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Lee County Visitor & Convention Bureau

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The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel receives Florida's prestigious tourism marketing awards

LEE COUNTY, FL – The Lee County Visitor & Convention Bureau (VCB) earned two Silver Awards, presented at the 48th annual Florida Governor's Conference on Tourism at the Tampa Convention Center on Aug. 31.

The Flagler Awards program, sponsored by Visit Florida, the official tourism marketing organization for the state, and the Florida Commission on Tourism, is designed to recognize outstanding tourism marketing in Florida. Every year, the Flagler Awards honor many individuals and organizations that help maintain and improve Florida's position as one of the world's most popular travel destinations. The awards are open to all individuals, private businesses and not-for-profit organizations offering a product or service that promotes tourism to or within Florida.

This year, the VCB was honored with the following awards:

- Silver Award, "*Chicago Art Project*" in the "Out of Home Advertising" category
- Silver Award, "*Interrupted :60 Radio Spot*" in the "Radio Advertising" category

The Silver Award for the "*Chicago Art Project*" was presented for a promotional campaign developed in conjunction with EXPO CHICAGO 2014, The International Exposition of Contemporary and Modern Art. The project, which aimed to drive visitation to the region and make a cultural connection between the people of Chicago and The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel, featured the work of Chicago-based artist Judy Ledgerwood, who was invited to vacation in famed artist Robert Rauschenberg's Captiva Island beach house to experience the destination and find inspiration.

Using her experience on the island as her muse, the artist completed six stunning works inspired by Southwest Florida's natural beauty, which were then reproduced and displayed as massive wallscape billboards throughout Chicago. In addition, the work was displayed on fifty-six rotating billboards along major expressways and featured on the EXPO Chicago shuttles used during Chicago Art Week. The campaign garnered 7,165,174 impressions with an increase in year-over-year visitation from the Chicago market.

The Silver Award for the "*Interrupted :60 Radio Spot*" resulted from a commercial developed to be an extension of The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel's established "Find Your Island" brand campaign. Specifically targeting decision-makers: married women, the spot showcases a female who is describing in detail all the best attributes of the destination. The campaign aimed to speak to the everyday mom who is in need of a vacation where she and her

family can unwind, and really take the time to enjoy the beauty of Southwest Florida. The campaign generated 3,774,600 impressions, with spots airing in key markets including Cleveland, Cincinnati, Indianapolis, and Columbus.

The winning entries were determined by a panel of seven out-of-state judges, who evaluated the creativity, innovation, production, quality, and effectiveness of each entry. Based on the judges' cumulative scores, awards were presented to the top three entries in each category: the Bronze Award for the third highest scoring entry, the Silver Award for the second highest scoring entry, and the Henry Award for the highest scoring entry in each of the 15 categories. There were a total of 260 entries in the competition.

“We appreciate this recognition from Visit Florida and the Florida Commission on Tourism,” said VCB Executive Director Tamara Pigott. “We are thankful for their partnership and support over the years.”