

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Lee County Visitor & Convention Bureau**

**Aug. 3, 2015**

**CONTACTS:** Lee Rose, Francesca Donlan, Charniece Jarman 239-338-3500

## **The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel** **sparkles during holidays in this unspoiled island sanctuary** *Seasonal entertainment, luminary trails, an island holiday village, and historic homes*

**LEE COUNTY, FL** – The holiday season is one of the most beautiful times to visit The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel in southwest Florida. This year, visitors have many opportunities to celebrate with traditional events that include the 40th Annual Holiday Nights at the Edison & Ford Winter Estates in Fort Myers and the 31st Annual Luminary Trail on Sanibel and Captiva islands. Two of the area's historic, turn-of-the-century homes will be open for holiday tours. Captiva Island Holiday Village is packed with activities to get visitors into the spirit of the season. There is much more and many events are free.

### **40th Annual Holiday Nights at the Edison & Ford Winter Estates, Fort Myers**

**Nov. 27, 2015 through Jan. 3, 2016 (Event is closed Dec. 24 & 25)**

239-334-7419

[www.edisonfordwinterestates.org](http://www.edisonfordwinterestates.org)

Edison Ford Holiday Nights reflect the many contributions of Thomas Edison, Henry Ford and their families. It was chosen by the editors of USA Today as one of the 10Best Historic Homes for the Holidays, which also included The White House, Mount Vernon, Monticello and the Biltmore in North Carolina. To view the article visit: <http://www.10best.com/interests/trip-pics/historic-homes-for-the-holidays/>.

A not-to-be-missed holiday tradition, the historic buildings and acres of gardens are decorated with lights and traditional decorations. The holiday estates offer a behind the scenes tour, Children's Holiday Tree Trail, Santa visits on select nights, refreshments and shopping in the Holiday Cottage Shoppe, Museum Store and Garden Shoppe.

For admission and details: [www.edisonfordwinterestates.org/events/annual-events/holiday-nights/](http://www.edisonfordwinterestates.org/events/annual-events/holiday-nights/)

### **Captiva Holiday Village, Captiva Island**

**Weekends beginning Thanksgiving weekend through mid-December 2015**

[www.captivaholidayvillage.com](http://www.captivaholidayvillage.com)

[www.captivaholidayvillage.com/accommodations-getaway-vacations/](http://www.captivaholidayvillage.com/accommodations-getaway-vacations/)

Beginning with a tree-lighting and fireworks, this popular southwest Florida barrier island transforms into a Holiday Village with events every weekend through December. This themed, fun-filled holiday extravaganza is set against the backdrop of the shimmering Gulf of Mexico and breathtaking sunsets. Visitors to Captiva Island during Captiva Holiday Village weekends enjoy a Mullet Band parade, lighted boat parade, South Seas holiday strolls, a Junkanoo Parade, a carol sing at the Chapel by the Sea, sunset arias, a holiday golf cart parade and much more.

### **The 31st Annual Christmas Luminary Trail and Open House, Sanibel island on Dec. 4, 2015 and Captiva Island Dec. 5, 2015**

[www.sanibel-captiva.org](http://www.sanibel-captiva.org)

This event draws visitors from all over the world as they join local residents to celebrate the season with three miles of luminary candles and events.

### **Broadway Palm Dinner Theatre, Fort Myers**

**Nov. 26-Dec. 26, 2015**

[www.BroadwayPalm.com](http://www.BroadwayPalm.com)

239-278-4422

Celebrating its 22nd season in southwest Florida, Broadway Palm offers an exciting holiday lineup that includes *It's a Wonderful Life* in its main theater on the dates above. In addition, Off Broadway Palm presents *Plaid Tidings* Nov. 12-Dec. 26. The Children's Theatre features *A Velveteen Rabbit Christmas* Dec. 4-8, 11, 13-15, 17-18 and 21-22. Call or visit website for detailed schedule and prices.

### **27th Annual Fort Myers Beach Boat Parade, Fort Myers Beach**

**Dec. 5, 2015**

[www.fortmyersbeachchamber.org](http://www.fortmyersbeachchamber.org)

239-474-7500

Come enjoy some holiday spirit at the 27th Annual Fort Myers Beach Christmas Boat Parade. Last year over 30 boats decked out in holiday array, participated and this year promises to be even more exciting. The parade will pass by such establishments as Big Game Waterfront Grill, Parrot Key Caribbean Grill, Matanzas, Nervous Nellies, Doc Ford's and Bonita Bills where spectators kick back and enjoy the fun. The parade is 6-8pm.

### **Santa's Dolphin & Wildlife Cruise, Port Sanibel Marina, Fort Myers**

**Dec. 24, 2015**

239-472-8443

[www.adventureinparadiseinc.com/cruises/santa-christmas-cruise/](http://www.adventureinparadiseinc.com/cruises/santa-christmas-cruise/)

Cruise out to a deserted island where Santa is waiting with presents for the kids before he makes his journey later that evening! Have photos taken. Cruise leaves at 10 a.m. and returns at 11:45 a.m. Reservations required. Call for details.

### **Annual Bonita Springs Christmas Boat Parade, Bonita Springs**

**Dec. 12, 2015**

[www.bonitaboatparade.com](http://www.bonitaboatparade.com)

239-495-0455

Parade kicks off at 6 p.m. from Big Hickory Fish Nook Restaurant. Visit website for a route map.

### **The Southwest Florida Symphony Holidays 2014, Fort Myers and Sanibel Island**

[www.swflso.org](http://www.swflso.org)

239-418-1500

Holiday Pops Concert: Christmas in Paradise will be presented Dec. 19 at Barbara B. Mann Performing Arts Hall In Fort Myers; Dec. 20 at Big ARTS Schein Hall on Sanibel Island and on Dec. 21 at Shell Point Village in Fort Myers. Call for ticket information.

### **Gasparilla Inn & Club, Boca Grande, celebrates "Twelve Days of Christmas"**

**Dec. 20, 2015-Jan. 1, 2016**

941-964-4500

[www.the-gasparilla-inn.com](http://www.the-gasparilla-inn.com)

A special package includes room and a host of special holiday activities that include: Christmas caroling, gingerbread house decorating, beach games, sand sculpting, Inn Bingo, a countdown to the New Year in BZ's and more. Call or visit site for details and rate information.

### **2015 Holidays in the Downtown Fort Myers River District**

A fun-filled series of holiday events are scheduled to welcome the season. For details of each day's events, visit [www.myriverdistrict.com](http://www.myriverdistrict.com). Events will include:

- **Holiday House  
Decorated Historic Homes, downtown Fort Myers  
Dec. 11-23, 2015  
5-9 p.m. nightly  
[www.fmwcc.com](http://www.fmwcc.com)  
[www.BurroughsHome.com](http://www.BurroughsHome.com)  
239-738-3710**

The holiday tradition continues as The Fort Myers Woman's Community Club once again brings this festive annual event to the downtown area at both of these historic, turn-of-the century homes: the Langford-Kingston House and Burroughs Home and Gardens in downtown Fort Myers. Bring your camera for a visit from Santa in the Langford-Kingston Home. Tickets are \$5 per person. Children and veterans receive free admission.

- **Holiday classics presented by the Florida Repertory Theatre, downtown Fort Myers  
[www.floridarep.org](http://www.floridarep.org)  
239-332-4488**

"The Seafarer" Nov. 20-Dec. 13 and "A Christmas Story" Dec. 1-20, 2015. Call or visit website for admission and times.

**2015 Holidays on the Seminole Gulf Railway, Fort Myers  
[www.semgulf.com](http://www.semgulf.com)  
239-275-8487**

Set sail for a holiday light extravaganza Dec. 7, 8, 14 and 15 on the Seminole Gulf Railway. Enjoy soup and salad going north to Punta Gorda for a boat tour through Punta Gorda Isles and entree and dessert on the journey back to Fort Myers. Call for details and reservations.

**Fort Myers Beach Birthday Party & New Year's Eve Celebration  
Dec. 31, 2015**

[www.fortmyersbeachfl.gov](http://www.fortmyersbeachfl.gov) or [www.fortmyersbeachchamber.org](http://www.fortmyersbeachchamber.org)

Come celebrate the birthday of the Town of Fort Myers Beach and New Year's Eve at Time Square. Festivities for the town's birthday run 1-3:30 p.m. with live music and free cupcakes starting at 1 p.m. New Year's Eve festivities kick off at 7 p.m. with more music. Ball drop is at midnight followed by fireworks off the pier. Don't miss the fun!

For more information on special holiday events and packages or for planning a holiday vacation to The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel, visit [www.FortMyers-Sanibel.com](http://www.FortMyers-Sanibel.com). Check "Vacation for Less" for special rates.

**-30-**

*Editor's Note: The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel in southwest Florida includes: 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. For media assistance on the destination, please visit [www.fortmyerssanibel.com/media](http://www.fortmyerssanibel.com/media).*