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## **Lee County Visitor & Convention Bureau to launch new consumer advertising campaign**

*VCB rolls out print ads, destination video with television, online ads to follow*

LEE COUNTY, FL – The Lee County Visitor & Convention Bureau (VCB) unveiled the first elements of a new consumer advertising campaign at this morning’s meeting of the Tourist Development Council (TDC).

The new campaign -- which will roll out to consumers this March – consists of three new print executions; two new television ads, each with a 60-second and 30-second version; two innovative online advertising executions; and a four-minute destination brand video for sales purposes. The VCB showcased the print and video executions at the TDC meeting and will roll out the television and online advertisements later this month. The campaign, which will appear in out-of-state markets in the winter and spring and in-state in the summer and fall, is part of the VCB’s nearly \$9 million annual advertising budget.

“Today’s consumers face unprecedented choices when it comes to vacation travel, and we want to continue to attract our share of visitors with stand-out creative campaigns that are true to our brand,” said Tamara Pigott, VCB interim executive director. “To stay in the forefront of consumers’ minds, we must refresh our advertising campaign on a regular basis.”

The three new print advertisements showcased at today’s TDC meeting extend the destination’s current campaign, which features compelling images of the destination imbedded in ordinary objects to position the area as Florida’s unspoiled island sanctuary -- where visitors can reconnect with themselves and loved ones. The campaign already has won numerous creative awards, and Pigott said the VCB hopes to garner additional awards with the latest three ads.

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In one, the headline reads “Welcome to island time” and features an image imbedded within an hour glass of a couple relaxing on a beach. A second ad leads with the headline, “Nature has a way of refreshing the soul” and spotlights a scene within a water bottle of a couple riding bikes on a boardwalk beneath Cypress trees. The third ad features a photo imbedded within a piggybank of two children running towards a beach with the headline, “Memories become more valuable as time goes by.”

Similar in nature to the print ads, the new brand promotional video that the VCB unveiled today showcases a wide variety of compelling destination scenes. The emotion-invoking scenes were captured last December as part of a video shoot to secure b-roll of the destination for a variety of publicity and promotional purposes.

The VCB’s new television ads were filmed at roughly the same time as the b-roll video and will be completed in mid-February for airing in March in select feeder markets that include Cincinnati, Columbus, St. Louis, Orlando and Fort Lauderdale. The ads engender a sense of family and connection with a highly emotional appeal captured through intimate moments of connection between people interacting in the destination’s natural setting.

The soon-to-be-completed online ads extend the destination brand into digital media with a break-through creative execution of a wave washing over a viewer’s computer screen to reveal a destination message. The highly realistic imagery is expected to garner the desired click-through rates to the destination’s consumer Web site. The ads are scheduled to appear on the front pages of the travel, weather, sports and life channels of [www.USAToday.com](http://www.USAToday.com) and include a mix of high-impact, high visibility rich media ads as well as a sustaining standard banner program to help build the campaign’s reach to more than 5.4 million impressions.

While the travel and weather channels are an obvious fit for the destination brand, the life channel skews more heavily female; and research indicates that women typically drive the travel planning process. Exposure on the sports channel is timed to coincide with the NCAA basketball tournaments and March Madness. The standard banner program will run across the entire Web site and be geo-targeted to the primary markets of Chicago, Boston, New York, Detroit, Philadelphia, Cleveland, Minneapolis, St. Louis and Milwaukee.

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Copies of the newly released print ads and brand promotional video are available for viewing on the VCB's industry partner Web site at [www.LeeVCB.com](http://www.LeeVCB.com); and the television commercials and online campaign will be added to the site when completed later this month.

“There is a numbing sea of sameness in communications messages,” said Pigott. “It’s particularly hard to stand out from the crowd in Florida, but we think our new consumer campaign does a great job of bringing our destination to life to pique consumer interest in visiting us.”

### **About the Lee County Visitor & Convention Bureau**

The Lee County Visitor & Convention Bureau (VCB) serves as the lead marketing and promotional agency for Lee County tourism. Its primary role is to brand the area as The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel with the mission of serving the broader interests of the area’s economy by acting as an industry leader to: 1) market the entire area globally, 2) facilitate travel to the area, and 3) preserve and protect the area’s unique attributes for the continual benefit of its residents and the travel and tourism industry.

The VCB functions as an agency of county government funded by the 5 percent tourist tax on short-term accommodations, commonly known as the bed tax. The organization reports to the county manager and has a nine-member TDC that is appointed as an Advisory Committee to the county’s Board of County Commissioners. TDC members oversee the tourist development tax fund, provide direction on the VCB’s programs and budget, and review the organization’s expenditures.