

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Association executives group names Lee County VCB supporting organization of the year

LEE COUNTY, FL – The Tallahassee Society of Association Executives (TSAE) presented The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel in southwest Florida with the Supporting Organization of the Year award for 2011. The award recognizes organizations that have displayed outstanding commitment and dedication to their communities, as well as excellence and innovation in efforts to positively affect their industry. Last year’s recipient was Hilton Worldwide.

VCB Tourism Sales Manager Kimball Mathews, who serves as the Lee County Visitor & Convention Bureau’s (VCB) representative to TSAE, has been a long-time member and supporter. Mathews promotes Lee County as a destination to meetings for the Southeastern U.S. territory. She has been with the VCB since 1998. When asked her reaction to the award, Mathews stated: “It would not have been possible without the support of all of our local industry partners.”

The VCB has been an active member of TSAE since 1983. The TSAE is an 800 member organization that promotes and acknowledges the achievements and efforts of Florida groups and associations. It also provides various awards and scholarships.

Through its promotional, marketing and communications efforts the VCB has promoted the Fort Myers/Sanibel Island area as one of Florida’s premier tourist destinations. Working with media from around the world, the VCB aims to highlight the destination’s unique nature and history-based attractions, making tourism the most vital industry in Lee County. The VCB’s mission statement is: “to serve the broader interests of the economy of Lee County by acting as an industry leader to market the entire area globally, facilitate travel to the area, and to preserve and protect the area’s unique attributes for the continual benefit of its residents and travel and tourism industry.”

The VCB has demonstrated its commitment to the local community through involvement in local projects, such as a partnership with The Conservation Fund’s Go Zero Program, which works to offset the carbon footprint of meetings in the destination. The VCB has donated more than \$12,600 to the program, which funded the planting of 1,508 native seedlings across America.

The VCB has also established programs such as TEAM Tourism, Guests First©, and the Tourism Ambassador Program. These programs provide informational workshops and networking opportunities for the industry and their community partners. The goal of the programs is to strengthen community connections, build teamwork and promote the importance of customer service excellence. Other initiatives, such as the Chrysalis Awards, the Junonia Award, Elaine McLaughlin Outstanding Hospitality Service Awards (“E” Awards), all honor business and tourism partners for their contributions to the Lee County community.

To learn more about The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel, visit www.FortMyers-Sanibel.com.

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