



# ST. AUGUSTINE PONTE VEDRA

FLORIDA'S HISTORIC COAST®

ANNUAL REPORT – FISCAL YEAR 2015

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## INTRODUCTION

### **FY2015**

Richard Goldman, President/CEO

The 450th grand commemoration, its four-year marketing plan and herculean efforts of the VCB team that supported it were a resounding success. And, St. Johns County tourism, once again, exceeded expectations on every major objective measure. In fact, calendar year to date growth rate for SJC in occupancy, average daily rate, revenue per available room and room revenue all exceeded that of both the state of Florida and the U.S. The VCB accomplished its mission to market Florida's Historic Coast® (FHC) as a premier leisure, convention and incentive, beach and golf destination. Performance metrics for the VCB tell the tale: consistently up and set new records for TDT collections, hotel Occupancy (except August), ADR, Demand (except August) and Revenue in every month, even when compared to the strong growth of FY2014.

While some of the physical results are still taking shape, the VCB actively assisted Partners and prospective Partners with the development and facilitation of new touristic assets for St. Johns County in FY2015, including air service by Via Air between Charlotte, NC, and NFRA, the St. Augustine Aquarium, several hotels in development and signage for the Florida East Coast Greenway, among others.

In its advertising, the VCB continued its award-winning “El Conquistador Returns” campaign with the over-arching and differentiating brand message “Our History Is Not The Same Old Story.” In 2015, the campaign enjoyed more robust participation from lodging and attraction Partners who have increasingly leveraged strategically targeted, affordable cooperative marketing opportunities.

FY2015 was also a strong year in the digital arena, with online enhancements to advertising, publicity, eCRM and websites. The VCB achieved broader reach with well-performing ad networks and placements on high-traffic sites like TripAdvisor and Facebook. The recently redesigned website is responsive, meaning that the single site functions simultaneously on mobile phones, tablets and desktops, showing increased visitation and engagement with gains in most metrics including sessions and conversions. Monthly email communications (eCRM) to the growing database, and vastly expanded social media presence have also built engagement between consumers, the destination and its partner businesses.

Sales and publicity programs aimed at boosting visitation paid off significantly in 2015 when FHC hosted 231 tour operators, meeting planners, travel influencers, and domestic and international media writers and producers. Our sales and publicity teams have developed a reputation for being the “go to” folks, thanks to continuous outreach and quick response to our prospects' needs.



## INTRODUCTION (CONT'D.)

### **FY2015**

Richard Goldman, President/CEO

The VCB, in partnership with the experts at MMGY Global and Miles Media Group, along with local, regional and statewide tourism-related organizations, strives to refine its marketing efforts on all fronts. Please review this report for details of how in 2015 the VCB staff accomplished their key objectives.

Sincerely,

Richard Goldman  
President & CEO  
St. Augustine, Ponte Vedra & The Beaches  
Visitors & Convention Bureau

## 2015 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### Executive Committee Officers

Chairman:	Kathy Fleming, Executive Director St. Augustine Lighthouse & Museum kfleming@staugustinelighthouse.com 81 Lighthouse Ave., St. Augustine, FL 32080
Vice Chairman:	Joe Finnegan, Owner St. Francis Inn joef@stfrancisinn.com 279 St. George St., St. Augustine, FL 32084
Past Chairman:	Jeffrey Oliasami, General Manager Renaissance World Golf Resort jeffrey.oliassami@jqh.com 500 South Legacy Trail, St. Augustine, FL 32092
Secretary:	Shannon Lake, General Manager Beacher's Lodge shannon@beacherslodge.com 6970 A1A South, St. Augustine, FL 32080
Treasurer:	Richard Roy, General Manager Casa Monica Hotel richard.roy@kesslercollection.com 95 Cordova, St. Augustine, FL 32084

### Board Members

John Fraser, Owner Fountain of Youth Archeological Park fountain@aug.com; 11 Magnolia Street, St. Augustine, FL 32084
Virginia Whetstone, Owner, Whetstone Chocolates vaw@whetstonechocolates.com 1 Dolphin Dr., St. Augustine, FL 32084
David Mariotti, General Manager The Ponte Vedra Inn and Lodge & Club dmariotti@pvresorts.com 607 Ponte Vedra Blvd., Ponte Vedra 32082

## **Board Members cont.**

Dave Chatterton, General Manager  
Old Town Trolleys  
dchatterton@historictours.com  
167 San Marco Ave., St. Augustine, FL 32084

## **Government Liaisons and Ex-Officiis**

Isabelle Rodriguez, Executive Director St. Johns County Chamber  
Commissioner Bill McClure, St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners  
Commissioner Undine George, St. Augustine Beach City Commission

## **2015 VISITORS AND CONVENTION BUREAU COMMITTEES**

### **Conference Sales Committee**

- › William McBroom, Dir. Sales & Marketing, Renaissance World Golf Village Resort
- › Joni Barkley, Director of Sales, Casa Monica Hotel
- › Burke Giblin, Director of Sales, Sawgrass
- › Michelle Kuziola, Nat'l Sales Manager, Shaner Hotels
- › Tony Fitzjohn, Director of Sales, PVIC
- › Glenn Graham, VCB Director of Conference Sales

### **Leisure Sales Committee**

- › Gina Villacorta, Nat'l Sales Manager, Days Inn Historic
- › Michelle Kuziola, Nat'l Sales Manager, Shaner Hotels
- › Evelyn Vazquez, VCB Director of Leisure Sales
- › Cindy Stavely, Director, St. Augustine Pirate & Treasure Museum
- › Shannon Lake, Beacher's Lodge/VCB Board Liaison
- › Amanda Teem, Director of Sales, Hilton Historic Bayfront
- › Isabelle Miranda, Sales Manager, Tour Saint Augustine, Inc.
- › Mae White, Director of Sales, Hampton Vilano

## **Advertising Committee**

- › Joe Finnegan, Owner, St. Francis Inn
- › Kathy Fleming, Executive Director, St. Augustine Lighthouse & Museum
- › Shannon Lake, General Manager, Beacher's Lodge
- › Richard Roy, General Manager, Casa Monica Hotel
- › Jeffrey Oliasami, General Manager, Renaissance World Golf Village Resort

## **2015 VISITORS AND CONVENTION BUREAU STAFF**

### **Administration**

#### **Richard Goldman, President/CEO**

RGoldman@FloridasHistoricCoast.com

904.209.4426

#### **Carey Cramer, Office Manager**

CCramer@FloridasHistoricCoast.com

904.209.4421

### **Promotions and Data Base**

#### **Rick Hensler, Director of Promotions and Strategic Alliances**

RHensler@FloridasHistoricCoast.com

904.209.4430

#### **Erin Masters, Special Events/Database Manager**

EMasters@FloridasHistoricCoast.com

904.209.4422

Database and Website Administration, Annual Florida's Birding & Photo Fest, Photography Workshops, Annual, Board and Partner Meetings

### **Communications Department**

#### **Kathy Catron, Communications Director**

KCatron@FloridasHistoricCoast.com

904.209.4424

Media Relations, Travel Press Communications, Editorial, Social Media

**Communications Department cont.****Barbara Golden, Communications Manager**

BGolden@FloridasHistoricCoast.com

904.209.4425

Calendar of Events Coordinator, Media Relations, Travel Press Communications,  
Publicity & Promotions

**Sales Department****Evelyn Vazquez, Director of Leisure Sales**

EVazquez@FloridasHistoricCoast.com

904.209.4431

Travel Industry, Leisure, Religious & International Sales

**Glenn Graham, Director of Conference Sales**

GGraham@FloridasHistoricCoast.com

904.209.4432

Corporate & Association Meetings & Incentives Sales

**Jaya Larkin, Sales & Services Manager**

JLarkin@FloridasHistoricCoast.com

904.209.4429

Executive Group Sales (35 rooms & less peak night, all segments; all military, reunion,  
government meetings & weddings.)

**Advertising****Stacey Sather, Creative & Advertising Manager**

SSather@FloridasHistoricCoast.com

904.209.4434

Collateral, Print, Website & Social Media and Email Advertising Development and Production

**Independent Staff for St. Augustine Beach Visitor Center****Remunerated directly by TDC**

Anna Helfinstine, Visitor Center Staff

Robert MacDowell, Visitor Center Staff



## LODGING PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW

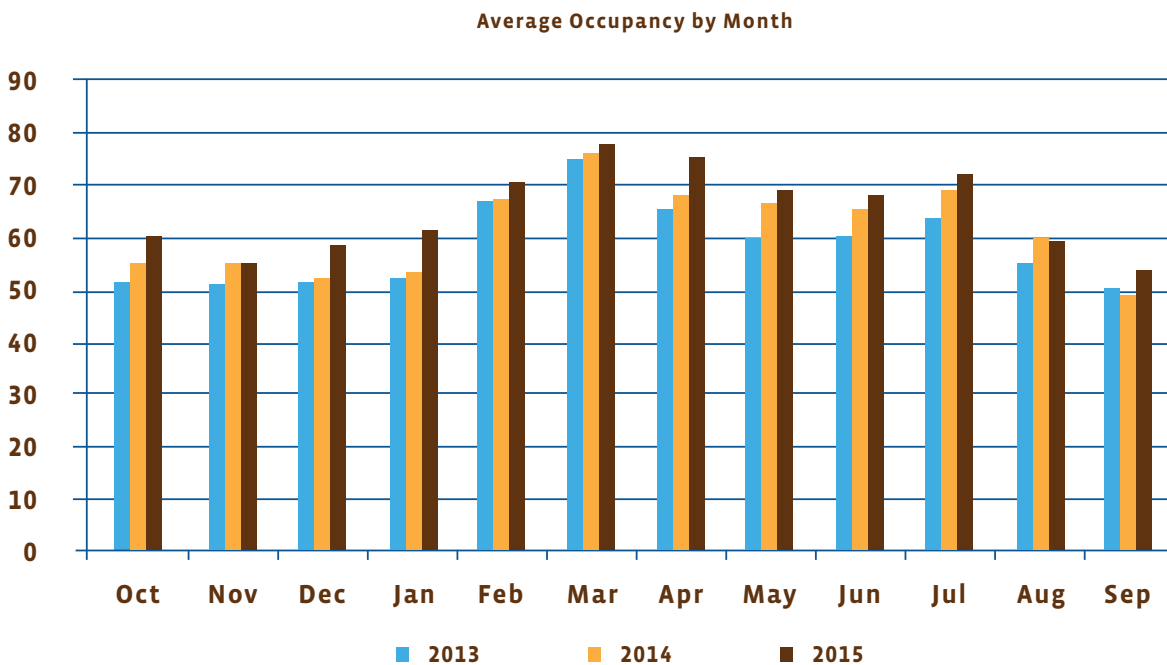
### FY2015

#### Smith Travel Reports

The VCB subscribes to Smith Travel Research (STR), recognized leader for lodging industry benchmarking and research and the world's foremost source of historical lodging performance trends, providing valuable market share analysis for hotels in our destination. The data provided by STR allows the VCB to track monthly performance in Occupancy, Average Daily Rate, RevPAR, Demand, and Room Revenue of 43 reporting hotel properties in St. Johns County. It does not include B&Bs, vacation rentals, condos or campgrounds.

#### Occupancy

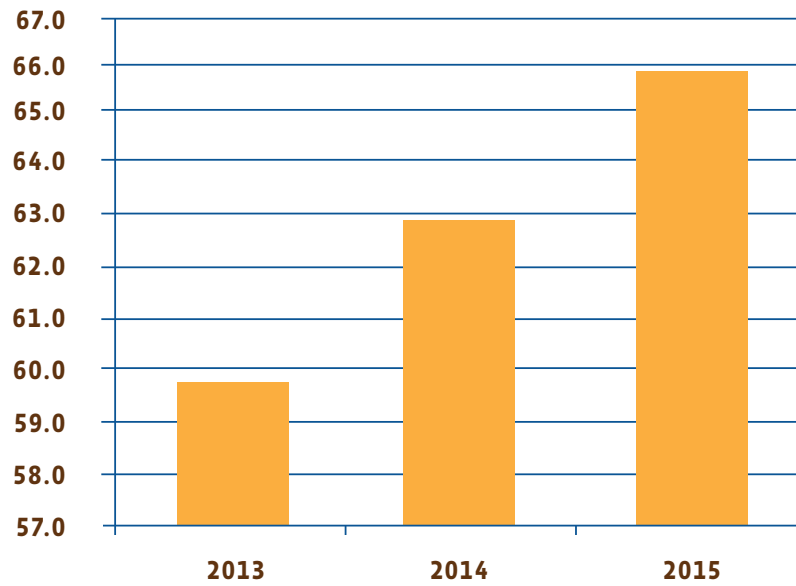
Average occupancy grew 5.7% to a fiscal year average of 65.9%. The largest monthly increases for SJC were in January (up 12.4%), September (up 11.3%) and December (up 10.6%). Only one month saw a decline in occupancy from 2014 and that was August, compared to the record generated the previous year, possibly because of early school starts in Georgia. August was down 2.4%.



Source: Smith Travel Research



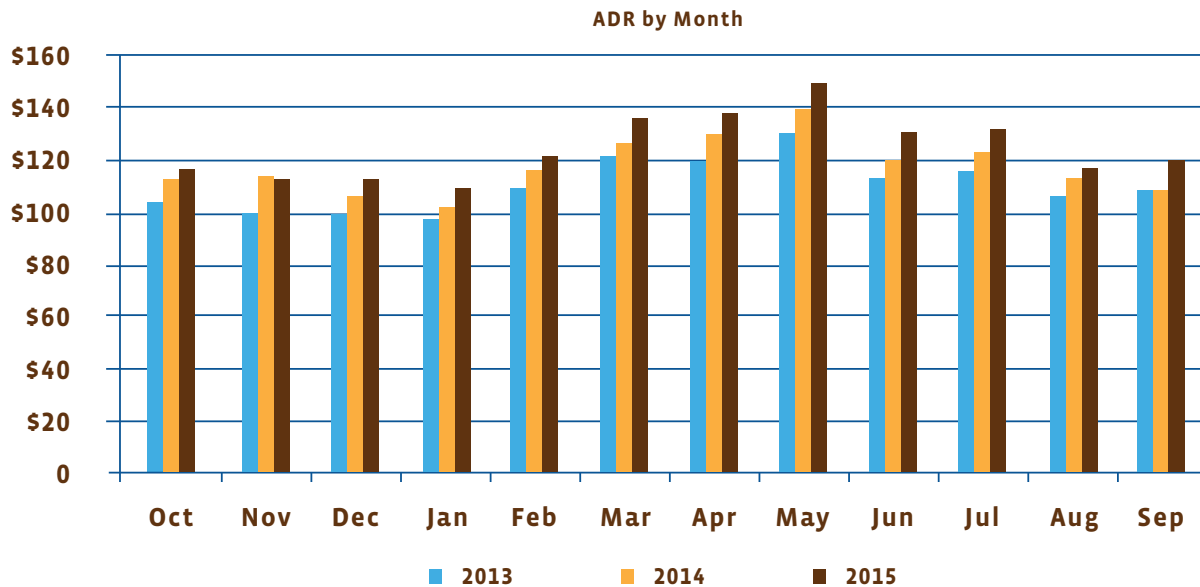
Occupancy Year over Year



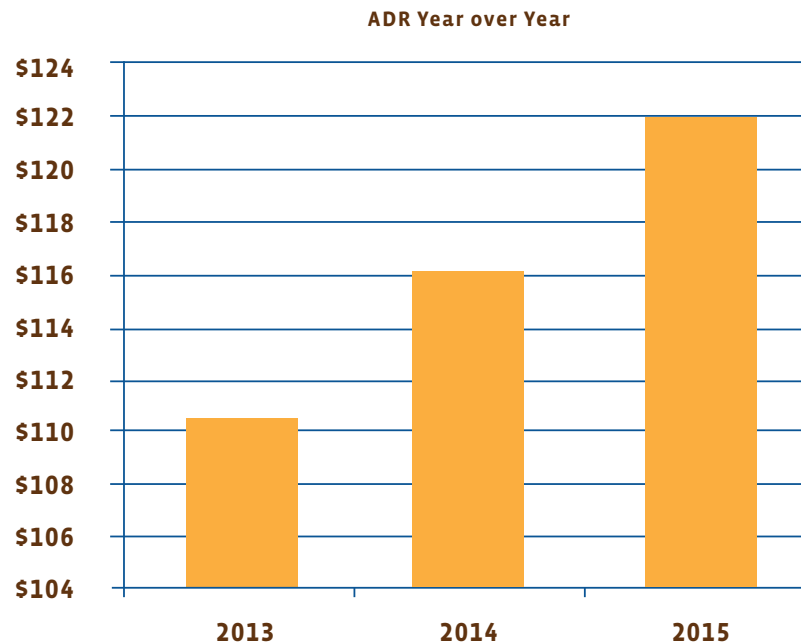
Source: Smith Travel Research

## ADR

The Average Daily Rate (ADR) growth exceeded last year, to 5.3%, the final FY2015 average closing at \$122.03. September showed the highest percentage change growing 12.7% over 2014 (\$105.42 to \$118.46, driven largely by Celebrate 450 weekend). January (up 8.1%) and April (up 7.0%), round out the top three months for growth in ADR. Every month in FY2015 showed increases and, for the previous four years in a row, only one month showed a decline.

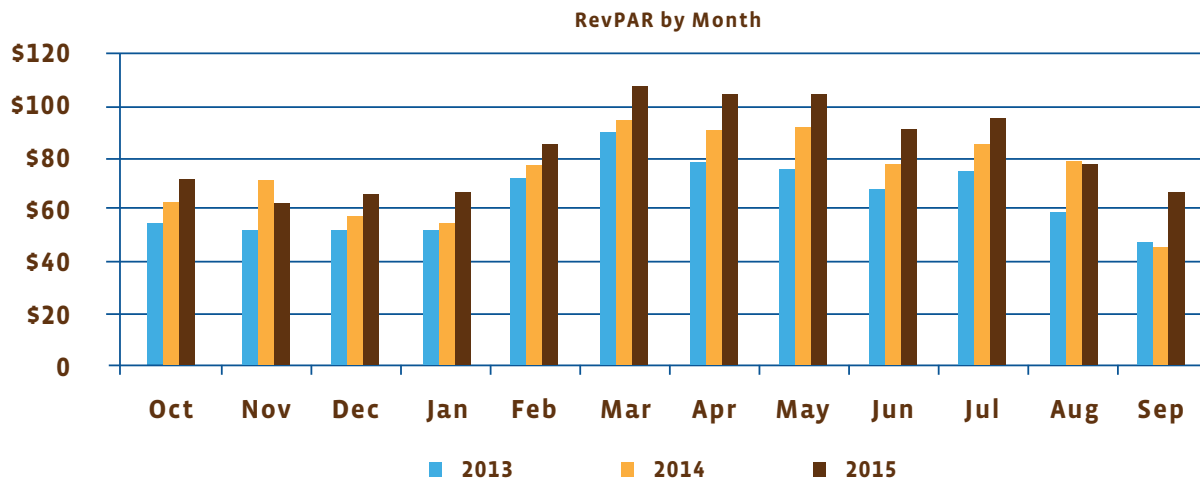


Source: Smith Travel Research

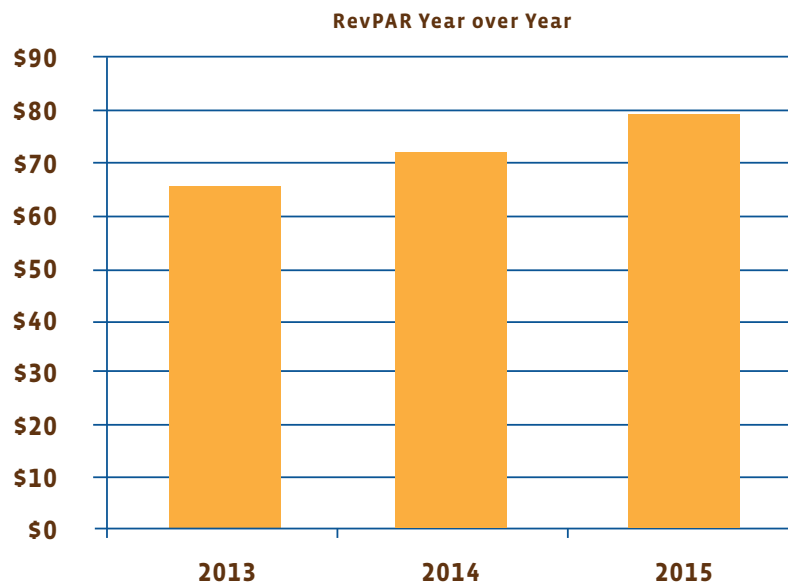


## RevPAR

Revenue per Available Room (RevPAR) showed improvement every month of FY2015 and closed out at 11.4%, or \$8.22 higher than 2014, and more than \$15 higher than 2013, at an average of \$80.47. September, January and December showed the highest gains with 25.4%, 21.4% and 17.1% growth, respectively, over 2014.

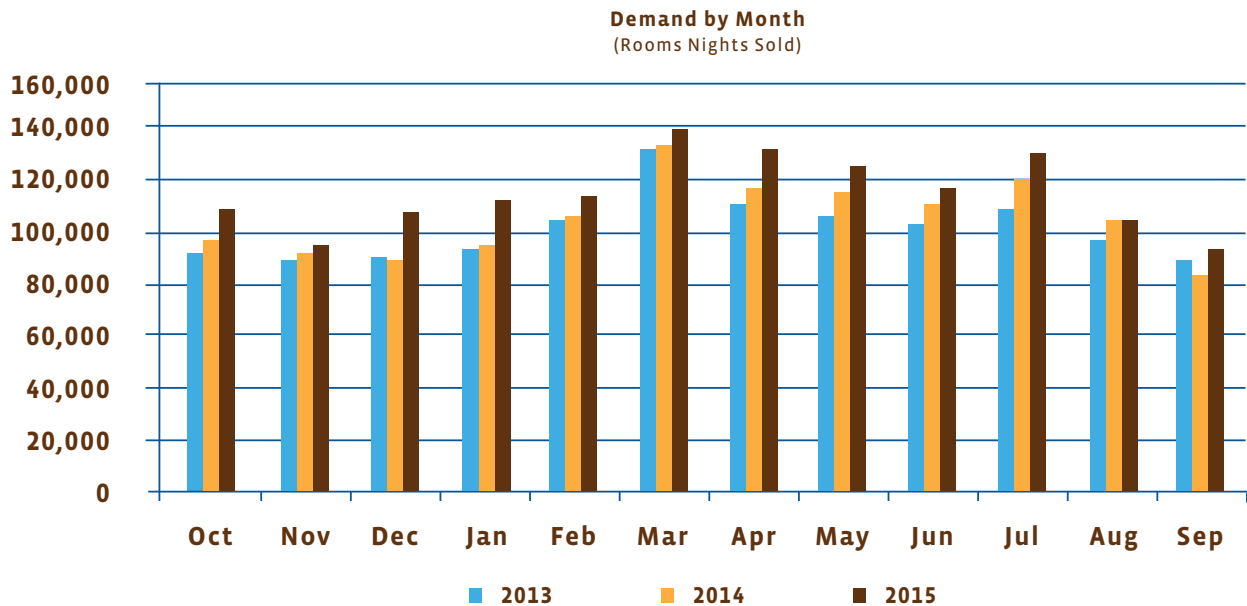


Source: Smith Travel Research

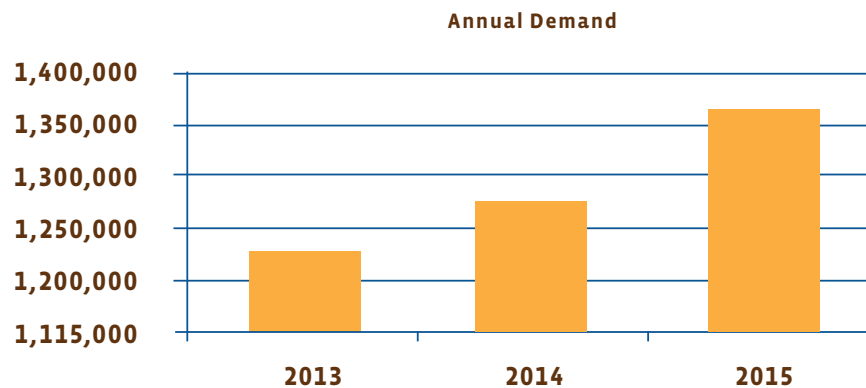


## Demand

Demand (room nights sold) continued its upward trend in 2015. Only August saw a very small decline year over year, due again we think to early school starts in 2015. Nevertheless, overall, Demand finished the fiscal year up 7.4%, with growth in 11 of 12 months. The greatest increases were in September (up 13.2%), January (up 14.3%) and December (up 12.5%).



Source: Smith Travel Research

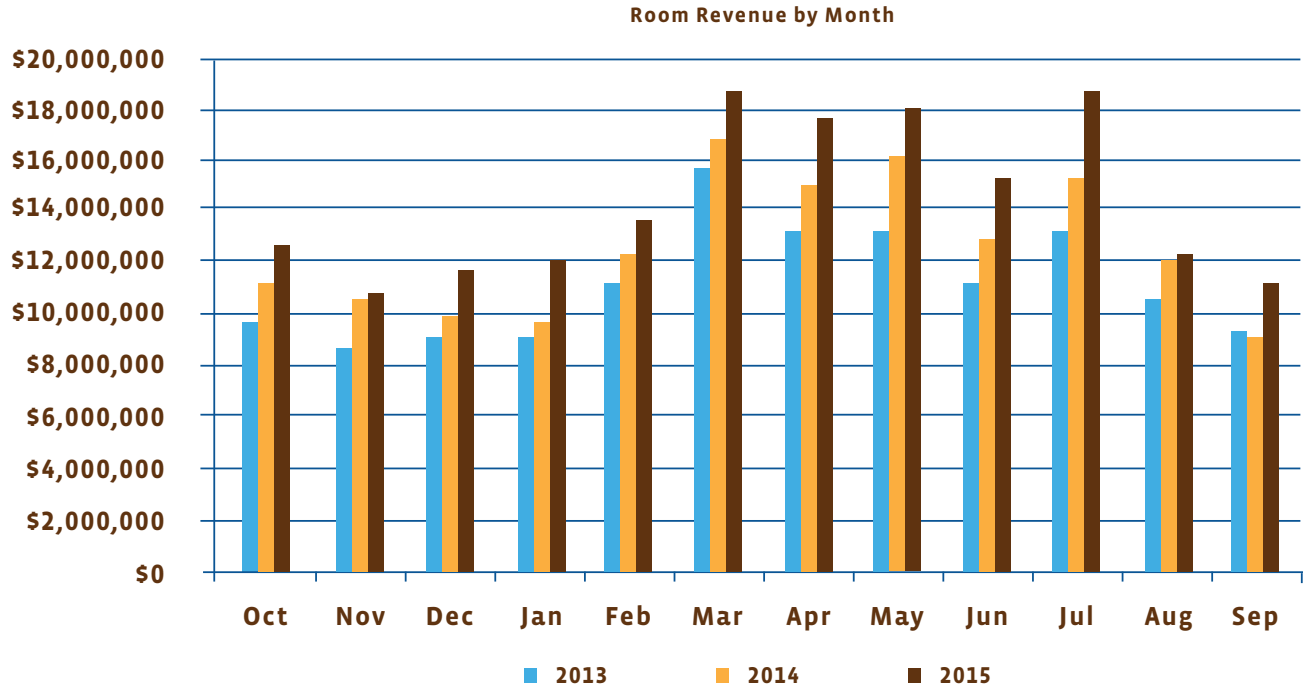


Source: Smith Travel Research

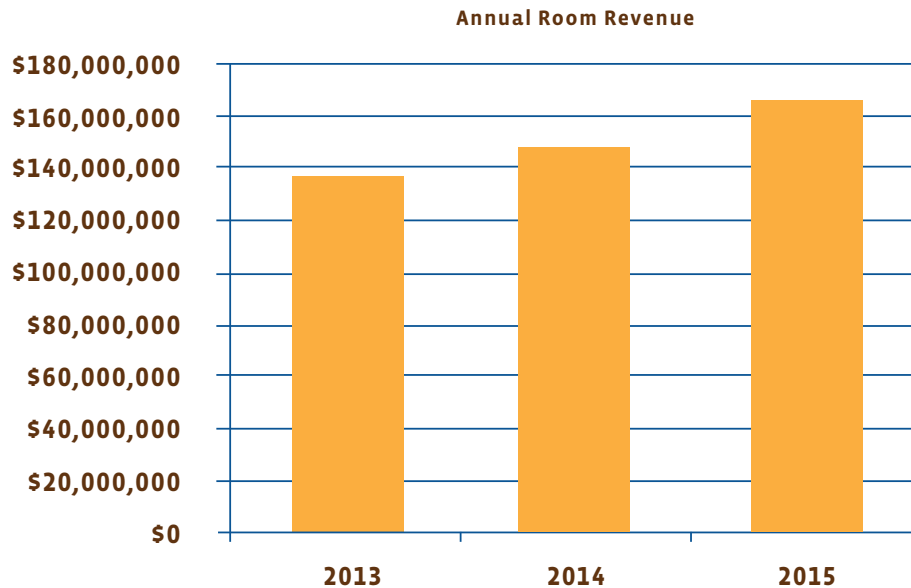


## Room Revenue

Monthly Room Revenue reported by STR sampling closed the year at \$168,355,066, 13.1% higher than 2014's \$148,794,101. While growth occurred in every month, September showed the highest percent increase, up 27.6% followed by January and April, up 23.5% and 17.3% respectively. As usual, the single largest producing month was March at \$18,594,377.



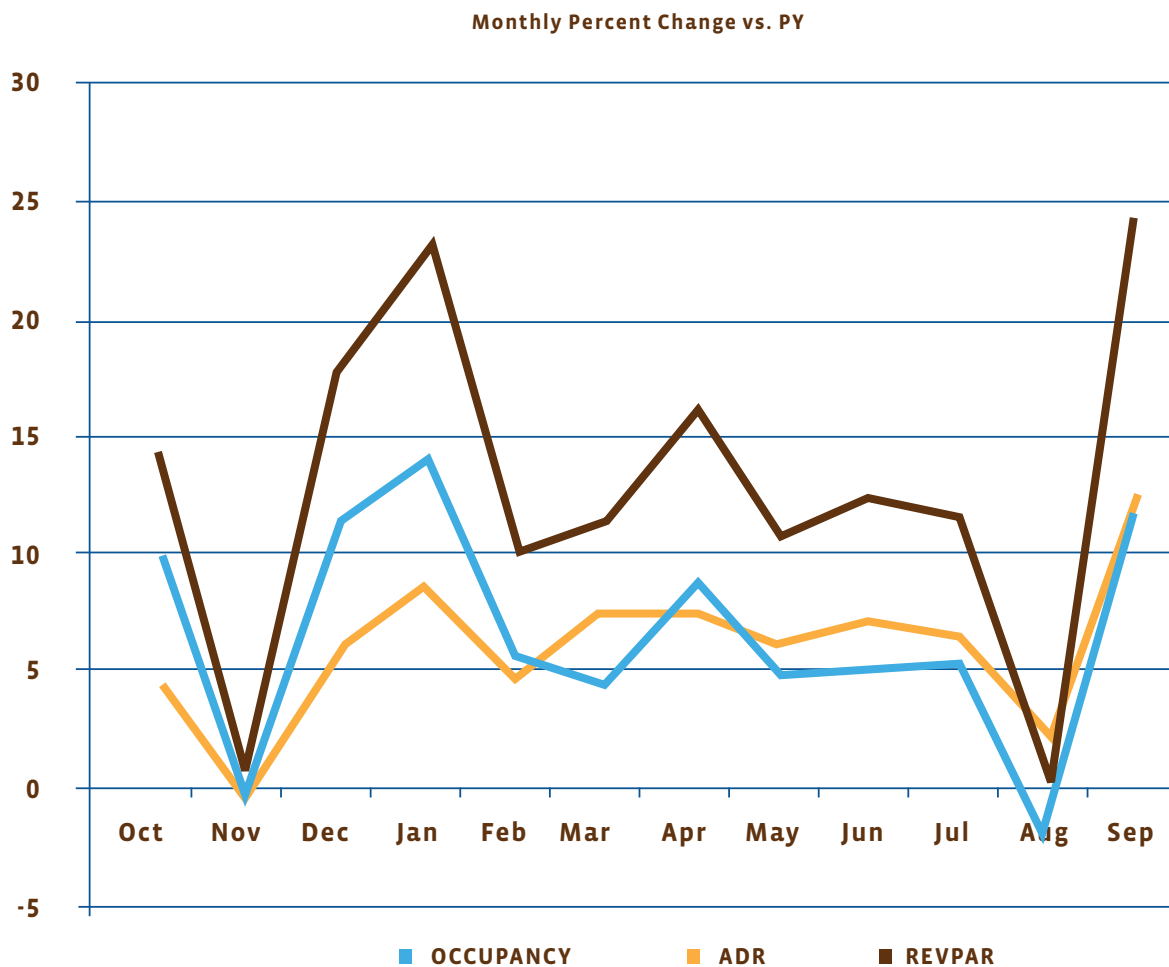
Source: Smith Travel Research



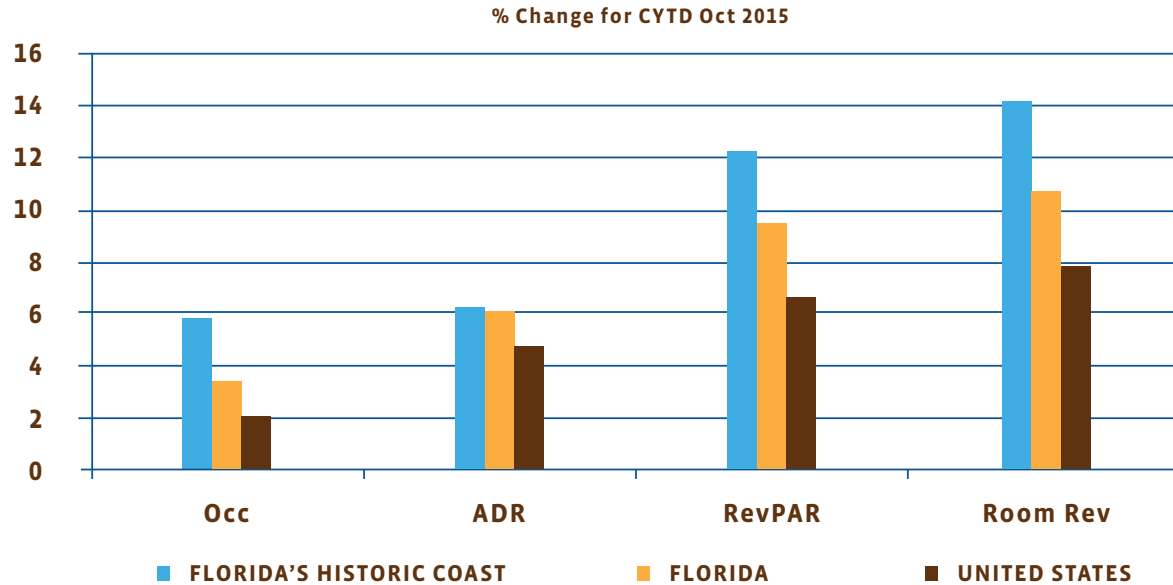
Source: Smith Travel Research

## Lodging Performance Summary

All indicators showed strong positive growth for the industry in FY2015, with most monthly metrics setting new records nearly every month. And, growth across all measures were positive for 11 out of 12 months.



Florida's Historic Coast (FHC) growth rate finished ahead of all of Florida and the U.S. on the key lodging measures of Occupancy, ADR, RevPAR and Room Revenue. FHC results demonstrate continued confidence by its hoteliers in the growing demand for visitor stays.



Source: Smith Travel Research

## ST. JOHNS COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT TAX COLLECTIONS

### FY2015

Local Option Tourism Development Tax (bed tax) collections were up over \$1 million or 12.7% over FY2014, finishing at \$9,382,631. While every month registered year-over-year growth, July and March were the highest grossing months again this fiscal year, both exceeding a million dollars for the first time ever. September was up by 22% on the heels of the 450th celebrations but, impressively, January was up 21% and November and December were up 16% and 17% respectively – all three months that have the most room to grow.

Consistently, spring and summer performance continues to be strong with both seasons enjoying the highest grossing months.

#### FY2015

MONTH OF OCCUPANCY	GROSS	COMPARED TO FY2014	TC & CC	NET
October	\$524,844	1.0%	-\$10,496.9	\$514,347
November	\$591,206	16.1%	-\$11,824.1	\$579,382
December	\$603,530	17.0%	-\$12,070.6	\$591,460
January	\$639,141	21.2%	-\$12,782.8	\$626,358
February	\$768,608	12.3%	-\$15,372.2	\$753,236
March	\$1,024,942	12.0%	-\$20,498.8	\$1,004,443
April	\$926,967	16.6%	-\$18,539.3	\$908,428
May	\$949,948	14.7%	-\$18,999.0	\$930,949
June	\$973,135	9.4%	-\$19,462.7	\$953,672
July	\$1,079,534	8.3%	-\$21,590.7	\$1,057,944
August	\$731,808	7.4%	-\$14,636.2	\$717,172
September	\$568,968	21.9%	-\$11,379.35	\$557,588
TOTALS	\$9,382,631	12.7%	-\$187,653	\$9,194,979

## GOLF TOURISM ROI FY2015



FY2015 investment in golf-oriented marketing programs included \$179,598 for support of Florida's First Coast of Golf programs. Aggregate direct spending by golfers on rooms, rounds and related F&B/retail resulting from the fiscal year generated an ROI of \$104.48 to \$1.00 – that's a 11.1% improvement over FY2014.

See below for how ROI was calculated.

### INVESTMENT RETURNS \$179,598

Hotel	\$3,044,282	24,647 Nts @ \$122.03 ADR
Golf	\$4,264,299	57,994 Rounds @ \$73.53
Spending	\$11,636,313	19,642 Golfers @ \$155.90 DAY x 3.8 Days
Sales Tax	\$1,136,631	Total @ 6%
Total Return	\$18,944,894	
ROI	\$104.48   \$1.00	

Media value of the FFCG advertising, PR and promotions in which FHC or its properties had a significant presence was \$2,159,010 in addition to the \$18,944,894 ROI – a 17.5x leveraging of the \$179,598 investment.

\*excluding sales tax



## VISITORS & CONVENTION BUREAU OPERATING BUDGET

### FY2015 MARKETING PLAN PAGES 104-106

#### FY2015 Budget Summary

Actual spending to entice visitors to Florida's Historic Coast in FY2015 increased by a total of 11.5% over FY2014, with a 19.0% increase directed into the Advertising line and 8.1% increase directed into Publicity.

- › Seventy-four percent of the \$265,422 underspend was in Promotions, Advertising Reserve, and Publicity, much of which was the result of late invoicing by vendors.
- › Fifteen percent of the underspend was due to savings in Contractual Services, renegotiated phone services, Airport VIC and travel expenses.
- › The \$203,295 in reserves was not spent and will roll over.

#### Key Performance Measures:

- › Total expenditures for FY2015 Destination Marketing were 11.5% more than FY2014.
- › Advertising, including Web Development and Online Advertising, increased 19.0% over FY2014 on a goal of 13.5%.
- › Partner co-op spending exceeded goal with a 16% increase over FY2014 to \$81,150.
- › Sales Missions and Trade Shows were up 19.8% over last year reflecting increased focus on Conference and International sales efforts.
- › Publicity spending increased 8.1% in FY2015 to continue steady growth.
- › Fulfillment spending declined 11.4%, largely due to e-distribution of collateral materials replacing traditional mail, this decline was anticipated in FY2015 budgeting.
- › Contractual Services increased at a less than anticipated 2.7%, largely due to the fact that rising health benefits costs were deferred by the provider into the following year.



BUDLINES FY2015	TOTAL ACT/BUD	TOTAL BUDGETED*	REMAINING
53100-Research	\$13,175	\$13,175	\$-
53401-Indirect Fees	\$14,261	\$14,261	\$(0)
53120- Contractual Services	\$923,800	\$936,000	\$12,200
53702-VIC Airport	\$-	\$8,500	\$8,500
54000-Travel @ Per Diem	\$48,161	\$58,000	\$9,839
54010-Tradeshows	\$80,374	\$87,677	\$7,303
54100-Communications	\$20,091	\$29,350	\$9,259
54102-Inquiry Services	\$63,857	\$65,000	\$1,143
54110-Postage	\$63,689	\$66,000	\$2,311
54112-Brochure Distribution	\$7,260	\$7,500	\$240
54300-Utilities	\$5,707	\$6,000	\$293
54400-Rental Equip	\$1,420	\$2,100	\$680
54401-Rent of Build.	\$48,000	\$48,000	\$-
54500-Insurance	\$-	\$1,500	\$1,500
54601-Equip Maint	\$-	\$600	\$600
54804-P R Services	\$69,044	\$102,000	\$32,956
54805-In house PR	\$32,747	\$68,000	\$35,253
54806-Sales Mission	\$4,259	\$4,000	\$(259)
54900-Advertising	\$2,530,241	\$2,660,205	\$129,964
55100--Office Supplies	\$1,827	\$3,800	\$1,973
55102-Software	\$-	\$2,500	\$2,500
55200-Operating Supplies	\$3,736	\$6,000	\$2,264
55401-Training	\$909	\$2,000	\$1,092
55405-Dues/Membership	\$25,680	\$29,404	\$3,724
56403-Office Equipment	\$-	\$5,000	\$5,000
56401-Office Assets	\$2,913		\$(2,913)
Total Before Reserves	\$3,961,150	\$4,226,572	\$265,422
59920- BR Reserve	\$-	\$155,795	\$155,795
59923-TPRD Reserve	\$-	\$-	\$-
59932- Part 1 Reserve	\$-	\$47,500	\$47,500
TOTAL	\$3,961,150	\$4,429,867	\$468,717
450th Expenses (Cat 4)	\$126,019	\$141,000	\$14,981

\*Budget reflects July 2015 revisions

## FY2015 IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS ANNUAL SUMMARY REPORT

Obtaining support throughout the year directly from Partners through in-kind contributions is instrumental to the VCB's success. The majority of these services/items are offered as a donation, the rest are offered at a substantial discount. The below figures reflect these generous amounts for the last two years. The decline in 2015 is largely due to the elevated demand for rooms in FY2015 which required the VCB to pay higher prices, thus lower in-kind value, for many media stays.

### ACTUAL VCB PARTNER IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS

	FY2014	FY2015	
TOTAL	\$124,757.00	\$106,234.00	14.9% Decrease

Each VCB department receives annual private sector support for their marketing programs. The many variations of these in-kind contributions include, but are not limited to: Accommodation stays, Meeting or Venue Space, F&B/Meals, Transportation, AV Equipment, Reenactors, Speakers, Promotional Giveaways, Private Tours, Attraction Entrance, Activities, Volunteer Hours, Welcome Bag Premiums, Misc. Services and cash contributions.

- › Annual VCB Marketing Initiatives That Receive In-Kind Support:
  - › State of the Industry Tourism Presentation
  - › FL Birding & Photo Festival
  - › Annual VCB Partner Dinner
  - › Sales Familiarization Tours
  - › Media Familiarization Tours
  - › Destination Site Inspections
  - › Flavors of Florida's Historic Coast Culinary Program
- › **Communication Support** mainly falls into the category of hosting visiting press, resulting in increasing media coverage and awareness of the destination, and its variety of accommodations and amenities.

**2015 HIGHLIGHT:** Hosted 104 journalists individually and via media familiarization tours (fams) with golf writers in conjunction with the PGA Tour, a Hispanic blogger media fam, a fam in conjunction with Ponte Vedra Inn & Club, and an international media fam. Media impressions for FY2015 exceeded 16 billion.

- › **Media Promotions** refers to contests and sweepstakes with radio and TV stations that spotlight the Florida's Historic Coast (FHC) vacation product, yielding significant levels of incremental media exposure for FHC and a means of engaging media partners' audiences.

**2015 HIGHLIGHT:** Delivered 43 media promotions vs. 29 in 2014, primarily with radio and TV partners, featuring our destination in the lead role and 100% supported by partner media.

- › **Sales Initiatives** encompasses using multiple outlets in reaching, educating and welcoming group business to FHC. Continued mission to solicit new business while retaining repeat business by introducing lodging, venues and services that accommodate groups.

**2015 HIGHLIGHT:** Sales entertained a combination of 127 familiarization tours and destination site visits, including hosting meeting planners, tour operators, travel agents, group leaders and brides while attending 48 shows and sales missions.

- › **St. Augustine Attractions Assoc. VIP Pass.** This pass is offered to qualified media and sales-related clients. The pass allows complimentary access to over 20 of the county's top attractions. Each pass is good for up to five people. The SAAA established value for each pass is from \$320 per person to a max of \$1,600, depending on the number of attendees.

## FY15 PARTNER IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS RECAP BY QUARTER

### Quarter 1 (October–December 2014)

- › Total # of Partners That Contributed = 29
- › Total # of Non-Partners That Contributed = 2
- › Total Amount of In-Kind Partner Contribution Value = \$57,035.80
- › Total Amount of Actual Contribution Value = \$64,603.80
- › Average Amount per Partner =  $(\$57,035.80 / 31) = \$1,839.86$
- › YTD Comparison Partner Contribution Value:

FY14 = \$22,420.46 vs. FY15 = \$57,035.80

### **Quarter 2 (January–March 2015)**

- › Total # of Partners That Contributed = 10
- › Total # of Non-Partners That Contributed = 1
- › Total Amount of In-Kind Partner Contribution Value = \$17,554.48
- › Total Amount of Actual Contribution Value = \$20,148.28
- › Average Amount per Partner =  $(\$17,554.48 / 11) = \$1,595.87$
- › YTD Comparison Partner Contribution Value:  
  
FY14 = \$36,364.80 vs. FY15 = \$21,784.98

### **Quarter 3 (April–June 2015)**

- › Total # of Partners That Contributed = 17
- › Total # of Non-Partners That Contributed = 1
- › Total Amount of In-Kind Partner Contribution Value = \$23,598.41
- › Total Amount of Actual Contribution Value = \$39,675.65
- › Average Amount per Partner =  $(\$23,598.41 / 18) = \$1,311.02$
- › YTD Comparison Partner Contribution Value:  
  
FY14 = \$34,517.87 vs. FY15 = \$23,598.41

### **Quarter 4 (July–September 2015)**

- › Total # of Partners That Contributed = 4
- › Total # of Non-Partners That Contributed = 0
- › Total Amount of In-Kind Partner Contribution Value = \$3,814.96
- › Total Amount of Actual Contribution Value = \$3,814.96
- › Average Amount per Partner =  $(\$3,814.96 / 4) = \$953.74$
- › YTD Comparison Partner Contribution Value:  
  
FY14 = \$31,453.87 vs. FY15 = \$ 3,814.96



## BRAND RESEARCH

### FY2015 MARKETING PLAN PAGES 94-96

#### OVERVIEW

In FY2010, important qualitative and quantitative research was conducted to determine the most effective branding moniker for St. Johns County tourism. Details of this work – and the selection of Florida's Historic Coast® (FHC) as the brand moniker – were referenced in the FY2011 Marketing Plan's "St. Johns County Brand" section. In FY2015, that research was being updated to determine the extent to which the branding remains relevant.

#### MARKET RESEARCH

##### Qualitative

In October 2014, the VCB engaged MMGY Global Research & Insights to conduct qualitative and quantitative research with residents of Orlando, FL, and Atlanta, GA, to measure consumer understanding, awareness, appeal, and perceptions of the "Florida Historic Coast" destination brand and to assess how consumers process/understand this regional moniker. Results reinforced the relevance to and understanding of the moniker by the target audiences and showed that "Florida's Historic Coast" continues to grow in awareness and association to "St. Augustine" and "Ponte Vedra".

A secondary objective was to solicit feedback on the appeal or lack of appeal of the region, and of St. Augustine, Ponte Vedra Beach, St. Augustine Beach, and World Golf Village. Additional objectives included the testing of multiple options of the destination logo to evaluate consumer reaction to each, and to evaluate three creative campaigns for appeal, relevance, understanding, uniqueness, and ability to influence decision-making. As a result of the input, the current logo was retained and a new visual presentation of the "Not the Same Old Story" campaign was adopted.

##### Quantitative

Subsequent to that research effort, MMGY Global Research & Insights partially replicated the FY2010 study by conducting an online survey among 850 respondents who resided in Florida, Georgia or South Carolina, and had expressed an interest in visiting the destination.

The objective was to understand their level of interest in visiting competitive destinations, attributes they consider to be important when vacationing in St. Augustine or Ponte Vedra and how well the destination delivers on those attributes. Results were positive and reflected an overall increase in awareness, understanding of and interest in the destination.

## **LODGING & SECONDARY RESEARCH RESOURCES**

Smith Travel Research continued to monitor lodging performance for FHC, and secondary travel industry resources, such as *Portrait of American Travelers*® and *travelhorizons*™, kept us informed of changes affecting the tourism business and our customer behaviors.

## **NSIGHT™ TRAVEL INTELLIGENCE**

In FY2015 nSight began delivering two reports to the VCB: one reflecting 60-day search volume and online booking conversions for future travel dates, the other showing online search volume and bookings by month. Both reports help the VCB and MMGY track the action generated (searches and bookings) by advertising and publicity efforts. While we are not able to link particular programs to performance, we can, at least, compare demand generated by marketing at a given time and compare that demand over time from one year to the next.

### **Key Performance Measures**

**GOAL:** Deliver monthly reports on lodging industry performance to VCB Partners and TDC. Achieved and on schedule, Smith Travel Research reports are presented to TDC and VCB Board and made available to VCB Partners every month.

**GOAL:** As available, report on relevant secondary research findings to the VCB partner base. Achieved through inclusion in Partner Com, VCB weekly partner info email and at annual State of the Industry meeting on May 27, 2016.

**GOAL:** Establish an online demand profile for FHC and competitive destinations. Achieved with the monthly reporting of search and booking volume for FHC and competitors.

## ADVERTISING AND MARKETING REPORT

### FY2015 MARKETING PLAN BRAND COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA PAGES 31-45 PREPARED BY MMGY GLOBAL

#### CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES

##### Mission Statement

Brand and market the destination globally as a premier leisure, convention and incentive destination; communicate the area's assets and inherent benefits to consumers, meeting planners, the travel trade, media, local community and constituents; and facilitate the opportunity for Partners to promote their individual businesses within that framework.

##### Florida's Historic Coast®

Based on its success – both in-market and through the receipt of various industry awards – the “El Conquistador” campaign continued to powerfully tell the story of a destination that is comprised of various types of vacation experiences, accommodation types and attractions, while being deeply rooted in history.

Whereas in FY2014, the “Chronicles” campaign evolved with a general 16th-century Spaniard to tell the stories that bring to life the consumer benefit uniquely offered by the destination, FY2015 saw an extension to the campaign showcasing Don Pedro Menéndez to support St. Augustine's 450th Anniversary.

##### Primary FY2015 Objectives

The VCB aimed for continued improvement in its efficiency, effectiveness and leadership toward driving visitation to St. Augustine | Ponte Vedra. Objectives were as follows:

- › Increase qualified website visitation with additional key metrics such as lead generation, intent to travel and partner conversions.
- › Increase destination awareness (and its identity as Florida's Historic Coast).
- › Increase midweek business.
- › Increase co-op partner support and engagement with high-value media opportunities, including programs targeted to new audiences.
- › Implement strong support for 450th Anniversary marketing plans.

## Strategies

- › Continue strong focus on appropriate media selection:
  - › Maintain both online and offline programs with strong lead generation.
  - › Increase online advertising and e-communications.
  - › Target media toward growing midweek business.
  - › Aggressively negotiate the best possible pricing on media purchases.
- › Develop enticing co-op opportunities to encourage more partner participation.
- › Continue to optimize performance of paid media while maintaining flexibility within the fiscal plan to move resources to best performing programs.

## TARGET AUDIENCE AND MARKETS

### Consumer Target Audience:

During the fall/winter months, the core visitors tend to be couples aged 35+, while in the spring/summer months, visitation shifts more toward families with children. Media efforts continue to be centered on impacting these key audience segments to drive overnight leisure trips. Efforts to reach Retirees and Military audiences to grow midweek stays remain a key targeting tactic. In addition, an increased focus on reaching the growing Millennial segment via relevant digital opportunities drove new visitor prospects and engaged young couples and families. The Hispanic community also remains an important segment due to its heritage relevance and is an opportunity to take advantage of the growing multigenerational travel trend.

### Primary Markets:

Drive markets within a 3–4 hour drive, expanding in summer to families within a 6–8 hour drive. They include the following cities:

- › Orlando, FL
- › Jacksonville, FL
- › The Villages, FL
- › Tampa, FL
- › Atlanta, GA
- › South Florida (Miami, Ft. Lauderdale, West Palm Beach)

## **MEDIA & CREATIVE**

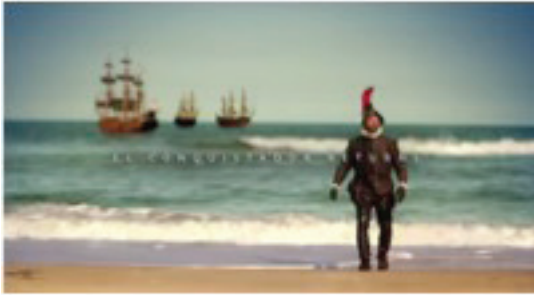
### **TV**

In FY2015, the VCB continued to expand reach through local television advertising in key markets and also utilized underwriting campaigns to promote key events to the affluent and educated PBS audience.

- › Affluent/PBS market focus was Orlando, Jacksonville, and Georgia in mid-November to December for Nights of Lights/holiday
- › :30 TV spot and promotional campaign on local Atlanta station WSB-TV, driving viewers to online contest page for Nights of Lights trip giveaway
- › Continued reach to West Palm DMA via :30 cable spot campaign in November for Nights of Lights/holiday
- › :30 commercial TV schedules ran locally in Orlando, Jacksonville and Atlanta to promote summer vacations
- › Added-value TV promotions with key stations in Orlando offered giveaways to the destination and also offered exposure via online channels
- › Visit Florida Early Morning News sponsorship co-op promoting spring break/early summer travel in the Atlanta market for four weeks
- › Integrated TV and online campaign promoting the 450th Anniversary Celebration on Telemundo targeted to Hispanics in Orlando, Tampa and South Florida and other cities throughout the U.S.
- › Bright House Orlando Visitor Network located in 63,000+ Orlando-area hotel rooms and at the Visit Orlando Official Visitors Center on International Drive targeting in-market tourists
- › :30 National TV spot during Taxslayer Bowl broadcast on ESPN on January 2nd, 2015
- › PGA TOUR – THE PLAYERS regional TV (Jan–Apr 2015)



## “El Conquistador Returns” TV Spot



## Radio

- › Campaigns ran with :60 spots in the following markets:
  - › Orlando, FL
  - › Jacksonville, FL
  - › The Villages, FL
  - › Atlanta, GA
- › Radio station mix included top stations in primary markets targeted to A35-64
- › Nights of Lights campaign included Adult Contemporary and Talk stations to promote Holiday messaging in Orlando and Jacksonville
- › June campaign focused on Adult Contemporary, Classic Hits and Talk stations to promote summer vacation in Orlando, Jacksonville and Atlanta
- › 450th Celebration messaging targeted a slightly younger audience, A25+, via Adult Contemporary and Hot AC stations to help promote musical acts/event festivities in Orlando and Jacksonville
- › Extended radio program to focus on Millennial audience via Pandora online radio campaign which was purchased on a cost per point/gross ratings basis in the Orlando, Jacksonville, Atlanta and Tampa markets
- › Co-op radio program in The Villages promoted midweek stays

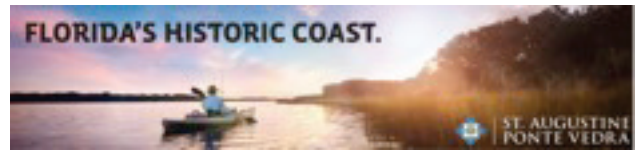
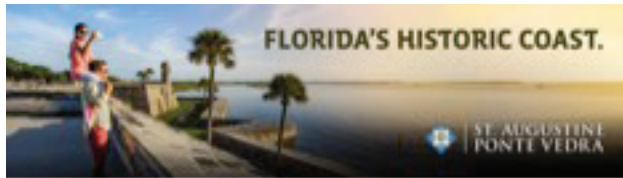
- › Added-value radio promotions with key stations offered giveaways to the destination in each market and also generated a sizeable opt-in list
- › Underwriting campaign on NPR stations across state of Georgia, Orlando and Jacksonville to promote holiday campaign



### Outdoor/Out-of-Home

- › The VCB updated its series of billboards in FY2015, including new photography, from Central Florida to South Georgia, keeping the destination branding as Florida's Historic Coast
- › Locations included North Orlando/Daytona Beach, Jacksonville, Brunswick and Savannah
- › Increased presence in feeder state via outdoor video sponsorship package in NYC Times Square promoting Nights of Lights/holiday Nov-Jan
- › Digital billboards were positioned in key upscale suburban areas indexing highest with A35-64 and HHI \$75K+ in Orlando and Jacksonville to promote Holiday campaign Nov-Dec, as well as Atlanta to promote Summer vacations Jul-Aug
- › In-stadium message board signage during Taxslayer Bowl
- › Increased exposure to tourists through advertising and event listing inclusion in Visit Florida Event Cards distributed at Highway Welcome Centers throughout the state of Florida

## Outdoor Billboards



## Print

Award-winning layout featured collage of destination photos amidst illustrated imagery, poetic/enticing copy and seasonal rates. Many executions included co-op partners.

- › Target to niche areas and audiences of focus:
  - › Lifestyle, History/Culture, Outdoor, Golf, Travel, Retirees and Military
- › Newspaper and lifestyle magazine in Atlanta market to drive summer and newspaper in South Florida and Orlando markets to drive holiday
- › Collinson in-state dedicated insert promoting summer travel/Collinson out-of-state dedicated insert promoting getaways from cold-weather states in February
- › Extended reach to Long Island, NY, market via Anton Media Group February Vacation and Travel Issue promoting last-minute Florida destinations
- › Increased frequency to Retirees audience through *Villages Magazine* with year-round exposure of mid-week messaging
- › 450th Celebration focused promotion to Jacksonville and Tampa markets via newspaper print
- › Continued to take advantage of reader service inclusion in widely recognized publications with vast national reach, e.g. *Southern Living*, *AAA South*



## Collinson



## AAA



## The Villages (Co-op)



## Bridal Programs

- › VISIT FLORIDA program in *Bridal Guide* (national) driving lead generation and exposure online
- › Co-op presence in *Orlando Magazine – Wedding Issue*, *Jacksonville Bride* and *The Knot Florida* (regional)
- › Bridal presence online via Brideclick, WeddingWire, StyleMePretty and eTarget, with a majority of placements being co-op opportunities

## The Knot



## International Programs

- › New focus on Canada market via Horizon Travel newspaper and outdoor video package targeting Toronto and Ottawa residents and CAA magazine
- › Multi-market Brand USA online campaign reaching travelers from UK, Canada and Brazil on TripAdvisor and Orbitz

## CAA Magazine



## KEY PERFORMANCE MEASURES FOR MEDIA BUYS & EFFECTIVENESS

In FY2015 the VCB continued to focus on trackable media to maximize website visitation. Digital media mix included targeting display, mobile, rich media, pre-roll video, paid social media, lead generation and dedicated emails.

- › The digital mix included ad networks, travel and lifestyle sites, local newspaper sites, emerging media as well as niche exposure with bridal pubs and international exposure via BrandUSA.
- › The most effective buys in FY2015 were TripAdvisor, Adara, Pandora, Digilant, VisitFlorida.com, Tapad and Brightroll. Overall these buys drove the most visits at the lowest costs.
- › More than 88 million impressions were served via digital media, with 198,641 visits driven to FHC.com.
- › Continued to measure success through various conversion points, i.e. tracking intent to travel or those who have expressed interest in accommodations via the accommodations link and/or hot deals page views.
- › VCB captured 63,758 Intents to Travel in FY15 from paid media.
- › Maintained lead gen efforts for remarketing purposes with more than 30,700 leads acquired from VCB digital media efforts in FY15.

- › High-impact units were utilized in FY15 with a number of key partners, including SAY Media, Tapad and Pandora, as well as cross-platform campaigns, including Tapad and Pandora.
- › Expandable rich media had more than 17,500 engagements with the ad unit.
- › The Tapad campaign focused on driving consumers to the deals page and accounted for 29,982 Intents to Travel – i.e., 47% of total Intents.
- › Continued to incorporate cross-device campaign strategy, reaching consumers from their mobile device to their laptop.
- › Continued the Trip Advisor Destination program with highly visible ads sold to the co-op Partners for partner referrals.

### Performance Results from 2015 Goals (pgs 38-39 in 2015 Marketing Plan):

GOAL	FY13-14 ACTUAL	FY14-15 GOAL	FY14-15 ACTUAL	ACTUAL % INCREASE
Increase website visitation by 5%	174,280	182,994	198,641	13.98%
Increase consumer media impressions by 15%	175,177,405	201,454,016	248,533,737	41.88%
Increase meetings/group impressions by 5%	1,940,704	2,037,739	3,057,600	57.55%
Increase number of co-op programs by 5% (Total number of opportunities)	38	40	44	15.79%
Increase partner participation spending by 10%. (Total number of filled slots)	155	171	194	25.16%

### Tapad



## Search Engine Marketing/Google Campaign

- › Paid search delivered 46% of site traffic at a very efficient cost of \$.23 per click, converting at 10% above site averages.
- › Live on Google, Bing and Yahoo with over 2,000+ targeted ads delivered to 58 different landing pages in FY2015.
- › Continued support for specific events and campaigns, including Flavors of Florida's Historic Coast, Nights of Lights and 450th Celebration.
- › Implemented structured snippets, added call out extensions and updated review extensions.
- › Paid Search delivered over 13 million impressions and resulted in over 7,800 leads for the destination.

## MEETINGS / TRAVEL TRADE / GROUP SALES

### Meetings

Focused on corporate meeting & event planners, association & SMERF planners, and executive influencers.

- › Targeted markets in Southeast region with focus on Florida
- › Advertising included
  - › Florida Society of Association Executives and Association Executives of North Carolina
  - › National trade publications – *Meetings & Conventions*, *Successful Meetings*, *Smart Meetings*, *Meetings Focus* and *Small Market Meetings* in issues with relevant editorial
  - › Expanded reach to SMERF audience via *Connect Meetings Magazine*, corporate and incentive planners via *Collaborate* and faith-based meeting planners via *Rejuvenate*
  - › *Hispanic Meetings & Travel Magazine* targeting Hispanic organizations and meeting professionals
  - › Presence in VISIT FLORIDA Meetings Enewsletter
- › Co-op Program included
  - › Custom online email opportunities with MCMag, Meetingsfocus.com, FSAE and Meeting Mailer



## Leisure Groups and Travel Trade

Focused on motor coach tour operators, domestic and international travel agents and tour operators, reunion planners, and student groups.

- › Employed annual trade guides/directories to reach key audience segments most cost-effectively and position destination within the competitive set
- › Advertising included
  - › Print presence with Florida Parent-Educators Association (FPEA), Florida's largest home-schooling families group
  - › *SEEN Magazine* special Florida School Travel Guide section, reaching public and private school teachers and administration
  - › VISIT FLORIDA Latin American Vacation Guide
  - › Annual Guide for ABA Motorcoach Marketer and inclusion in ABA Destinations Top 100 Events
  - › *Reunion Friendly Network*, a bimonthly publication reaching military reunion planners
- › Co-op Program included
  - › Online advertorial feature articles via LGT InSite on Student and Reunion Travel
  - › Student Group Tour and Group Tour Magazines
  - › Heritage & History Planning Annual Resource Guide
  - › FPEA custom email

## ABA Motorcoach





## **VCB PARTNER CO-OPERATIVE OPPORTUNITIES REPORT**

### **FY2015 MARKETING PLAN PAGES 39 & 105**

### **PREPARED BY MMGY GLOBAL**

#### **CO-OP ADVERTISING OPPORTUNITIES OVERVIEW**

To help expand branded Florida's Historic Coast advertising and provide Partners with opportunities to expand their own advertising efforts, the VCB provided a wide variety of marketing options to tourism partner businesses. In FY2015 the VCB offered 47 co-operative advertising opportunities to Partners. Of the 47 opportunities, 44 were leveraged by 49 different Partners. In summary, the number of co-op programs increased by 16% year over year, exceeding our FY2015 goal of 5%.

#### **Highlights of Initiatives**

##### **Opportunities Offered**

- › 21 print
- › 25 online
- › 1 radio

##### **Categories**

- › 2 history and culture
- › 4 travel endemic/travel guide
- › 6 retirees
- › 3 outdoor, fishing and golf
- › 6 bridal
- › 12 general leisure
- › 14 groups, meetings and travel agents

#### **Key Performance Measures FY2015**

- › Number of co-op programs increased by 16% year over year, exceeding FY2015 goal of 5%.
- › Annual partner co-op cash contribution reached a total of \$81,150 for FY2015, a 33% increase year over year, exceeding our FY2015 goal of 10%.

- › \$198,108 net worth of media exposure.
- › A total of 194 spots of the 216 offered were filled, bringing our participation to 89.8%.
- › Total impressions were 6,827,920, total web visits were 56,817 and total leads were 367.
- › Groups, Meetings & Travel Agents opportunities were one of the most popular segments, with 13 of 14 programs selling out. Forty seven different slots were filled. This resulted in a savings of \$25,887.75 overall, or an average of \$550 per partner.
- › History & Culture, Travel Endemic and Retirees were also very popular, with 10 of 12 opportunities selling out. Sixty-three different slots were filled, resulting in an overall savings of \$68,845.25, or \$1,092.78 per partner.
- › Outdoor, Bridal and Leisure also did well, with 12 of 19 opportunities selling out. Eighty-four different slots were filled. This resulted in a savings of \$94,425.11 overall, or an average of \$1,124.11 per partner.
- › In-kind contributions from Partners for promotional use reached \$95,265 (\$106,234 overall), including attraction tickets; discounts on lodging, food and beverage, meeting space, tours, transportation, entertainment and merchandise; and signage and printing.

## **DIRECT MARKETING REPORT**

### **FY2015 MARKETING PLAN PAGES 69-72**

#### **DIRECT MARKETING OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES**

Direct Marketing refers to communications between the VCB and specific individuals or groups as opposed to broad advertising or publicity. It includes the disciplines of direct mail and eCRM (electronic customer relationship marketing) and database management.

#### **Print and Online Guides**

The VCB produces four publications distributed to selected audiences in print, online and via flash drives:

- › Annual Travel Planner
- › Group Planning Guide
- › Celebrate: Wedding & Life Events Planning Guide
- › Calendar of Events

#### **Objective**

Facilitate the destination planning process and motivate purchase.

#### **Key Performance Measures**

- › Travel Planners are published each calendar year; 100% of 135K printed were distributed by December 31, meeting the FY2015 goal.
- › Calendar of Events is published three times per year, fall/winter (NOL), spring and summer; 100% of 81K print versions were distributed, meeting the FY2015 goal.
- › Both Celebrate and Meeting Planner Guide are produced for use over several years. In FY2015, 952 and 352 were distributed, respectively, through the mail and sales team.
- › Online downloads for FY2015 were up 24% for Travel Planner and up 39% for Calendar of Events. The Celebrate and Meeting Planner Guides were distributed online 1,436 (up 568%) and 291 (up 28%) times respectively, exceeding the goal of 10% increase for FY2015.

### **Initiatives completed**

- › Requests for the publications and their e-versions were added to selected advertising calls to action.
- › Solicitation buttons were updated, added and relocated on more pages on the website to build online linking to print and e-versions of publications.

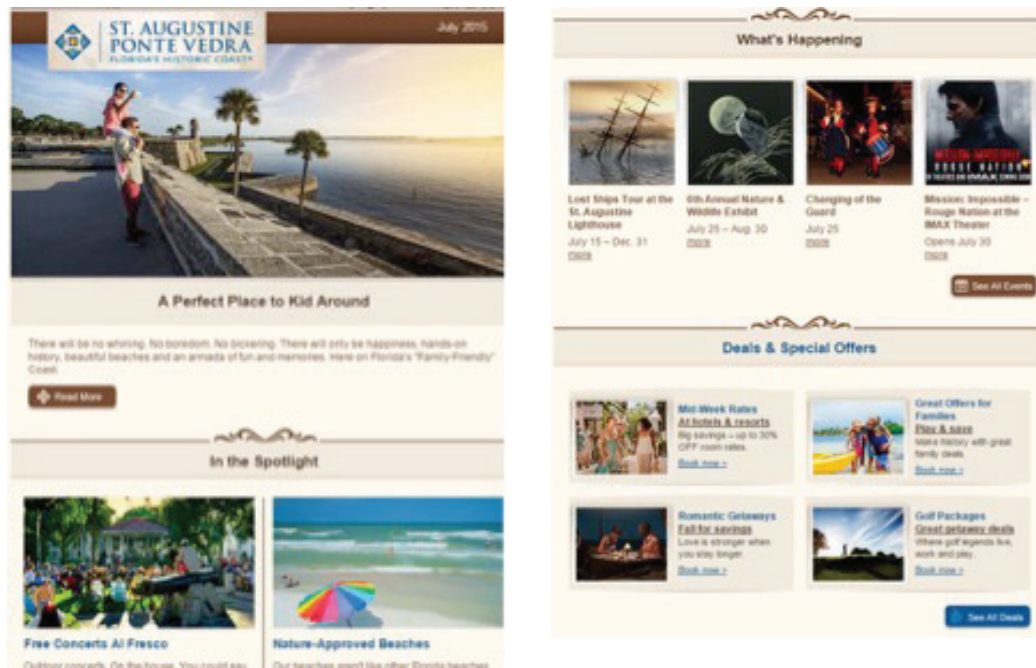
## DATABASE MARKETING

### FY2015 MARKETING PLAN PAGES 72-76

#### Objectives


- › Streamline monthly email tasks from the VCB staff to free their time to attend to more social media and promotions programs.
  - › New process reduces VCB staff hours dedicated to monthly eNews through a combination of selective outsourcing of tasks and a more efficient overall monthly procedure, allowing in-house staff to address increased workloads in social media and web development.
- › Migrate the database and email messaging to a more robust email management system.
  - › Efficiencies noted above were made possible through a more robust overall system developed with consultant and VCB partner, Miles.
- › Create a responsive design that will serve desktop and mobile users.
  - › Monthly emails to the VCB database are all of a responsive design, as is the overall VCB consumer web site.
  - › See views of approved responsive template designs below.

#### Desktop:






Mobile:




ST. AUGUSTINE  
PONTE VEDRA  
FLORIDA'S HISTORIC COAST®

July 2015




A Perfect Place to Kid Around

There will be no whining. No boredom. No bickering. There will only be happiness, hands-on history, beautiful beaches and an armada of fun and memories. Here on Florida's "Family-Friendly" Coast.




In the Spotlight



Free Concerts Al Fresco

Outdoor concerts. On the house. You could say it's one of our "things." Especially during summer, with free performances twice a week. And an equally prolific lineup of paid shows and festivals.



- › Improve list quality and engagement.
  - › As it pertains to engagement/non-engagement segmenting and stats, there were only 3,000 hard email blocks due to non-engagement or spam subscribers throughout the fiscal-list cleansing process. Compared to the amazing organic and campaign growth that the program saw for FY15 (audience grew from 15,000 subscribers at program launch to 84,000 subscribers by the end of FY15), this is a very low overall cleansing amount.
  - › Hard-bounce rates are the result of a poor subscriber database – either from invalid or spam email accounts, or poor account activity. During the list-cleansing process, these invalid subscribers are eliminated. Hard-bounce rates in the Travel & Leisure industry account for approximately 6.5% of subscribers. FHC only accounted for 3.5% based off of their 3,000 email blocks, demonstrating a more qualified subscriber list.

### Key Performance Measures

- › **Goal:** After three deployments in the new program using a “re-engagement” program, list will be segmented by openers and non-openers as part of the list-cleansing process.
  - › During these first three deployments, a full cleanse was conducted and the predictable attrition that typically accompanies a list cleanse was a mere 3,000 subscribers; moreover, the FHC database actually grew in size by 9.7%, from 62,000 to 68,000. Organic campaign growth and lead generation programs all contributed to this qualified-subscriber database increase.
- › **Goal:** Target click-through rate (CTR) will be 3% – higher than travel industry averages of 2.1% because of the VCB’s narrower target audience and expected higher engagement.
  - › Email marketing average CTR for FY15 was 2.61%, higher than the industry average, but 13% below the internal team goal of 3%.
- › **Goal:** Measuring beyond the click, target-engagement metrics will be the same as those of the site’s traffic from organic search – i.e., a successful visit from the email program will perform as well as a visitor coming from a search on Google or Yahoo.
  - › “Unique clicks to open” is the email marketing stat that shows who is clicking on links within the email, in our case to the FHC website or other links featured in email. FHC’s FY15 average for this metric was 16.07%. This reveals very high engagement with users who are reading and then looking for more info on the site/performing other continued interactions.

- › Bottom quartile numbers for open rates in the United States is 8.2%. With a monthly average of 16.5%, the FHC program more than doubled this percentage and was among the highest performers according to a recent Email Marketing Metrics study.



## WEBSITE ANALYTICS REPORT

### FY2015 MARKETING PLAN PAGES 86-93

### PREPARED BY MILES

## FLORIDASHISTORICCOAST.COM

### Objectives

- › Focus on user experience/user interface for mobile platforms.
  - › A benefit of the FHC site responsive retrofit was that the mobile user experience was vastly improved.
  - › In FY15, VCB with Miles enhanced the FHC site mobile experience with the addition of mobile Smart Content. This targeted content ensured that mobile users are delivered relevant messaging based on geographic location.
  - › Through these efforts, FloridasHistoricCoast.com saw a 67% increase of mobile traffic coming to the site YOY.
- › Modernize the display of content throughout the site.
  - › Through the FY15 content generation plan, VCB with Miles created six long-form articles that were researched, written and featured on the FHC site. The goal of this plan was to optimize SEO performance and enhance organic site search through new, timely content.
  - › The FHC site saw an 11% increase in site visits due to diligent content organization and organic search efforts.
- › Create new content and repurpose existing content to match the site design and responsive presentation.
  - › Completed one-off campaign landing page modifications to align with 2015 media placements and annual events, i.e., Nights of Lights. This included content enhancements, development update to enhance the responsive experience, and the placement of new, visually engaging imagery.
- › Enrich the on-site user experience to maintain value for the VCB's Partners.
  - › Through the FY15 content generation plan, content was prioritized to be relevant and promote local VCB Partners. The content plan outlined specific seasonal events and list-style articles that editorially promoted Partners and campaign-related events throughout the year. This organic content saw about 1:50 minute time-on-site, and over 300 pageviews.

- › Continue to track effectiveness of online and offline campaigns through more detailed reporting.
  - › Through site analytics, campaigns were tracked and recommendations were generated to improve campaign performance. In some situations, site bounce rates increased due to specific campaigns, and Miles worked alongside the FHC team and ad agency to resolve the issue collaboratively.
  - › The overall site bounce rate for FY15 total 49%, with a homepage bounce rate of 37.5%.
- › Continue to improve visitor conversation and interaction on the site by using best-practices social media integration.
  - › Enhanced campaign landing pages and incorporated social tie-ins for these programs where applicable. For these campaigns, the user was directed to a landing page where they received further direction, such as to utilize a specific hashtag to document and promote events in a viral way, or to download a mask via Instagram or Facebook, as done with the Flat Pedro campaign.
  - › Miles and VCB discussed opportunities around incorporating social media feeds for FY16 through a third-party provider. This feed will aggregate content from all FHC's social channels and display it in a visual and easy-to-digest format.

### **Key Performance Measures**

- › Goal: Improve overall sessions to 825,000.
  - › FY15 sessions totaled 1,036,725 – 25.7% above goal.
- › Goal: Maintain time on site at 3:30.
  - › FY15 time-on-site engagement totaled 2:58 – under goal by 15%, likely due to substantial increase in mobile users who spend less time on sites.
- › Goal: Maintain an overall site–bounce rate of less than 43% and home page bounce rate of less than 35%.
  - › The overall site–bounce rate for FY15 was 49%, with a home page bounce rate of 37.5%.
  - › Increase in bounce rates month over month was due to poorly performing campaigns. By cutting some of those out, we saw an immediate improvement in monthly reporting.

- › For example, in July 2015, we saw a 10% reduction, with overall visit duration improved by 2% and pages per visit improved by 12%.
- › This is just one example of how there is a trickle-down effect when it comes to poorly performing campaigns affecting website performance.
  - › Although we did not meet our specific bounce rate goals, with the new site development in progress, VCB will prioritize these performance metrics – along with others – to ensure that the site resonates with users and fosters engagement. This sets our goals to meet or beat the bounce rates of the best-performing destination industry sites.
- › Goal: Increase conversion rate by 5% as measured by signals of intent to travel (SIT).
  - › Conversion rate grew 10%, from 15.8% in FY14 to 17.4% in FY15, beating goal by 100%.

## Strategies

- › Improve on website UX/UI (user experience/user interface) based on the needs of a mobile audience using a responsive site.
  - › While budget constraints prevented implementing all improvements on our wish list for 2015, Miles and VCB plan for complete site redesign in FY2016.
  - › The new site will reflect an interactive magazine format that leverages FHC's current site content and displays it in a refreshed, mobile-first approach.
  - › This updated content display strategy will better match consumer expectations and enhance FHC site performance.
- › Create and execute a content-generation plan to improve depth and increase organic traffic using BrightEdge technology. Conduct ongoing keyword research and identify content gaps/needs.
  - › In FY15, the content management team ran a keyword assessment of top events and search terms for FHC and compiled a content plan that outlined seasonal events and list-style articles that editorially promoted Partners and campaign-related events throughout the year.
  - › Leveraging BrightEdge for this initial assessment was a useful tool in determining the search keywords of potential visitors and how to create content that appeals to their specific interests.

## Performance

FloridasHistoricCoast.com saw an increase in visits, with a 25% increase in international visits specifically, for FY15. Organic search was also up 44% as compared to 2014, along with a 22% boost in campaign traffic.

OVERALL PERFORMANCE	FY2014	FY2015	% CHANGE
Total Visits	931,107	1,036,725	11%
Pageviews	4,241,596	3,975,118	-6%
Pages per Visit	4.56	3.83	-16%
Average Time on Site	03:29	02:58	-15%
Overall Bounce Rate	42.8%	49.6%	16%
Property Profile Views	656,103	681,376	4%

INTERNATIONAL TRAFFIC	FY2014	FY2015	% CHANGE
International Visits	37,372	46,754	25%
Visits - Canada	12,676	15,472	22%
Visits - UK	4,597	4,597	0%
Visits - Germany	3,064	2,092	-32%

## Traffic Sources

TRAFFIC SOURCES	FY2014	FY2015	% CHANGE
Organic Search	222,460	319,839	44%
Referral Traffic	115,607	96,611	-16%
Direct Traffic	78,371	71,301	-9%
Campaigns	449,230	548,445	22%

## Traffic by Device Category

In looking at metrics for FY15, FloridasHistoricCoast.com saw a slight decrease in year-over-year performance, but large increases in goal conversions across all devices.

TRAFFIC BY DEVICE CATEGORY	VISITS	BOUNCE RATE	PAGES/VISIT	AVG. VISIT DURATION	GOAL CONVERSIONS
<b>DESKTOP TRAFFIC</b>					
FY 14	587,605	37%	5.09	04:08	226,058
FY 15	542,817	41%	4.67	03:39	351,175
% change	-8%	10%	-8%	-12%	55%

TRAFFIC BY DEVICE CATEGORY	VISITS	BOUNCE RATE	PAGES/VISIT	AVG. VISIT DURATION	GOAL CONVERSIONS
<b>MOBILE TRAFFIC</b>					
FY 14	191,087	57%	3.34	01:36	7,992
FY 15	319,946	66%	2.33	01:35	127,989
% change	67%	15%	-30%	-1%	1501%

TRAFFIC BY DEVICE CATEGORY	VISITS	BOUNCE RATE	PAGES/VISIT	AVG. VISIT DURATION	GOAL CONVERSIONS
<b>TABLET TRAFFIC</b>					
FY 14	152,370	47%	4.08	03:32	48,958
FY 15	173,962	48%	3.98	03:23	99,302
% change	14%	2%	-2%	-4%	103%

## Website User Demographics (Source: Quantcast)

### GENDER

Male	35%
Female	65%



#### AGE

<18	15%
18-24	10%
25-34	16%
35-44	19%
45-54	19%
55-64	13%
65+	8%

#### HOUSEHOLD INCOME

\$0-50K	47%
\$50-100K	32%
\$100-150K	13%
\$150K+	9%

#### EDUCATION

No College	38%
College	46%
Grad School	16%

#### RACE

Caucasian	80%
African-American	7%
Asian	3%
Hispanic	8%
Other	1%

## COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

### FY2015 MARKETING PLAN PAGES 64-68

#### OVERVIEW

The mission of the Communications Department of the St. Augustine, Ponte Vedra & The Beaches Visitors and Convention Bureau (VCB) is to engage in a comprehensive communication program that builds mutually beneficial relationships with media, engages consumers through social media and online communications, supports Partners and generates positive awareness of the destination, which results in greater travel to the area.

#### **Objective: Increase awareness of the destination's diversity of accommodations and amenities.**

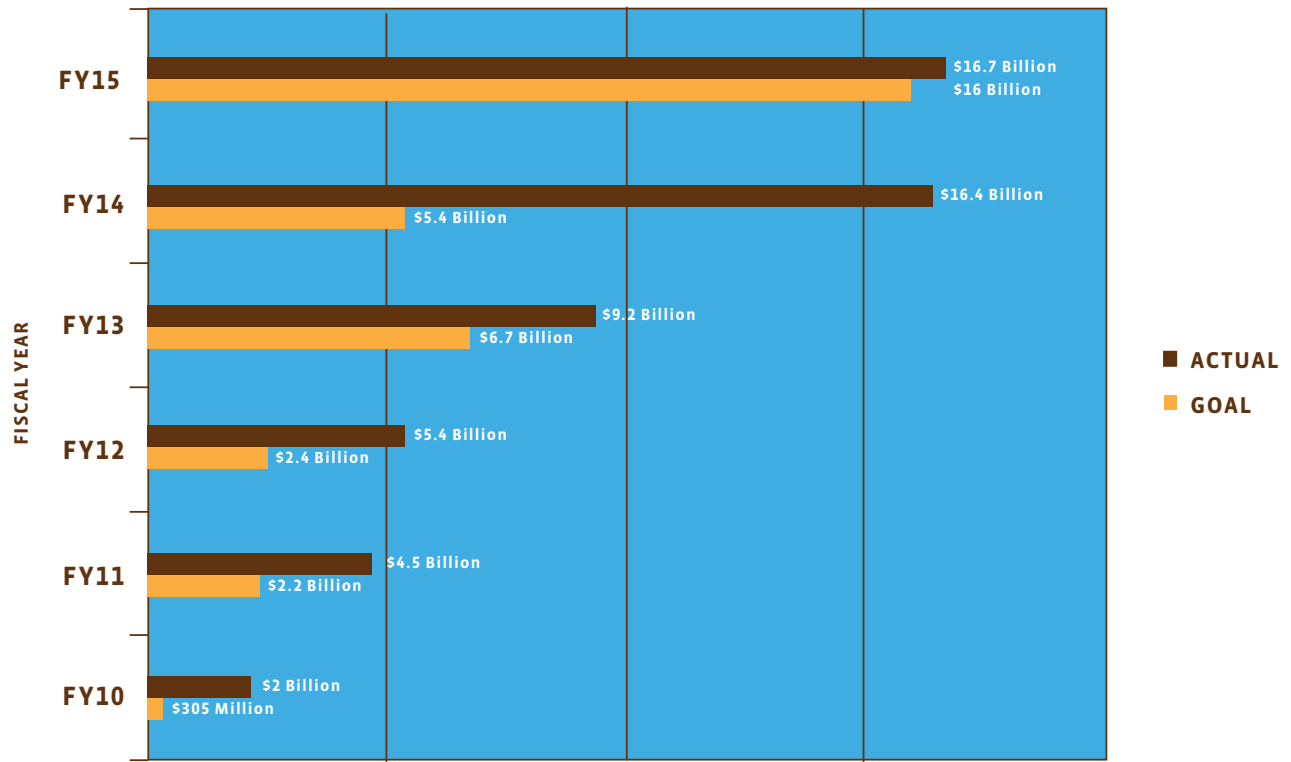
In addition to media impressions, increased awareness of Florida's Historic Coast led to several important accolades, including: TripAdvisor's Top 25 U.S. Destinations to Visit; Orbitz Top Five Great American Getaways; USA TODAY Top 10 Best Historic Southern Attraction; Parent Magazine Top 12 Destinations in the U.S. for Family Fun; TripAdvisor's Top 10 Beach in the U.S.; Dating Advice Top 14 list of Best Small Cities for a First Date; Today Show Best Places to Celebrate Christmas; and USA TODAY 10 Best American Holiday Lights.

The Communications Department took advantage of partnerships to host more media in FY2015. The VCB worked with VISIT FLORIDA to bring international media to the destination through a familiarization tour following International Pow Wow. Partnerships with First Coast of Golf, The PGA Tour, Visit Jacksonville and the Daytona Beach Visitors & Convention Bureau attracted high-profile national and international media coverage.

#### KEY PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Media impressions for FY2015 increased along with media inquiries and the number of media hosted in the destination. FY2015 media impressions were 16,758,424,192, which surpassed the goal of 16 billion by 5% and increased 2% over FY 2014 actual impressions.

## FLORIDA'S HISTORIC COAST MEDIA IMPRESSIONS



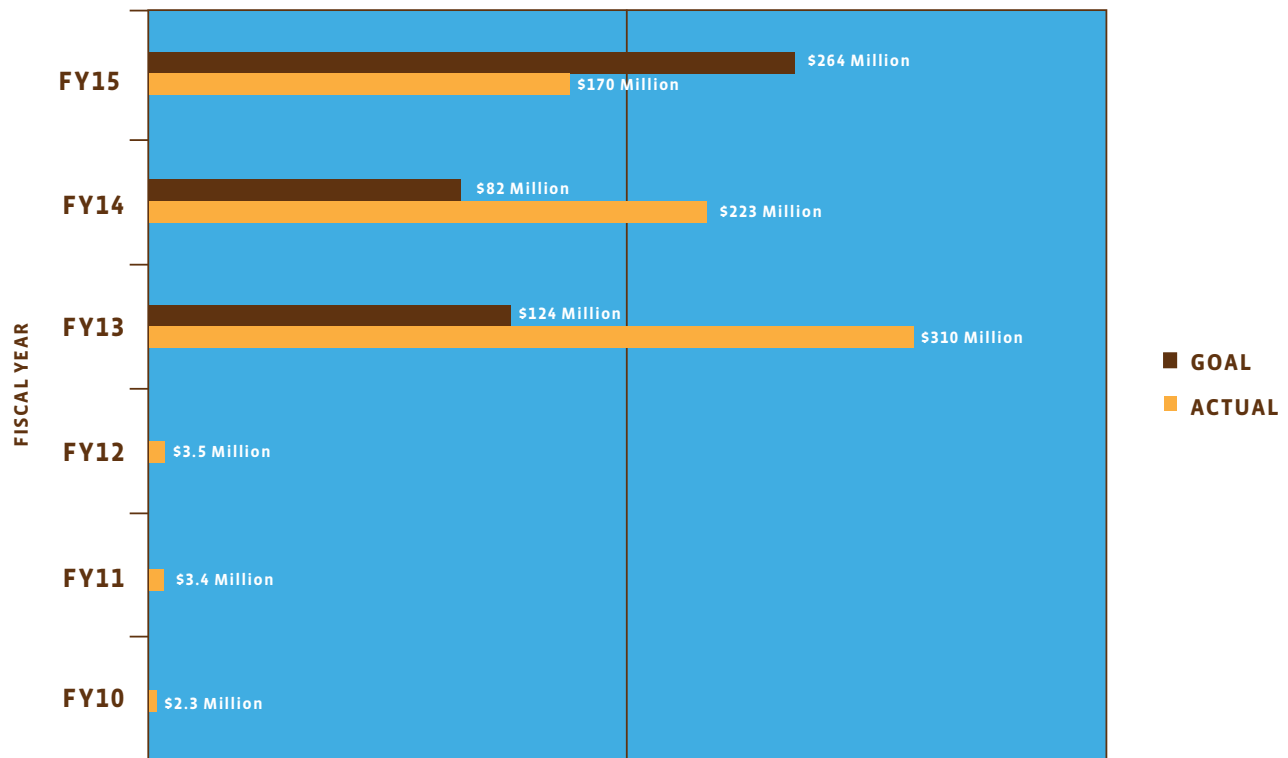
Source: Data collected through Meltwater Media Monitoring Service and TV Eyes Broadcast Monitoring Service

The VCB's publicity of St. Augustine's anniversary contributed to the increase in media coverage with more than 2,312,392,534 impressions related to the 450th alone. Media coverage of the 450th Commemoration ran in 17 countries.

Media coverage of the destination by Hispanic media was 54.2 million impressions, 28 times the goal of 1.9 million. When setting the 2015 goal, the visit by the King and Queen of Spain had not been confirmed. National and international coverage of the Royal visit contributed to the increased coverage along with media missions, more Hispanic media hosted in destination and several articles related to the Sister Cities visits that made the Spanish newswire.



## FLORIDA'S HISTORIC COAST VALUE OF MEDIA IMPRESSIONS



Source: VCB applied formula for calculations provided by Meltwater Media Monitoring Service and data provided by TV Eyes Broadcast Monitoring Service.

The goal for value of impressions in 2015 was \$264 million, 6% above the 2014 value of \$250 million. The actual value of media impressions in 2015 was \$170,378,897, 35% below goal and 32% below 2014 actual. While overall media impressions increased year over year, there was a decrease in national broadcast coverage and an increase in regional and digital coverage (valued lower) and less-prime time airings of programming about Florida's Historic Coast than the previous year.

### **Objective: Enhance reach and effectiveness of social media.**

The VCB's social media channels all exceeded goals with the exception of the Hispanic Twitter account. In 2015, the VCB increased its focus on Instagram, which has a greater audience among Millennials than other social media channels. Several contests on Facebook increased followers and engagement along with the continuation of the VCB's popular Share Your Sunshine Sunday Facebook campaign. Participation in VISIT FLORIDA'S monthly Twitter Chats helped to expand followers and reach of the VCB's Twitter channel.

## Key Performance Measures

- › The Facebook goal for 2015 of 360,000 followers was surpassed by 3% to 369,317 followers an increase of 18% over 2014 actual (312,823).
- › The Twitter goal for 2015 of 4,600 followers was surpassed by 24% to 5,695 followers and 42% over 2014 actual (4,024).
- › The You Tube goal for 2015 of 110,000 views was surpassed by 25% to 137,816 and 57% over 2014 actual (87,709).
- › The Instagram goal for 2015 of 1,500 followers was surpassed by 148% to 3,722 followers, ten times more than 2014.
- › The Hispanic Facebook goal for 2015 of 1,300 followers was surpassed by 37% to 1,787 followers and 78% over 2014 actual (1,003).
- › The Hispanic Twitter account reached 233 followers in 2015, 23% below goal (305) and 53% above 2014 actual (152).

A new social media initiative for the 450th Commemoration was the creation of #PedroSelfie. The VCB Communication staff created a fun cutout of the face of Pedro Menendez – which was referred to as Flat Pedro – with the hashtag #Celebrate450! and encouraged people to use the Flat Pedro in their social media posts. A website was created where individuals could download the template for Flat Pedro to make their own and use it in their social media channels. More than 200 people visited the website in August and September and there were 1,091 #PedroSelfie posts on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter showing everything from Flat Pedro scuba diving, flying a bi-plane, catching the view from the Lighthouse, fitting in as part of the displays at Ripley's Believe It or Not! Museum and zip-lining over the alligators.



**Objective: Encourage midweek visitation.**

The greatest increase in media coverage in FY2015 was with Florida media, including coverage in Tampa, Orlando and South Florida, which have a higher population of retirees more likely to travel midweek. Other publications and online media with an audience more likely to travel midweek were targeted for publicity and media hosting.

**Highlights of Initiatives Completed:**

- › Press releases were issued that touted midweek deals and budget travel.
- › *New Travel Planner* article promoted budget travel with midweek featured.
- › Coverage ran in publications with a high audience reach of retirees, including *AARP*, *MotorHome Magazine*, *Forever Young*, *AAA Living*, *RVing* magazine, *Parade* magazine, and *Travel Beyond 50* magazine.

- › Coverage ran in Florida publications that served larger populations over 50, including: *Tampa Tribune*, *Venice Gondolier*, *Orlando Sentinel*, *Sarasota magazine*, *Miami Herald*, *Herald Tribune*, *Orlando magazine*, *Palm Beach Post*, *Sun Sentinel* and *Accent on Tampa Bay*.
- › Hosted bloggers that served homeschool audiences including Macaroni Kid, Trekaroo, The Educators Spin On It, Suitcases & Sippycups, and Traveling Mom.

**Objective: Support City of St. Augustine's 450th programming.**

In addition to publicity and promotion of the city's commemoration, the Communications Department staff served on the city's 450th Task Force, the Diocese of St. Augustine's 450th planning committee, and the city's parking and traffic committee. The 450th Commemoration had only one staff member to manage social media, media relations and publicity, so the VCB provided support in the following ways:

- › Created an online photo gallery for media to access images for the Tapestry, First City Through the Eyes of the Masters and the Journey exhibits
- › Supported the 450th Volkswagen Educational Campaign through weekly Facebook and Twitter posts
- › Established a media credential website and managed credentialing for 245 media for Celebrate 450!
- › Hosted a press room for media during Celebrate 450!
- › Coordinated media interviews with 450th Commemoration staff and Chief Lueders throughout the year for coverage of the 450th events and celebrations.
- › Coordinated television live remote broadcasts during Celebrate 450!
- › Organized a press conference for media covering Celebrate 450!
- › Took over the 450th Commemorations Twitter and Facebook accounts posting content daily during Celebrate 450!
- › Created and maintained a website for parking and traffic information for special events including Celebrate 450! which received over 6,000 visits

## Key Performance Measures

The VCB hosted the Weather Channel for a live-remote broadcast of the morning magazine program AMHQ with Sam Champion. The program aired live from 7 a.m. to 10 a.m. on Friday September 4, 2015. The live broadcast included 18 segments, each at least 1 minute. The total media impressions earned resulting from the exposure on The Weather Channel was 7,645,593.

Media missions and desk-side visits promoting the 450th anniversary were conducted with 21 writers in Trenton, New Jersey; Philadelphia; and New York.

Use of the #Celebrate450 hashtag generated 9,251,666 social media posts from September 4–6 and was the second-highest trending hashtag in the nation for several hours on September 4.

A Satellite Media Tour was held September 8 with coverage in: Tallahassee; Las Vegas; Macon, GA; Tampa/St. Pete; Orlando; Toledo; Birmingham; Albuquerque; Wichita; Columbus, GA; Cleveland; West Palm Beach; National Fox News Network; Buffalo NY; Louisville, KY; and nationally syndicated kids' show on Armed Forces Network.

## Objective: Integrate Public Relations efforts with those of Sales and Promotions.

During FY2015, Communications supported Promotions and Sales initiatives through media relations, creative design, written content, photography assets, video assets and website design and content.

### Highlights of Initiatives Completed:

- › Provided content and photography for consumer e-news, website articles and microsites
- › Created powerpoint and slide show presentations for tourism advocacy efforts
- › Updated Flavors of Florida's Historic Coast website and event marketing materials
- › Created sales profile sheets for tradeshow
- › Uploaded content, video and photos to conference websites for sales staff members
- › Redesigned banner stand displays for trade shows
- › Wrote advertorial copy for meeting and convention magazines
- › Redesigned the Birding & Photo Fest website, which realized a 6% increase in visitation, and converted the printed guide to an interactive guide, with more than 17,000 page views, helping to increase ticket sales to the highest level the event had recorded
- › Started an Instagram account for Birding & Photo Fest to market the event

**Objective: Actively engage Partners and other stakeholders to mutual benefit.**

The Communication department supported Partners and stakeholders through public relations, social media, promotions and publicity.

**Highlights of Initiatives Completed:**

- › Redesigned the PartnerCom newsletter to make it mobile and tablet friendly, and averaging a 33% open rate
- › Conducted media missions with Frontier Airlines and posted Frontier and Via Air promotions on social media
- › Supported THE PLAYERS Championship with media relations, photography, website content and social media promotions
- › Assisted Partners in developing social media engagement through their participation in the #PedroSelfie campaign, with 55 Partners participating
- › Partnered with the St. Johns Cultural Council on a media familiarization tour
- › Partnered with Ponte Vedra Inn & Club on a media familiarization tour
- › Partnered with the PGA Tour on a media familiarization tour
- › Partnered with Visit Florida on an international media familiarization tour

## PROMOTION & STRATEGIC ALLIANCES ANNUAL REPORT

**FY2015 MARKETING PLAN PAGES 77-85**

**PREPARED BY RICK HENSLER, DIRECTOR**

### OVERVIEW

In FY2015, the VCB Promotions department supported overall VCB efforts through a mix of Partner promotions, integrated marketing planning, and VCB B2B brand promotion. There was a strong focus on St. Augustine's 450th Commemoration, though not to the exclusion of other SJC tourism interests.

The 2015 VCB Promotion Plan was separated into four categories:

- › Media Promotions
- › Integrated Marketing Communications
- › VCB Brand Promotion
- › Innovative Programs

### 1. MEDIA PROMOTIONS

- › **Objective:** To leverage the allure of Florida's Historic Coast and the participation of our VCB Partners to maintain a steady flow of incremental exposure fueled by other people's money and media.

VCB efforts were consistent with this objective as noted below.

- › **Key Performance Measures:**

- › KPM: Deliver one awareness-building media/partner promo per market per ad buy at little or no cost to VCB.

In 2015, MMGY continued to leverage paid advertising to secure promo extensions wherever possible. Concurrently, the VCB supplemented those efforts with independent promo acquisition initiatives. In aggregate, 41 promos/giveaways were secured – a 58% YOY increase – all at little or no cost to the VCB. Detailed summary follows. (FY15 PROMOTION SUMMARY)

- › KPM: Maintain a minimum 10:1 ratio of partner-funded media value to hard VCB costs.

The VCB maintained a minimum 10:1 ratio of partner-funded media value to hard VCB costs by securing media promotions and database leads valued at \$437,770 against associated expenses of less than \$5,000, well above the 10:1 ratio.

## FY15 PROMOTION SUMMARY

MEDIA PARTNER	CAMPAIGN	MARKET	MEDIA	# WEEKS	MEDIA VALUE	IMPRES-SIONS	LEADS	LEAD VALUE*
AJC.com	Fall	Atlanta	Print/Online	2	\$15,000.00	577,078	26	\$1,042
WSB-TV	NOL	Atlanta	TV/Online	6	\$19,600.00	3,380,345	479	\$19,194
WMGF-FM	NOL	Orlando	Radio/Online	3	\$13,600.00	167,468	N/A	N/A
WTKS-FM	NOL	Orlando	Radio/Online	4	\$27,000.00	661,108	N/A	N/A
WEJZ-FM	NOL	Jacksonville	Radio/Online	4	\$2,400.00	170,000	N/A	N/A
WJGL-FM	NOL	Jacksonville	Radio/Online	2	\$2,500.00	117,720	N/A	N/A
Orlando Sentinel	Spring Break	Orlando	Print/Online	3	\$35,528.00	150,000	1,192	\$47,763
WOFL-TV	Spring/Summer	Orlando	TV/Online	1	\$2,000.00	600,000	N/A	N/A
WFTV-TV	Spring/Summer	Orlando	Online	3	\$2,100.00	205,000	196	\$7,854
WMMO-FM	Spring/Summer	Orlando	Radio/Online	2	\$3,900.00	68,500	N/A	N/A
WOCL-FM	Spring/Summer	Orlando	Radio/Online	2	\$21,250.00	926,700	N/A	N/A
WEJZ-FM	Spring/Summer	Jacksonville	Radio/Online	3	\$3,825.00	255,000	N/A	N/A
WJGL-FM	Spring/Summer	Jacksonville	Radio/Online	2	\$8,000.00	430,000	N/A	N/A
WSB-TV	Spring/Summer	Atlanta	TV/Online	4	\$6,000.00	1,140,000	666	\$26,687
WSRV-FM	Spring/Summer	Atlanta	Radio/Online	2	\$12,000.00	100,000	79	\$3,166
WTKS Prize Promo	Mar. Philips Phile	Orlando	Radio	1	\$5,000.00	161,500	N/A	N/A
WTKS Prize Promo	Apr. Monsters	Orlando	Radio	1	\$5,000.00	174,500	N/A	N/A
WTKS Prize Promo	May Philips Phile	Orlando	Radio	1	\$5,000.00	161,500	N/A	N/A
WTKS Prize Promo	Jun. Monsters	Orlando	Radio	1	\$5,000.00	174,500	N/A	N/A
WTKS Prize Promo	Jul. Philips Phile	Orlando	Radio	1	\$5,000.00	161,500	N/A	N/A





MEDIA PARTNER	CAMPAIGN	MARKET	MEDIA	# WEEKS	MEDIA VALUE	IMPRES-SIONS	LEADS	LEAD VALUE*
WTKS Prize Promo	Aug. Monsters	Orlando	Radio	1	\$5,000.00	174,500	N/A	N/A
WTKS Prize Promo	Sep. Philips Phile	Orlando	Radio	1	\$5,000.00	161,500	N/A	N/A
Via Air/WLKO	Nights of Lights	Charlotte	Radio/Online	2	\$13,800.00	750,000	N/A	N/A
Via Air/WVRC	Nights of Lights	Beckley	Radio/Online	2	\$2,500.00	250,000	N/A	N/A
Via Air/Pr. Outlets	Nights of Lights	Charlotte	Mall Signage	4	\$2,232.00	N/A	N/A	N/A
Via Air/WKKT	Seasonal Launch	Charlotte	Radio/online	6	\$13,800.00	1,380,000	N/A	N/A
Via Air/WVRC	Seasonal Launch	Beckley	Radio/online	6	\$5,400.00	540,000	N/A	N/A
Via Air/WKKT	New Years Flyaway	Charlotte	Radio/Online	2	\$18,633.00	1,863,300	N/A	N/A
Via Air/WLKO	New Years Flyaway	Beckley	Radio/Online	2	\$9,316.00	931,600	N/A	N/A
Via Air/WKKT	Daytona 500 Promo	Charlotte	Radio/Online	2	\$6,210.00	621,000	N/A	N/A
Via Air/WLKO	Daytona 500 Promo	Charlotte	Radio/Online	2	\$3,105.00	310,500	N/A	N/A
Via Air/WVRC	PLAYERS Promo	Beckley	Radio/Online	2	\$3,105.00	310,500	N/A	N/A
Via Air/WRFX	PLAYERS Flyaway	Charlotte	Radio/Online	4	\$22,000.00	2,200,000	N/A	N/A
Via Air/WKKT	PLAYERS Flyaway	Charlotte	Radio/Online	2	\$6,210.00	621,000	N/A	N/A
Frontier/WPST/NJE	PLAYERS Flyaway	Trenton/Philly	Radio/Online	2	\$10,000.00	1,000,000	N/A	N/A
Via Air/WJLS	PLAYERS Flyaway	Beckley	Radio/Online	2	\$6,050.00	650,000	N/A	N/A
Frontier/FIOS (PBS)	Princeton Flyaway	Trenton	Opt-ins	2	N/A	N/A	101	\$4,047
Frontier/FIOS (PBS)	Princeton Flyaway	Trenton	TV/Online	2	\$18,000.00	1,800,000	N/A	N/A

MEDIA PARTNER	CAMPAIGN	MARKET	MEDIA	# WEEKS	MEDIA VALUE	IMPRES-SIONS	LEADS	LEAD VALUE*
Via Air/WKKT	Superfest Flyaway	Charlotte	Radio/Online	3	\$11,000.00	1,100,000	N/A	N/A
Via Air/WKKT	Summer Flyaway	Charlotte	Radio/Online	2	\$13,800.00	1,380,000	N/A	N/A

## FY15 KEY PROMO DATA POINTS

# PROMOTIONS	41
MEDIA VALUE	\$332,064
# IMPRESSIONS	21,546,319
# OPT-IN LEADS	2,638
LEAD VALUE	\$105,706
TOTAL VALUE	\$437,770

Note: 2015 avg lead gen cost of \$40.07(yearlong advertising cost per lead) applied as promo lead gen value.

- › **KPM:**Capitalize on Viva Florida's stated support of St. Augustine's 450th Commemoration by working together to secure at least one promotion or ad campaign funded by VISIT FLORIDA.

Viva Florida fully supported the 450th but through a cooperative program with the Florida Lottery and the City of St. Augustine rather than the proposed VCB "Win a Trip" promotions. In fact, the live Lottery drawing from the Celebrate 450! event was the stronger choice for all parties, delivering significant statewide exposure and solid endorsement value.

## 2. INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS

- › **Objective:** To develop vertically integrated aggregations of tactical support plans that, by design, function as a single coordinated unit focused on a common goal. VCB accomplished same as detailed below.
- › **Key Performance Measurement:** Development of three robust multi-dimensional marketing plans carrying a vertically integrated message that delivers significantly more impressions through the course of the campaign than traditional approaches with a single voice.

VCB developed integrated marketing plans for Nights of Lights, THE PLAYERS Championship and Celebrate 450! As expected, the comprehensive marketing plan developed for the 450 Commemoration and Celebrate 450! event dominated VCB marketing energies and, while the NOL and PLAYERS efforts were significant and impactful, the cohesiveness of the 450 plan was a model of synergy throughout the year, particularly with regard to the September celebration itself.



- › 450 Commemoration integrated marketing highlights:
  - › Celebrate 450! marketing generated Sept. 4–8 attendance of 123,000
  - › More than one billion impressions mentioning city's 450th in 2015
  - › International messaging reached 17 countries



#### 4. VCB BRAND DEVELOPMENT

- › **Objective:** Achieve and maintain, among our stakeholders, influencers and SJC general public, a strong awareness of the value of tourism to our community.

This was accomplished through a combination of focused messaging, aggressive outreach and effective support materials.

- › **Key Performance Measurements:**
  - › On May 27, produced a State of the Tourism Industry event attended by more than 450 tourism/hospitality stakeholders and VCB Partners, 29% over goal of 350.

- › Produced a summary presentation of the May 27 event that served as speaker support for presentations to 19 community groups over the following six months, 217% over goal of six.
- › Area speaking engagements included the following:
  - › A1A Scenic Hwy Assoc.
  - › Historic St. Augustine Kiwanis
  - › Junior Service League
  - › Kiwanis St. Augustine
  - › Rotary Northwest
  - › Rotary St. Augustine
  - › Rotary St. Johns
  - › Rotary Sunrise
  - › SA Amphitheatre Team
  - › SAAA (Attractions Association)
  - › SAB Civic Assoc.
  - › SAIRA (St. Augustine Restaurant Association)
  - › SJC Board of County Commissioners
  - › SJC Business Network
  - › SJC Cultural Council
  - › St. Augustine Neighborhood Councils
  - › St. Augustine Wedding/Events Assoc.
  - › Tourism Development Council
  - › SJC Chamber of Commerce Councils: Economic Development; HSAAC; PVB; Tourism & Hospitality

- › Overall campaign was selected by VISIT FLORIDA to receive the travel industry's most prestigious accolade, the Flagler Award, in the category of Tourism Advocacy.



## 5. **INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS**

Four potential programs were loosely described in the 2015 marketing plan:

- › Kids Tour Guide Program
- › 450 Years of Ghosts, Ouija Boards, etc.
- › America's Most Photogenic City
- › Conversion of the Day-Trippers

However, as the 450 Commemoration took center stage in 2015, these programs were replaced by other promotions focusing more specifically on the commemoration, such as the national “More In a Minute” guaranteed placement newsreel that reached more than 11 million television viewers. The above programs were placed on the shelf for future consideration when the VCB and select marketing partners are more able to develop and execute new programs. Indeed, 2–3 of these “shelf promotions” are in discussion with VCB partners as of this writing.

## SPECIAL EVENTS REPORT

### FY2015 MARKETING PLAN PAGES 98-102

**PREPARED BY ERIN MASTERS, SPECIAL EVENTS/DATABASE MANAGER AND BARBARA GOLDEN, COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER**

#### **Florida's Birding & Photo Fest: April 22-26, 2015**

Florida's Birding & Photo Fest is a birding and photography event featuring more than 168 seminars and field trips throughout SJC. This festival is unique in that it targets both birding enthusiasts and photographers, specifically nature and bird photographers, by providing a range of events for both groups.

Florida's Birding & Photo Fest, celebrating its 13th year in 2015, saw an 11% increase in attendance over 2014, with 742 attendees, resulting in direct tourism spending of \$563,794.

#### **Key Performance Measures**

- › Attendance surpassed goal by 12% (742 vs. 660)
- › Direct Visitor Spending surpassed goal by 8% (\$563,794 vs. \$522,000) based on survey results.

The attendance and spending data reflect two influences:

1. Early release of scheduled events
2. More variety of field workshops and reprise of popular workshops such as Birds of Prey and Horses on the Beach field photography

#### **Key Findings for 2015**

- › 91% of attendees said that Photo Fest was their primary reason for visiting FHC
- › 80% said they will likely return next year
- › 69% were from out of the region/out of state
- › 81% of attendees participated two or more days
- › 56% stayed in hotels/motels, campgrounds, condos, or B&Bs in FHC

Non-Festival Activities included the following:

- › 93% dined out
- › 49% visited historic district
- › 45% visited beaches
- › 44% visited state parks
- › 21% visited Ponte Vedra Beach
- › 11% visited outlet malls
- › 23% visited museums/paid attractions

Source: Post-event survey of Festival attendees (742 sent; 41% responded)

## **FY2015 Annual Report for Flavors of Florida's Historic Coast October 2014**

In order to capture more of the growing culinary travel business, Flavors of Florida's Historic Coast was created as a month-long program designed to raise awareness of the area's local cuisine while enticing visitors to experience the exceptional flavors offered by local dining establishments. Each October since 2010, participating restaurants have provided month-long prix fixe menus that feature their signature dishes on [www.HistoricCoastFlavors.com](http://www.HistoricCoastFlavors.com) as well as via other media outlets.

### **FY2015 KEY PERFORMANCE MEASURES FOR (October 2014)**

- › Increase earned media impressions about Flavors by 5% to 17.7 million (print, online & broadcast).

The VCB distributed press releases with Flavors messaging from August through October.

- › 8 million media impressions about dining on Florida's Historic Coast through online, print and broadcast news outlets before, during and after the Flavors promotion.
- › 1,577,250 advertorial impressions
- › Nearly 3 million impressions resulting from social media posts (multiple Facebook and Twitter posts)
- › More than 2.4 million impressions from e-blasts: VCB's consumer database (60,000) Eventful.com (157,054), Living Social National (2.2million)
- › Messaging about the October 2014 Flavors of Florida's Historic Coast resulted in 14,899,623 earned media impressions, 18% below the projected 17,000,000 goal, but 7% over FY2014 total impressions earned.
- › Secure 25 participating restaurants.

Twenty-eight restaurants participated in the Flavors month-long promotion, 12% over goal and 22% over previous year.

- › Increase traffic to [HistoricCoastFlavors.com](http://HistoricCoastFlavors.com) by 10% to 5,764.

With 7,657 visitors and 24,608 page views, traffic to the promotional website [HistoricCoastFlavors.com](http://HistoricCoastFlavors.com) increased 33% over goal (5,764) and 46% over previous year.



- › Arrange five appearances by local chefs on regional television magazine programs.

There were eight broadcast appearances by local chefs talking about Flavors and dining on FHC, 60% over goal.

- › Two airings in Atlanta with WGCL's Wallace Parker
  - › Two appearances on WJCT Morning Show in Tallahassee
  - › Four appearances on First Coast News/Good Morning Jacksonville
- › Attendance of 600 people at the Top Chef Cook-Off.

There was a total attendance of 449 people at the October 21, 2014, Flavors Top Chef Cook-Off – 25% under goal and 7% less than previous year.

- › Raise \$6,600 to benefit Home Again St. Johns (10% more than FY2014).

The VCB Flavors Top Chef Cook-Off event raised \$7,662 to benefit Home Again St. Johns 16% over the \$6,600 goal and 28% over previous year.

## **SALES DEPARTMENT REPORT**

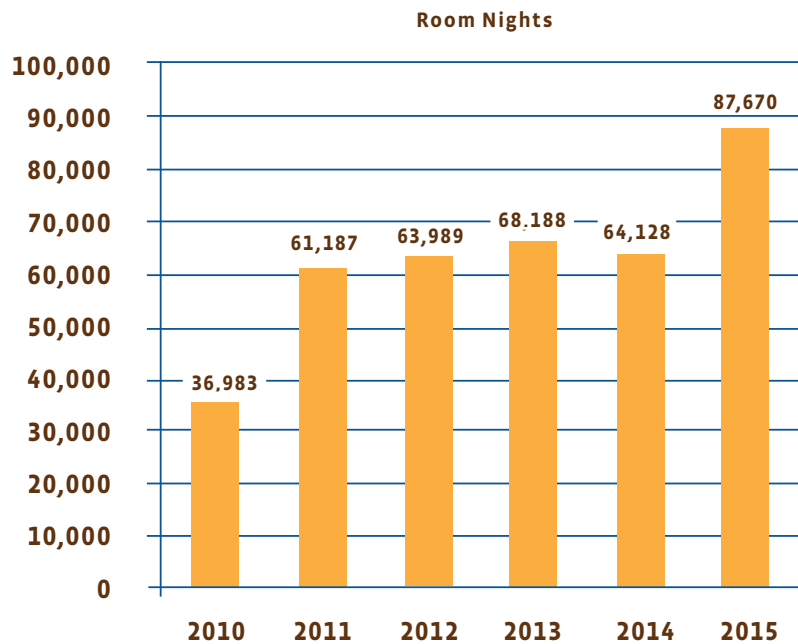
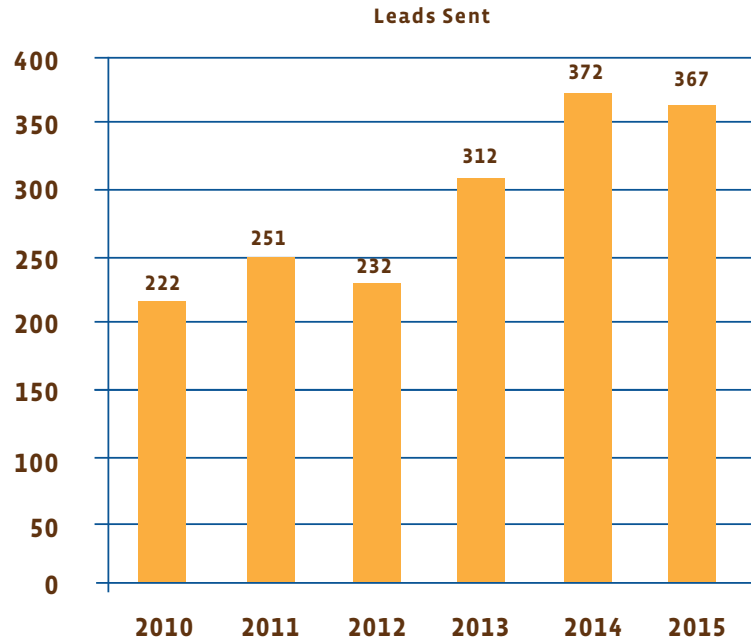
### **FY2015 MARKETING PLAN PAGES 47- 62**

**PREPARED BY EVELYN VAZQUEZ, DIRECTOR OF LEISURE SALES / GLENN GRAHAM,  
DIRECTOR OF CONFERENCE SALES / JAYA LARKIN, SALES & SERVICES MANAGER**

### **FY2015 KEY PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

#### **Combined Sales Leads and Room Nights**

- › FY15 Objective:
  - › Source 303 leads representing 65,520 Room Nights
- › FY15 Accomplishment:
  - › 367 leads or 21% greater than goal, representing 87,670 Room Nights or 34% above goal
- › FY15 Wholesale Room Night Objective:
  - › 100,000 Room Nights
- › FY15 Accomplishment:
  - › 106,455, or 6% above goal



## **COMBINED SALES CALLS/EMAILS**

- › FY15 Objective:
  - › Make 1638 prospecting calls/emails
- › FY15 Accomplishment:
  - › 1833 prospecting calls/emails recorded, or 12% above goal

## **Combined FAMs and Site Visits – 127 for the year**

During FY15, the Sales Department hosted approximately 127 meeting planners, tour operators, travel agents, group leaders and brides.

## **SALES DEPARTMENT INITIATIVES**

### **Internet Destination Sales System (iDSS)**

Ongoing training continues throughout the year providing education to both staff and stakeholders in using iDSS to its maximum capacity. In all there were five Partners who had one-on-one training, twenty five Partners who were helped over the phone and there were two administrative training sessions where VCB staff received additional training.

### **Databases**

In FY15, the department managed several email databases, including one of 850 travel agents and a 90+ residents list of The Villages. With upcoming travel agent webinars, sales missions and academy, we expect to double the travel agent database for FY16 to make up the drop in FY15.

iDSS is the Customer Relation Management (CRM) tool used for tracking meeting and leisure group planners from all market segments. This tool makes it possible to send out special offers and event notices to meeting professionals on a timely basis.

### **Combined Sales Initiatives – 48 for the year**

There were 43 sales initiatives originally planned, then seven were added (two were cancelled; one was replaced by a new show). The additional shows allowed the sales team to introduce more meeting professionals to SAPVB, at less investment. These changes were made for a variety of reasons, including unforeseen date conflicts with other initiatives, staff availability and budget concerns. Mainly, it was felt new opportunities that arose during the course of the year presented a greater return on investment, borne out by the performance on KPMs.

## MEETINGS & INCENTIVE

Meeting Focus LIVE	New Orleans, LA	Sep 21-24, 2014
Small Market Meetings Tradeshow	Mesa, AZ	Sep 28-Oct 1, 2014
IMEX America w/VISIT FLORIDA	Las Vegas, NV	Oct 13-17, 2014
Meeting Focus LIVE	Ponte Vedra, FL	Nov 2-5, 2014
M & C Interact Tradeshow - National	Portland, OR	Nov 9-12, 2014
Meeting Masters	Orlando, FL	Nov 19-23, 2014
Florida Encounter	Ft Lauderdale, FL	Dec 3-6, 2014
Assn Exec's of NC Tradeshow	Raleigh, NC	Dec 10-12, 2014
Xsite Tradeshow (FSAE, TSAE, MPI)	Tallahassee, FL	Feb 17-18, 2015
M & C Interact Tradeshow - Florida (Replaced Smart Meetings Show, Charlotte, NC)	Palm Beach, FL	Apr 12-15, 2015
DMAI Destination Showcase	Washington, DC	Mar 24-26, 2015
Ind. Planner Education Conf. (IPEC)	Las Vegas, NV	Apr 19-22, 2015
TPC Meeting Planner FAM	SAPV, FL	May 6-10, 2015
HelmsBriscoe Annual Business Conference	Las Vegas, NV	May 17-20, 2015
Collaborate Tradeshow	Orlando, FL	Jun 11-14, 2015
SMART Meetings Tradeshow	Washington, DC	Jul 22-24, 2015
Successful Meetings Tradeshow	Ft Lauderdale, FL	Aug 9-12, 2015
Connect Tradeshow	Pittsburgh, PA	Aug 27-30, 2015
M & C Interact Tradeshow - National (Show Added)	New Orleans, LA	Aug 30-Sep 2, 2015
Small Market Meetings Tradeshow (Show Added)	Little Rock, AR	Sept 27-30, 2015

## SPECIALTY & EXECUTIVE GROUP EVENTS & MARKETS

National Coalition of Black Meeting Planners	Cincinnati, OH	Nov 12 -16, 2014
VF I-95 Welcome Center Festival	Yulee, FL	Jan 30, 2015
Savannah Bridal Expo	Savannah, GA	Feb 8, 2015
My Shadi Bridal Expo & Sales Calls	Atlanta, GA	Mar 1, 2015
TRI-Base Travel Show	Mayport & Kings Bay	Mar 12-14, 2015
SGMP EDU-Day	Gainesville, FL	Mar 19, 2015
MPI EDU-CON Day	St. Augustine, FL	Apr 13, 2015

#### SPECIALTY & EXECUTIVE GROUP EVENTS & MARKETS

MPI Board Retreat (Event Added)	Jacksonville, FL	Apr 14-15, 2015
The PLAYERS Fam (Military Appreciation Day)	Ponte Vedra	May 5-7, 2015
MPI Georgia Chapter Tradeshow	Atlanta, GA	May 12-13, 2015
VF I-10 Welcome Center Festival @ Sales Calls	Pensacola, FL	Jun 5, 2015
Tampa Bay Bridal Show @ Sales Calls	Tampa, FL	Jun 14, 2015
Home Education Resource @ Information (Show Added_)	Jacksonville, FL	Jul 24-25, 2015
MPI 23rd SE Regional Conference	Tampa, FL	Aug 26-29, 2015
Reunion Friendly Network	Clinton, MD	Sept 8-10, 2015
Reunion Friendly Network	Chattanooga, TN	Oct 19-21, 2015

#### LEISURE SALES-DOMESTIC & INTERNATIONAL

20th Annual Ed HMP Conf/Tradeshow Show was cancelled		
Rejuvenate Marketplace	Atlanta	Oct 28-30, 2014
World Travel Market (Show Added)	London	Nov 1-7, 2014
Florida Huddle	Ft. Lauderdale, FL	Jan 14-16, 2015
NTA @ UMA Motorcoach Travel Exchange	New Orleans, LA	Jan 18-22, 2015
Diversity Summit	Anaheim, CA	Jan 25-27, 2015
RSAA	Las Vegas	Feb 3-4, 2015
Player's Championship Tournament Fam	SA/PV	May 7-10, 2015
IPW	Orlando, FL	May 30-June 3, 2015
Post IPW Fam Tour	SA/PV	Jun-15
Going on Faith (Show Added)	South Bend, IN	Aug 4-6, 2015
VMA/NCMA/MCASC	Columbia, SC	Aug 20-23, 2015
SYTA Waiting for 2016 when show is in Orlando	Branson, MO	Aug 26-Sept 1
Travel Agent Sales Mission---NY	Long Island, NY	Jul 27-30, 2015
Reunion Friendly Network	Clinton, MD	Sept 8-10, 2015
Reunion Friendly Network	Chattanooga, TN	Oct 19-21, 2015

## **PARTNERSHIPS AND INDUSTRY PROGRAMS REPORT FY2015**

### **LOCAL INDUSTRY PROGRAMS OVERVIEW**

The VCB develops business sessions to empower and educate the St. Johns County tourism industry about opportunities in the marketplace.

#### **Key Membership Programs**

- › May 27 – State of the Industry Report with guest speaker Peter Yesawich of MMGY Global
- › September 24 – VCB Annual Meeting
- › October 6, 2015 – Co-op workshop outlining upcoming advertising opportunities (Due to the 450th Birthday Celebration, the co-op workshop was pushed into FY2015)
- › Weekly PartnerCom emails average open rate of 30% for 2015, down from 35% in 2014 (format revised in FY2016 to make emails more mobile friendly)

#### **VCB Partnerships**

The growth in partnership was flat in 2015 (288 vs. 288).

#### **Additionally in 2015**

- › The VCB conducted 39 partnership orientations during which Partners were given usernames and passwords and shown how to update their profiles on the VCB's industry partner site, [www.sapvb.org](http://www.sapvb.org).
- › 26 new Partners were approved.

## TOURISTIC DEVELOPMENT REPORT

### FY2015

#### TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

This section reports on efforts to encourage, initiate and/or facilitate the development of touristic infrastructure and services for the fiscal year. The reader will find that there are frequently few if any details when proprietary business activities are involved. Such is the nature of business and economic development work.

Also, there will be no key performance measures tied back to the marketing plan, as this VCB function, while mentioned in the contract with the county, is not a graded marketing performance metric.

#### Initiatives Completed in FY2015

- › Compiled, consulted with and distributed tourism-related information to four hotel development groups and one attraction developer for development, redevelopment and/or purchase of hotels and attractions in St. Johns County
- › Assisted Northeast Florida Regional Airport (NFRA) with the solicitation, introduction and promotion of new air service by Via Air service to Charlotte, NC, and Beckley, WV, as well as ongoing support for Frontier Airlines – Princeton, NJ, in FY2015
- › Compiled tourism-related information and consulted with two other air carriers for the purpose of adding or starting service to NFRA and JIA—all work was done in conjunction with NFRA and JAA senior staff
- › Actively participated in the Horizon Group, a team of business and government leaders who work on Economic Development opportunities for SJC
- › Participated in and supported with tourism data and research City of St. Augustine/St. Augustine Beach shuttle transportation considerations
- › Continued to work closely with St. Johns County Chamber, St. Johns County Cultural Council and JaxUSA on tourism-related economic development opportunities
- › Continued to work with JaxSports Authority and Florida's First Coast of Golf on pitching sporting events in the region