference center capable of accommodating close to 300 people and parking with close to 185 parking spaces. This facility should be completed near the end of 2011 or the first part of 2012.

Finally, plans are well underway for our next major event, which is Oktoberfest. Oktoberfest will take place Friday, Saturday and Sunday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>.

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