

TOURIST DEVELOPMENT

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OKALOOSA COUNTY, FLORIDA**

SERVICE AREA: CULTURE/RECREATION

DEPARTMENT/PROGRAM: TOURIST DEVELOPMENT

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION: Okaloosa Tourist Development is responsible for a unified marketing strategy and visitor service program that promotes awareness of the Emerald Coast as a tourist destination to increase overall visitation and lodging facility occupancy in the southern Okaloosa County areas of Destin, Fort Walton Beach, Okaloosa Island, Mary Esther, and Cinco Bayou.

REVENUE: Tourist Development is funded by the Tourist Development Trust Fund, specifically the 2nd and 5th cents of the Tourist Development Tax on short term rentals.

EXPENDITURES:

Category	Expenditures		Budget	
	FY12 Actual \$	FY13 Actual \$	FY14 Original \$	FY15 Approved \$
Personal Services	520,838	591,854	529,394	553,077
Operating Expenses	3,398,214	4,014,426	3,216,138	3,931,473
Capital Outlay	47,445	53,313	4,000	44,000
Grants & Aids	7,500	526,135	551,536	519,157
Transfers Out	0	0	551,536	519,157
Reserves	0	0	6,067,396	6,098,136
Total	3,973,997	5,185,728	10,920,000	11,665,000

HISTORICAL STAFFING SUMMARY:

Category	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15
Full-time	8	8	7	7
Part-Time	2	2	2	4
Total	10	10	9	11

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS LAST YEAR:

- Launched a new Let's Go #Emerald Coasting campaign to showcase the destination's active, varied, and unpretentious atmosphere.
- Updated the Emerald Coast leisure website (www.emeraldcoastfl.com) with the new campaign theme and added user-friendly navigation icons on the site.
- Launched an Instagram campaign.
- Produced two new television commercials, one feature families and one featuring couples
- Produced four new, seasonal radio commercials.
- Received several advertising awards:
 - Reader's Choice Award for Best Meeting Place in the South, Emerald Coast Convention Center
 - Trip Advisor named the Emerald Coast one of the "Top Ten Destinations on the Rise"
 - FlipKey recognized Destin in the "Top 10 Best Gulf Beaches"
 - Gold Addy for the 2013-14 Emerald Coast Visitors Guide Cover
 - Silver Addy for the entire Emerald Coast Visitors Guide
 - Silver Addy for the Emerald Coast Visitors Guide Dining 2-page editorial section

PROGRAM GOAL: Conduct proactive and productive sales, marketing, advertising, public relations, communications, and social networking initiatives to enhance economic growth for the area through increased visitation and tourism.

KEY OBJECTIVES:

1. Increase the monthly bed tax collections revenue and monthly lodging occupancy percentages each month over previous years.
2. Regain market share.
3. Increase sales leads and actual bookings by aggressively soliciting and marketing the SMERF (Social, Military, Educational, Religious, and Fraternal), Motor Coach, Family Reunion, Association, and Government organizations.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES:

Performance Measures		Actual FY12/13	Estimated FY13/14	Adopted FY14/15
Output	Booked Groups	224	271	298
	Number of Trade Shows Attended by Sales Staff	24	25	25
	Number Sales Missions and FAMS	4	8	8
Effectiveness	Annual Tourist Development Tax Revenues	\$13.5M	\$13.3M	\$13.4M
	Social Media Fans/Followers – Facebook	N/A	453,000	500,000
	Social Media Fans/Followers – Twitter	N/A	4,900	5,900
	Social Media Fans/Followers – Pinterest	N/A	470	750
	Social Media Fans/Followers – Instagram	N/A	232	750
Reserves	Operations	N/A	N/A	35%
	Beach Restoration	N/A	N/A	\$2.0M
	Promotional Activities	N/A	N/A	261%

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OKALOOSA COUNTY, FLORIDA**

SERVICE AREA: CULTURE/RECREATION

DEPARTMENT/PROGRAM: TOURIST DEVELOPMENT - BEACHES & PARKS

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION: Maintenance, restoration, and improvements of beaches and beach facilities; maintenance and improvements of waterfront parks within the taxing district; and support for an artificial reef program and ecotourism opportunities.

REVENUE: Beaches and parks maintenance and improvements are funded by the Tourist Development Trust Fund, specifically the 1st cent of the Tourist Development Tax on short term rentals, as well as by a special assessment of certain properties.

EXPENDITURES:

Category	Expenditures		Budget	
	FY12 Actual \$	FY13 Actual \$	FY14 Original \$	FY15 Approved \$
Personal Services	77,363	0	146,419	141,611
Operating Expenses	230,735	312,711	901,866	524,882
Capital Outlay	0	0	1,650,000	2,000,000
Grants & Aids	0	6,395,000	15,000	438,530
Transfer Out	0	1,227,572	804,193	1,498,756
Reserves	0	0	6,852,522	5,512,721
Total	308,098	7,935,283	10,370,000	10,116,500

HISTORICAL STAFFING SUMMARY:

Category	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15
Full-time	1	1	2	2
Part-Time	0	0	0	0
Relief	0	0	0	0
Total	1	1	2	2

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS LAST YEAR:

- Began environmental permitting for Veterans Park Baywalk project.
- Began Phase II, upland environmental permitting for Veterans Park.
- Continued design and permitting of artificial reefs.
- Began design work for development of Beach Freeways 4, 5, & 6.
- Began permitting process for six, near shore snorkel reef sites.
- Secured \$1 million in the United States Army Corps of Engineers work plan for maintenance dredging of East Pass.
- Awarded a DEP grant for the construction of six public dune walkovers on Okaloosa Island.
- Pending award of Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation grants for the construction of artificial reefs.
- Submitted a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant for Baywalk living shorelines project.

PROGRAM GOAL:

Protect Okaloosa County and City of Destin beaches through regular cleaning and raking, periodic beach restoration, and sea turtle monitoring. Enhance these assets through improvements in the form of waterfront parks, public access, artificial, reefs and other tourist related projects. Seek long-term beach restoration and Federal funding through the Federal Shore Protection Program.

KEY OBJECTIVES:

1. Provide clean, well-maintained, and quality beaches and waterfront parks that offer facilities, amenities, landscaping, and improvements that enhance the environmental experience for visitors.
2. Protect nesting sea turtles.
3. Secure Congressional/US Army Corp of Engineers funding for Feasibility Study phase of the Federal Shore Protection Project.
4. Expand and enhance artificial reef and ecotourism programs.

The following projects are planned for FY 2015:

- Construct improvements at beach access points 4, 5, and 6.
- Construct six dune walkovers between R-2 and R-10 on Okaloosa Island.
- Construct multiple artificial reefs to support the fishing and diving industry.
- Construct 2 near shore snorkeling reefs.
- Begin construction of Baywalk living shorelines project and upland improvements to Veterans Park.
- Deploy boat Tenneco as diving reef.
- Assist City of Destin in securing long term funding for maintenance dredging of East Pass Federal Navigation Project.
- Work with Eglin AFB and neighboring Counties to establish a program to use “materials of opportunity” to construct artificial reefs.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES:

Performance Measures		Actual FY12/13	Estimated FY13/14	Adopted FY14/15
Effectiveness	Capital Improvements – Beaches	N/A	\$750K	\$1.06M
	Capital Improvements – Parks	N/A	\$750K	\$777K
	Capital Improvements – Reefs	N/A	\$150K	\$225K
	Grant Funding Obtained for Improvements	N/A	\$246K	\$4.1M
Reserves	Operations	N/A	N/A	35%
	Beach Restoration	N/A	N/A	\$2.4M
	East Pass Dredging	N/A	N/A	\$2.0M

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
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SERVICE AREA: CULTURE/RECREATION

DEPARTMENT/PROGRAM: TOURIST DEVELOPMENT - CONVENTION CENTER

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION: The Emerald Coast Convention Center (ECCC) provides economic impact to the tourism and general businesses of Okaloosa County. The convention center's mission is to provide a professional service team, exquisite food service, and a spotlessly clean and safe environment for meetings, conventions, trade shows, public entertainment and all types of special event activities.

REVENUE: The Convention Center is funded by the Tourist Development Trust Fund, specifically the 3rd and 4th cents of the Tourist Development Tax on short term rentals, as well as by revenues generated by functions held at the convention center.

EXPENDITURES:

Category	Expenditures		Budget	
	FY12 Actual \$	FY13 Actual \$	FY14 Original \$	FY15 Approved \$
Personal Services	972,550	912,066	1,295,517	1,342,052
Operating Expenses	2,967,558	2,146,234	3,350,575	2,363,120
Capital Outlay	187,153	94,764	5,620,375	3,263,058
Debt Service	106,988	0	155,000	0
Grants & Aids	250,000	0	0	0
Transfer Out	532,051	428,126	0	0
Reserves	0	0	2,256,283	6,167,770
Total	5,016,300	3,581,190	12,677,750	13,136,000

HISTORICAL STAFFING SUMMARY:

Category	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15
Full-time	19	19	24	26
Part-Time	2	2	2	2
Relief	0	0	0	0
Total	21	21	26	28

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS LAST YEAR:

- Conducted and serviced 215 functions at the ECCC, generating an estimated economic impact of \$15M to the County.
- Completed construction and held a grand opening for Bayview Plaza, a new 30,000 square foot exhibition area and outdoor venue that will further expand the flexibility and marketability of the convention center.
- Finalized design and approval for Porte Cocheres at the main and south entrances.

PROGRAM GOAL: Provide a clean, safe, and well-maintained conference and convention facility for visitors, local clients, and guests to create economic impact and opportunities for local functions. Provide necessary performance data to the Tourist Development Director, Tourist Development Council, and Board of County Commissioners.

KEY OBJECTIVES:

1. Ensure that all functions of the ECCC comply with county policies and procedures.
2. Improve sales for all revenue streams available to the center.
3. Provide all data necessary for a profitable and successful marketing campaign.
4. Provide exemplary service, facilities, food service, and technical services to all clients to promote re-bookings of existing clients and recommendation of the center by existing clients to new clients.

The following projects are planned for FY 2015:

- Begin construction of Porte Cocheres at the main and south entrances to facilitate entrance and exit of the building in inclement weather.
- Expand loading dock to alleviate problems unloading and loading of tradeshow exhibits. The current dock size does not allow fork lift access for large exhibits to be used.
- Replace carpeting in ballrooms.
- Renovate hard floor surfaces.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES:

Performance Measures		Actual FY12/13	Estimated FY13/14	Adopted FY14/15
Output	Number of Trade Shows Attended by Sales Staff	N/A	N/A	14
	Number of Functions Held	215	220	225
	Revenues Generated by Functions	\$804,094	\$822,750	\$861,000
Effectiveness	Revenue Per Function	\$3,740	\$3,740	\$3,827
Reserves	Operations	N/A	N/A	35%
	Beach Restoration	N/A	N/A	\$0
	Insured Loss Deductible	N/A	N/A	\$1.5M