

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 2010

Contacts: Nancy Hamilton or Katie Meckley (239) 338-3500
Jackie MacKay, BVK, (407) 814-0014 or (407) 496-1770

The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel continues destination's meetings incentive

Special Islands Incentive good through 2013

LEE COUNTY, FL – Based on a positive response from meeting planners, The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel is continuing its destination meetings incentive first introduced in 2008 to offer significantly reduced costs for meeting planners and to provide them with one more reason to bring their meeting to the southwest Florida destination.

The *Islands Incentive* gives meeting planners the opportunity to receive a 5 percent credit – up to a maximum of \$5,000 – of the total actualized room revenue to be used toward any meeting or conference taking place in the Fort Myers/Sanibel area between May 1, 2011 and Dec. 15, 2011. In addition, meetings booked in 2010 or 2011 that occur between May 1, 2012 and Dec. 12, 2013, excluding February through April, will also receive a 5 percent credit.

“With the economy continuing to affect the bottom line of many meeting budgets, planners are seeking destinations that are affordable and accessible without cutting back on amenities,” said Tamara Pigott, executive director of the Lee County Visitor & Convention Bureau (VCB), which markets The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel. “So we’re continuing our destination incentive through 2013 to respond to industry demand and send a clear message that we welcome meetings business and are fully prepared to meet planners’ needs.”

To qualify, planners must book a minimum of 25 rooms per night for three or more consecutive nights at a destination property. The offer applies to new bookings and meetings that have not already been contracted and does not apply to weddings or social groups. Destination properties must have at least 2,500 square feet of meeting facilities, and actualized room revenue

-MORE-

The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel continues destination meetings incentive/Page 2

will be calculated based on group pick-up at the conclusion of the meeting or conference. The offer is subject to availability, and reimbursement will be issued by the VCB at the conclusion of the meeting.

In addition to its *Islands Incentive*, the destination is helping to address habitat loss and climate change by continuing to make donations to The Conservation Fund's Go ZeroSM program to offset the carbon footprint of meetings in the destination. Specifically, the VCB is donating to The Conservation Fund 100 percent of the cost of offsetting the CO₂ emissions that result from any event within the destination, including out-of-area attendee travel, facility energy use and off-site functions. The VCB already offsets its own events with the Fund and is encouraging meeting properties and meeting planners to do the same.

Details of both offers are available at the destination's meetings website at www.FortMyersSanibelMeetings.com. In addition to providing information on the destination's booking incentives for meetings on The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel, the website gives planners information on properties and their respective meeting space, green meeting options, the latest meeting news and more. Planners also can contact any participating meeting property in the destination for details.

The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel offers a variety of meeting room options via its many hotels and resorts. A total of 256,129 square feet of meeting space is available throughout the county, with area properties offering from 600 square feet up to 73,000 square feet at one venue. There also are meeting options in myriad off-site venues, including one-of-a-kind museums, parks and other attractions. The area offers a full range of properties from inexpensive motels to idyllic cottages to condominiums and full-service resort properties. Many are located within 30 minutes of Southwest Florida International Airport (RSW), featuring 20 carriers making non-stop flights to 41 domestic and three international destinations.

-30-

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel include: Sanibel Island, Captiva Island, Fort Myers Beach, Fort Myers, Bonita Springs, Estero, Cape Coral, Pine Island, Boca Grande & Outer islands, North Fort Myers, Lehigh Acres. Meeting-themed images available upon request.*