

THE NEWS-PRESS BUSINESS

USA TODAY MONEY

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PROMOTION



JACK HARDMAN/THE NEWS-PRESS

Visitors to Southwest Florida explore Tarpon Bay during a kayak tour.

Tourism industry seeks spot on global stage

By Laura Ruane
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Lee County lodgings operators welcomed an estimated 3 million visitors in 2014, up a robust 12 percent year-over-year. It's reckoned these travelers spent nearly \$2 billion while staying here.

Buoyed by those numbers, the county Tourist Development Council Thursday endorsed a plan for a new international advertising and marketing push that includes a culinary-themed promotion at the 2015 World Expo, to be held May through October in Milan.

And, the council formally recommended supplementing the county Visitor & Convention Bureau's budget this fiscal year by \$1.4 million, to pay for that international-focused advertising and marketing.

"Any time we spend more money on marketing, I'm all for it," said Rene Affourtit, tourism council member and Sanibel hotelier.

County commissioners will make the call on the budget supplement, most likely in March. The county has \$8.9 million in marketing reserve funds. These are derived from the 5 percent county bed

Lee County tourism by the numbers

Survey-based estimates show strong year-over-year gains in paid lodgings' use and in international guests for the Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel tourism brand. These offset declines in the number of visitors staying with friends and relatives and in-state travelers.

Total calendar year visitation	2013	2014	CHANGE
Paid Accommodations	2,703,012	3,015,974	11.6%
Friends/Relatives	2,094,921	1,987,596	-5.1%
Total Visitation	4,797,933	5,003,570	4.3%

Visitor origin	2013	2014	CHANGE
Florida	194,700	160,947	-17.3%
US	2,072,309	2,279,842	10%
Germany	209,199	250,055	19.5%
Canada	139,811	176,059	25.9%
UK	100,457	139,061	38.4%
Other International	170,880	170,956	No significant change

SOURCE: Lee County Visitor and Convention Bureau

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tax levied short-term accommodations.

The World Expo is the successor to the World's Fair, and is held every five years.

Local promotions at the World Expo would play out over two weeks, but would be heavily documented for future use in a variety of promotional materials and in social media.

The theme of the 2015 expo is "Feeding the World: Energy for Life."

The bulk of extra bed tax dollars the visitor bureau hopes to spend, however, would go to media

buys. These would include advertising in such publications as National Geographic Traveler, Saveur and Allrecipes, as well as digital advertising in cities including London, Berlin, Toronto, New York and Chicago.

International visitors tend to stay longer and to spend more than the area's domestic travelers.

One-third of Lee's fall 2014 visitors originated from outside the United States, according to estimates from the statistical consultancy Davidson-Peterson Associates.

For the World Expo, Lee tourism promoters hope to tap into the expertise of the James Beard Chef Ambassadors group to introduce a unique regional menu featuring the catch of Fort Myers Beach shrimpers.

"It's considered the sweetest, freshest, healthiest shrimp available," said Tamara Pigott, county visitor bureau executive director.

Added Pigott: "What better way to promote a beautiful, natural place where healthy things grow?"

IN BRIEF

Seminars for Hispanics to be held

On Wednesday and Thursday, Hispanic entrepreneurs in the southwest region of Florida will have the opportunity to participate in small-business workshops and receive individual consulting for free. The Hispanic Business Initiative Fund of Florida will visit the region to provide guidance and support to current and potential Hispanic small-business owners. The workshops will be presented in Spanish each day from 9 a.m. until noon at United Way of Collier County, followed by individual consulting sessions in Spanish or English.

For information, visit hbfflorida.org, call 407-413-8564, ext. 205, or send an email to dteixeira@hbfflorida.org.

Financial class to meet today

The next financial class of Bonita Springs meets today from 10 a.m. to noon at Community Congregational Church, 15300 Tamiami Trail N., Naples.

The guest speaker is Bill Whitney, a retired accountant and tax preparer, who will talk about the current tax law changes for 2015 and how to save money through tax planning.

The class meets once a month from December to April during the winter season. The cost is \$10 per person or couple. For information, call Keith Moored at 947-6068.

Airport meeting canceled

The Lee County Port Authority Airports Special Management Committee meeting scheduled Tuesday has been canceled.

The committee's next regularly scheduled meeting will be held on March 17 at 1:30 p.m. at Southwest Florida International Airport's Training and Conference Center.

Above Board Chamber to host seminar

Above Board Chamber of Florida will present a luncheon presentation featuring a world economic outlook with Credit Suisse Chief Economist James Sweeney from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Monday at the Hilton Naples.

What does the future hold for the global economy? From inflation to deflation, to political unrest, punitive sanctions, elections, austerity measures, currency manipulation and offshore tax havens, changes in one part of the world have an impact across the globe. Sweeney will draw from his expertise to make sense of a changing world and what it means for your wallet here at home.

Reservations are required for this plated-lunch event. Registration is \$35 for members and \$45 for friends.

For information, visit tinyurl.com/q4s3twc or call 910-7426.

Susan J. Fahs Insurance revises website

The owners of Susan J. Fahs Insurance, a family-owned insurance company in Fort Myers, recently rebranded and unveiled a new website.

The incorporation of a newly designed Fahs Insurance logo and website showcases a new look for the company. The website uses responsive design and enhanced navigation features for Southwest Florida residents to explore personal, commercial, financial, and retirement insurance options. A quote form for homeowners and auto insurance is also available.

For information, call 939-9972 or visit FahsInsurance.com.

NEWSMAKER

Davidson named construction chief

Ron Davidson has been named construction superintendent at Lotus Construction. Davidson has more than 37 years of construction experience, specializing in the areas of project management, estimating, scheduling and field/job site supervision.

His construction background has been in upscale, luxury homes in both Indianapolis and Naples. Prior to joining Lotus, Davidson held superintendent positions with several premier luxury custom home builders in Naples.

LOCAL PUBLIC COMPANIES

N = NYSE, O = Nasdaq

52-week High	Low	Issue	Mkt Div	PE	Sales (Hun.)	High	Low	Last	Chg
58.10	33.77	Alico	O	.24	22	177	45.63	43.95	-1.18
9.37	4.50	BeasleyB	O	.18	17	5.14	5.08	5.08	+0.01
45.67	28.70	CntryLink	N	2.16	29	125976	39.79	38.47	-1.23
18.98	14.39	Chicos	N	.30	29	15760	18.33	17.95	+0.04
59.30	47.74	Comcast	O	.90	18	114805	58.41	57.71	+0.60
90.55	67.13	EastChem	N	1.60f	15	10178	75.43	74.35	+1.24
35.70	25.53	Gannett	N	.80	7	25391	35.11	34.25	+0.86
31.61	18.50	Hertz	N			67526	23.24	22.72	+0.52
6.10	2.95	NeoGenom	O			840	4.10	4.01	+0.10
112.64	89.81	NextEraEn	N	2.90	18	23287	105.37	103.84	+1.53
23.34	15.22	ScrippsEW	N			1333	20.82	20.31	+0.51
21.28	17.08	WCI Cmts	N			2063	20.02	19.84	+0.18

TORONTO EXCHANGE

Stock	Last	Chg	Stock	Last	Chg
ManulifeFin	21.33	-0.51	TransCdaCorp	58.50	+1.17
SunLifeFin	39.23	-2.73	AgnicoEagle	40.65	+1.83
T D Bank	55.50	+0.50	CIBC	94.40	+0.72
BCE Inc	55.77	-0.35	BombardrAMV	2.80	-0.32
RoyalBank	77.42	+0.69	ImperialOil	50.83	+1.09
CdnNatRes	38.94	+0.01	Magnalnt l	128.39	+0.50
BarrickGold	15.15	+0.05	IndAlliance	40.17	-0.27
Bk NS	66.52	+0.65	AgriumInc	133.93	-0.71
EnCanaCorp	17.11	+0.26	WestJetAirVr	30.29	-0.39
BkMontreal	78.50	+0.75	Hydrogenics	18.11	-1.10
EnbridgeInc	61.98	+0.44			

CHICAGO BOARD OF TRADE

	Corn		Soybeans		Wheat			
	Settle	Chg	Settle	Chg	Settle	Chg		
Mar 15	383	-2.75	Mar 15	983.75	+6	Mar 15	521.25	-4.50
May 15	391	-2.75	May 15	986.75	+6	May 15	519.75	-4
Jul 15	398.25	-3	Jul 15	991.50	+5.75	Jul 15	522.50	-4.50
Sep 15	404.50	-2.75	Aug 15	990.75	+6.25	Sep 15	529.75	-4.75
Dec 15	413	-2.25	Sep 15	975.25	+5.25	Dec 15	543.25	-4.75
Mar 16	421.50	-1.75	Nov 15	964.25	+4.50	Mar 16	551.25	-4.50
May 16	427.50	-1.50	Jan 16	969.75	+4.50	May 16	555.75	-2.75
Prev. sales:	361,996		Prev. sales:	338,586		Prev. sales:	195,606	
Prev. open int:	1,368,423		Prev. open int:	708,243		Prev. open int:	419,404	

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