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## **The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel kicks off *Summer Sanctuary* program to spotlight attractions, special deals**

LEE COUNTY, FL – The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel on southwest Florida’s Gulf Coast is about to launch its first *Summer Sanctuary* program to entice summer visitation to the destination.

From May through August 2009, the unspoiled island sanctuary is spotlighting its unique attractions and vacation adventures with exceptional vacation packages for consumers to enjoy.

“Summer is one of the best times of year to visit our destination because travelers can live like a local, enjoy a laid-back lifestyle and embrace calm both internally and externally,” said Suya Davenport, executive director of the Lee County Visitor & Convention Bureau, which markets the destination for leisure and group business. “We have fewer crowds and more peace and quiet for visitors, not to mention the extraordinary weather and breathtaking sunsets. It all makes for a classic summer vacation.”

Visitors during *Summer Sanctuary* can soak up the sun on more than 50 miles of white, sand beaches; revel in some of the world’s best shelling beaches featuring more than 400 species; hop a cruise or water taxi and marvel at bottlenose dolphins and manatees in the wild; witness a sea turtle release by the local non-profit organization Turtle Time; go island hopping among the area’s more than 100 coastal islands; catch a snook, tarpon or redfish while fishing off piers, bridges or beaches; enjoy waterfront rentals like Hobie cats and wave runners; meander through quaint art galleries; shop at a wide assortment of shopping spots; and watch the sun set from picturesque, waterfront restaurants.

In addition, summer visitors can discover some of the area’s unique attractions by learning to sail at Colgate’s Offshore Sailing School; exploring history at the Edison & Ford Winter Estates; viewing migratory birds and other wildlife at the J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge, the largest undeveloped mangrove ecosystems in the United States; visiting the Sanibel Lighthouse and the Boca Grande Lighthouse, true area landmarks; getting close to nature on the 190-mile Great Calusa Blueway Paddling Trail; and soaking in the breathtaking beauty of Lovers Key State Park.

Visitors to The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel can take advantage of *Summer Sanctuary* vacation packages at 20 participating properties. Offers start at \$99 per night and include such perks as local attraction tickets, shopping gift cards, spa treatments, beach gear, and meals. Some restrictions apply.

Those interested in visiting The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel to enjoy its *Summer Sanctuary* can log onto [www.FortMyers-Sanibel.com](http://www.FortMyers-Sanibel.com) for complete details on all featured attractions, adventures, and vacation packages, or they can call (800) 237-6444.

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**EDITOR'S NOTE:** *The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel in southwest Florida includes: Sanibel Island, Captiva Island, Fort Myers Beach, Fort Myers, Bonita Spring, Estero, Cape Coral, Pine Island, Boca Grande & Outer islands, North Fort Myers, Lehigh Acres. Images available upon request.*