

VISIT MISSISSIPPI GULF COAST BOARD  
JANUARY 25, 2018  
OFFICIAL MINUTES

The Visit Mississippi Gulf Coast Board met Thursday, January 25, 2018 at 3:00 p.m. at its office located at 2350 Beach Blvd, Suite A, Biloxi, Mississippi.

Commissioners Present: Bill Holmes, President; Danny Hansen, Vice-President; Richard Chenoweth, Treasurer; Nikki Moon, Secretary; Carla Todd; Kim Fritz; Mary Spain; Myron Webb; Rich Westfall, Richard Marsh

Commissioners Present via Phone: LuAnn Pappas

Commissioners Absent: Clay Wagner, Dan Wittmann, John Carter and Rusty David

Staff Members Present: Cindy Jo Calvit, Executive Administrative Assistant; Karen Conner, Director of Marketing; Janice Jefferson, Director of Sales; Lisa Jones, Finance Manager

Others Present: Hugh Keating, Legal Counsel; VMGC Advisory Members: Clay Williams, Gulfport-Biloxi Regional Airport Authority; Donna Brown, Gulf Hills Hotel and Conference Center; Gloria Frey, MS Coast Coliseum and Convention Center and Natalie Guess, Hancock County Tourism; Nicole Sullivan, City of Biloxi; Charlotte Miller, City of Biloxi; Myrna Green, Hancock County Tourism Development Bureau; Stephen Schoettmer, Rapiscan Systems Classic Senior Golf Tournament; Mary Perez, Sun Herald; Keith Wilson, Biloxi-D'Iberville Press

President Holmes called the meeting to Order.

1. Commissioner Hansen made the motion to accept the agenda as presented. Seconded by Commissioner Marsh, the president called the question, with the following results:

Commissioner Carter	Voted ---- Absent	Commissioner Pappas	Voted ---- Yes
Commissioner Chenoweth	Voted ---- Yes	Commissioner Spain	Voted ---- Yes
Commissioner David	Voted ---- Absent	Commissioner Todd	Voted ---- Yes
Commissioner Fritz	Voted ---- Yes	Commissioner Wagner	Voted ---- Absent
Commissioner Hansen	Voted ---- Yes	Commissioner Webb	Voted ---- Yes
Commissioner Marsh	Voted ---- Yes	Commissioner Westfall	Voted ---- Yes
Commissioner Moon	Voted ---- Yes	Commissioner Wittmann	Voted ---- A&E

The motion having been duly made, seconded, and a favorable vote received from the Board, the president declared the motion adopted January 25, 2018.

2. Commissioner Westfall made the motion to accept the minutes from the December 21, 2017 Visit Mississippi Gulf Coast Board Meeting as presented. Seconded by Commissioner Spain, the president called the question, with the following results:

Commissioner Carter	Voted ---- Absent	Commissioner Pappas	Voted ---- Yes
Commissioner Chenoweth	Voted ---- Yes	Commissioner Spain	Voted ---- Yes
Commissioner David	Voted ---- Absent	Commissioner Todd	Voted ---- Yes
Commissioner Fritz	Voted ---- Yes	Commissioner Wagner	Voted ---- Absent
Commissioner Hansen	Voted ---- Yes	Commissioner Webb	Voted ---- Yes
Commissioner Marsh	Voted ---- Yes	Commissioner Westfall	Voted ---- Yes
Commissioner Moon	Voted ---- Yes	Commissioner Wittmann	Voted ---- A&E

The motion having been duly made, seconded, and a favorable vote received from the Board, the president declared the motion adopted January 25, 2018.

3. President's Report:

- Recognized and welcomed all Advisory Members and Guests
- Introduced Natalie Guess- Visit Mississippi Gulf Coast Advisory Member for Hancock County; replaced David Hilbert
- Gave a brief update on One Coast Tags
- President Holmes (Financial), Janice Jefferson (Sales) and Karen Conner (Marketing) presented the Key Performance Indicators for December 2017 (attached).

4. Commissioner Hansen made the motion to approve an extension for the Director & Officers Liability and Employment Practices Liability Insurance. Seconded by Commissioner Marsh, the president called the question, with the following results:

Commissioner Carter	Voted ---- Absent	Commissioner Pappas	Voted ---- Yes
Commissioner Chenoweth	Voted ---- Yes	Commissioner Spain	Voted ---- Yes
Commissioner David	Voted ---- Absent	Commissioner Todd	Voted ---- Yes
Commissioner Fritz	Voted ---- Yes	Commissioner Wagner	Voted ---- Absent
Commissioner Hansen	Voted ---- Yes	Commissioner Webb	Voted ---- Yes
Commissioner Marsh	Voted ---- Yes	Commissioner Westfall	Voted ---- Yes
Commissioner Moon	Voted ---- Yes	Commissioner Wittmann	Voted ---- A&E

The motion having been duly made, seconded, and a favorable vote received from the Board, the president declared the motion adopted January 25, 2018.

5. Milton Segarra, Visit Mississippi Gulf Coast CEO, presented his Initial Assessment Report (attached)

6. Commissioner Hansen made the motion to approve the Southern Administrators Benefits Consultants, Inc. Agreement as presented at no charge to Visit Mississippi Gulf Coast. Seconded by Commissioner Fritz, the president called the question, with the following results:

Commissioner Carter	Voted ---- Absent	Commissioner Pappas	Voted ---- Yes
Commissioner Chenoweth	Voted ---- Yes	Commissioner Spain	Voted ---- Yes
Commissioner David	Voted ---- Absent	Commissioner Todd	Voted ---- Yes
Commissioner Fritz	Voted ---- Yes	Commissioner Wagner	Voted ---- Absent
Commissioner Hansen	Voted ---- Yes	Commissioner Webb	Voted ---- Yes
Commissioner Marsh	Voted ---- Yes	Commissioner Westfall	Voted ---- Yes
Commissioner Moon	Voted ---- Yes	Commissioner Wittmann	Voted ---- A&E

The motion having been duly made, seconded, and a favorable vote received from the Board, the president declared the motion adopted January 25, 2018.

7. Commissioner Moon made the motion to approve the MeetingMax Housing Agreement-For Hotels with the following revisions: 1<sup>st</sup> page: Remove Rebate Payable and 3<sup>rd</sup> page: Change \$5.00 Housing Fee to \$4.00 Housing Fee and remove Rebate of \$4.00. Seconded by Commissioner Fritz, the president called the question, with the following results:

Commissioner Carter	Voted ---- Absent	Commissioner Pappas	Voted ---- Yes
Commissioner Chenoweth	Voted ---- Yes	Commissioner Spain	Voted ---- Yes
Commissioner David	Voted ---- Absent	Commissioner Todd	Voted ---- Yes
Commissioner Fritz	Voted ---- Yes	Commissioner Wagner	Voted ---- Absent
Commissioner Hansen	Voted ---- Yes	Commissioner Webb	Voted ---- Yes
Commissioner Marsh	Voted ---- Yes	Commissioner Westfall	Voted ---- Yes
Commissioner Moon	Voted ---- Yes	Commissioner Wittmann	Voted ---- A&E

The motion having been duly made, seconded, and a favorable vote received from the Board, the president declared the motion adopted January 25, 2018.

8. Commissioner Fritz made the motion to approve a Resolution in Support of Senate Bill No. 2176 (Funds from the BP Economic Damages Settlement) to be sent to Mississippi Congressional Delegation.

Seconded by Commissioner Marsh, the president called the question, with the following results:

Commissioner Carter	Voted ---- Absent	Commissioner Pappas	Voted ---- Yes
Commissioner Chenoweth	Voted ---- Yes	Commissioner Spain	Voted ---- Yes
Commissioner David	Voted ---- Absent	Commissioner Todd	Voted ---- Yes
Commissioner Fritz	Voted ---- Yes	Commissioner Wagner	Voted ---- Absent
Commissioner Hansen	Voted ---- Yes	Commissioner Webb	Voted ---- Yes
Commissioner Marsh	Voted ---- Yes	Commissioner Westfall	Voted ---- Yes
Commissioner Moon	Voted ---- Yes	Commissioner Wittmann	Voted ---- A&E

The motion having been duly made, seconded, and a favorable vote received from the Board, the president declared the motion adopted January 25, 2018.

9. Legal Counsel gave an update on the status of the Public Records Request received from the City of Biloxi regarding the 5% taxes on Hotel, Motel and other Rooms in Harrison County. He also presented an Analysis of Allocation of Hotel Room Tax per H.B. 1716, Local and Private Laws of 2013.

10. Public:

- Stephen Schoettmer- Spoke about Rapiscan Systems Classic Senior Golf Tournament (formerly known as the Mississippi Gulf Resort Classic).
- Clay Williams- Thanked Visit Mississippi Gulf Coast for Partnership and gave an overview of the increased business running through the Gulfport-Biloxi International Airport.
- Myrna Green- Spoke about events happening in Hancock County.

11. Commissioner Hansen made the motion to approve the Financial Statements as of December 31, 2017.

Seconded by Commissioner Moon, the president called the question, with the following results:

Commissioner Carter	Voted ---- Absent	Commissioner Pappas	Voted ---- Yes
Commissioner Chenoweth	Voted ---- Yes	Commissioner Spain	Voted ---- Yes
Commissioner David	Voted ---- Absent	Commissioner Todd	Voted ---- Yes
Commissioner Fritz	Voted ---- Yes	Commissioner Wagner	Voted ---- Absent
Commissioner Hansen	Voted ---- Yes	Commissioner Webb	Voted ---- Yes
Commissioner Marsh	Voted ---- Yes	Commissioner Westfall	Voted ---- Yes
Commissioner Moon	Voted ---- Yes	Commissioner Wittmann	Voted ---- A&E

The motion having been duly made, seconded, and a favorable vote received from the Board, the president declared the motion adopted January 25, 2018.

12. Commissioner Todd made the motion to ratify the expenses paid by check/ACH in the amount of \$316,737.25. Seconded by Commissioner Marsh, the president called the question, with the following results:

Commissioner Carter	Voted ---- Absent	Commissioner Pappas	Voted ---- Yes
Commissioner Chenoweth	Voted ---- Yes	Commissioner Spain	Voted ---- Yes
Commissioner David	Voted ---- Absent	Commissioner Todd	Voted ---- Yes
Commissioner Fritz	Voted ---- Yes	Commissioner Wagner	Voted ---- Absent
Commissioner Hansen	Voted ---- Yes	Commissioner Webb	Voted ---- Yes
Commissioner Marsh	Voted ---- Yes	Commissioner Westfall	Voted ---- Yes
Commissioner Moon	Voted ---- Yes	Commissioner Wittmann	Voted ---- A&E

The motion having been duly made, seconded, and a favorable vote received from the Board, the president declared the motion adopted January 25, 2018.

13. Commissioner Spain made the motion to ratify the expenses paid by credit card in the amount of \$22,193.23. Seconded by Commissioner Westfall, the president called the question, with the following results:

Commissioner Carter	Voted ---- Absent	Commissioner Pappas	Voted ---- Yes
Commissioner Chenoweth	Voted ---- Yes	Commissioner Spain	Voted ---- Yes
Commissioner David	Voted ---- Absent	Commissioner Todd	Voted ---- Yes
Commissioner Fritz	Voted ---- Yes	Commissioner Wagner	Voted ---- Absent
Commissioner Hansen	Voted ---- Yes	Commissioner Webb	Voted ---- Yes
Commissioner Marsh	Voted ---- Yes	Commissioner Westfall	Voted ---- Yes
Commissioner Moon	Voted ---- Yes	Commissioner Wittmann	Voted ---- A&E

The motion having been duly made, seconded, and a favorable vote received from the Board, the president declared the motion adopted January 25, 2018.

14. Commissioner Moon made the motion to approve the Group Incentive Request for the 2020 Junior/Senior Beta Club being held March 1-6, 2020 at the MS Gulf Coast Convention Center up to the amount of \$10,000 and the Group Incentive Request for the 2021 Junior/Senior Beta Club being held February 28-March 1, 2021 at the MS Gulf Coast Convention Center up to the amount of \$10,000.

Seconded by Commissioner Webb, the president called the question, with the following results:

Commissioner Carter	Voted ---- Absent	Commissioner Pappas	Voted ---- Yes
Commissioner Chenoweth	Voted ---- Yes	Commissioner Spain	Voted ---- Yes
Commissioner David	Voted ---- Absent	Commissioner Todd	Voted ---- Yes
Commissioner Fritz	Voted ---- Yes	Commissioner Wagner	Voted ---- Absent
Commissioner Hansen	Voted ---- Yes	Commissioner Webb	Voted ---- Yes
Commissioner Marsh	Voted ---- Yes	Commissioner Westfall	Voted ---- Yes
Commissioner Moon	Voted ---- Yes	Commissioner Wittmann	Voted ---- A&E

The motion having been duly made, seconded, and a favorable vote received from the Board, the president declared the motion adopted January 25, 2018.

15. Reminder

- Visit Mississippi Gulf Coast Offices will be closed:  
Tuesday, February 13, 2018 in observance of Mardi Gras
- Visit Mississippi Gulf Coast Monthly Board Meeting- February  
Thursday, February 22, 2018 3:00pm – 4:30pm VMGC Board Room

16. Commissioner Hansen made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Marsh, the president called the question, with the following results:

Commissioner Carter	Voted ---- Absent	Commissioner Pappas	Voted ---- Yes
Commissioner Chenoweth	Voted ---- Yes	Commissioner Spain	Voted ---- Yes
Commissioner David	Voted ---- Absent	Commissioner Todd	Voted ---- Yes
Commissioner Fritz	Voted ---- Yes	Commissioner Wagner	Voted ---- Absent
Commissioner Hansen	Voted ---- Yes	Commissioner Webb	Voted ---- Yes
Commissioner Marsh	Voted ---- Yes	Commissioner Westfall	Voted ---- Yes
Commissioner Moon	Voted ---- Yes	Commissioner Wittmann	Voted ---- A&E

The motion having been duly made, seconded, and a favorable vote received from the Board, the president declared the motion adopted January 25, 2018.

# Visit Mississippi Gulf Coast

Board of Commissioners Meeting  
Thursday, January 25, 2018



## CEO REPORT

### Market and Organization Assessment Overview

Milton Segarra, CDME  
VMGC CEO

Thank  
You!

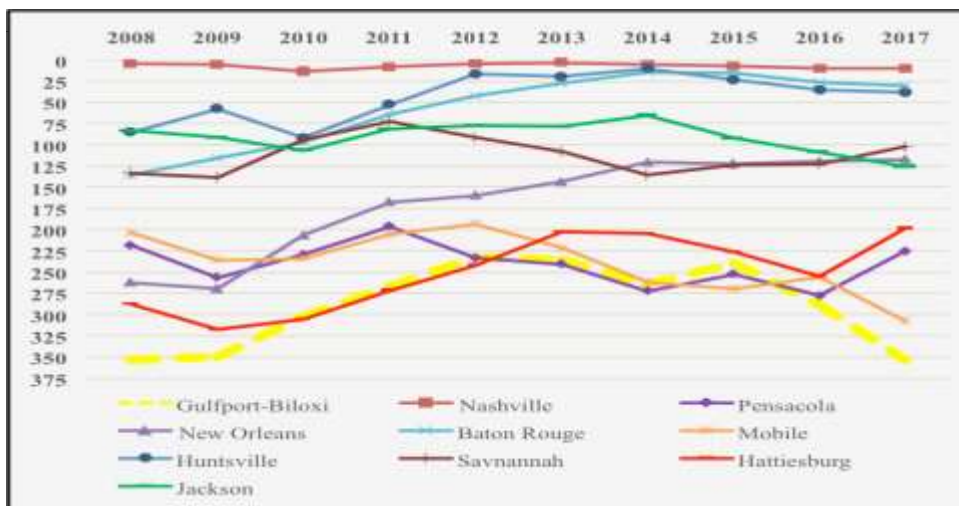


We  
feel at  
home!



# Gulf Coast Economic Indicators

## Economic Indicators- Mississippi Gulf Coast Policom Economic Strength Rankings- 382 MSA's



Source: Gulf Coast Business Council- USM Trent Lott National Center and College of Business



## AT A GLANCE...

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- The region has suffered through multiple disasters, causing significant economic impact
- Coast economic growth lags behind the rest of Mississippi and the nation
- That trend is expected to continue in the next five years
- Our median household income has continuously lost ground compared to the national average; that gap is projected to continue to widen in coming years
- Coast sales tax collection revenue growth is not keeping pace with the rest of the state
- Job growth on the Coast is significantly less than the rest of the state

Source: Gulf Coast Business Council- Blue Print Gulf Coast Initiative



## AT A GLANCE...

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- **WE HAVE DUPLICATION OF RESOURCES IN PUBLIC SERVICE, NON-PROFIT AND CHARITABLE EFFORT INITIATIVES.**
- **WE ARE SPENDING A HUGE AMOUNT OF TIME AND RESOURCES ON DUPLICATIVE AND HALF-MEASURES.**
- **WE HAVE NO ACCOUNTABILITY ESTABLISHED.**

Source: Gulf Coast Business Council- Blue Print Gulf Coast Initiative

# Tourism Economic Impact- Mississippi Gulf Coast



Travel and Tourism Expenditures by Visitors	\$1,989,110,347.00
Direct Travel and Tourism Employment	26,000
State/Local Taxes/Fees Attributed to Tourism	\$225,915,187.00
Tourism Capital Investment	\$81,036,614.00
2017 Gross Gaming Revenue	\$1,192,094,871.00
2017 Total Occupancy Rate and Average Daily Rate	71.4%      \$80.57
Non- Casino	56.8%      \$89.58
Casino	89.0%      \$73.62

Source: 2016-2017 Economic Impact Report- Visit Mississippi



## U.S. Travel Trends

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# U.S. Travel Trends

Number of Trips Per Year	4.4
Time Spent on Vacation	6.7 days
U.S. Traveler's Preference	Domestically – 82%
U.S. Preferred Way to Travel	Plane – 57% / Car – 37% / Train – 1%
Most Popular Place to Stay	Hotel – 63%      Cruises – 5% Resorts – 14%      Home Sharing – 4% Family/Friends – 13%

Source: North American Travel and Tourism Trends- Expedia Media Solutions



# Booking A Trip

Primary Factor	Budget - 68%
Most Influential Online Source for Booking	Search Engines- 63% Online Travel Agency - 60% Travel Review Sites - 57%
Top Priorities When Selecting a Destination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities</li> <li>• Experiences</li> </ul>
Determining Factors for Choosing a Destination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bucket List</li> <li>• Off the Beaten Path</li> </ul>

Source: North American Travel and Tourism Trends- Expedia Media Solutions



## Conclusions and Recommendations

Source: Longwoods International

## Conclusions and Recommendations



- **The results of this research reveal some significant competitive challenges for the positioning of the Mississippi Gulf Coast in the travel marketplace:**
  - ✓ Unlike its main competition, the Mississippi Gulf Coast is not thought to have any unique strengths that would differentiate it from its tourism rivals.
  - ✓ Although Mississippi Gulf Coast does share some strengths with other destinations, most of those strengths are relatively unimportant at the wish list stage of destination selection.
  - ✓ And Mississippi Gulf Coast is believed to fall short of other potential destinations in key hot button areas.

Source: Longwoods International

# Conclusions and Recommendations



- **Specifically, relative to competitors evaluated in this research and on the broad range of attributes included, Mississippi Gulf Coast does not come out ahead of the competition on any single image aspect.**
  - ✓ Virginia Beach
  - ✓ Daytona Beach
  - ✓ Gulf Shores
  - ✓ Tampa
  - ✓ Pensacola
  
- **Nonetheless, Mississippi Gulf Coast does have a few important strengths on which it shares the lead with others:**
  - ✓ Being considered an exciting place.
  - ✓ Offering a comfortable atmosphere with warm, friendly people.
  - ✓ Unspoiled and beautiful natural scenery.
  
- **Mississippi Gulf Coast has several less important shared strengths:**
  - ✓ Excellent Fishing.
  - ✓ Viewing wildlife/birds.
  - ✓ Affordability both in terms of getting there/proximity as well as once there (dining, accommodations).
  - ✓ Safety.

Source: Longwoods International

# Conclusions and Recommendations



- **Versus the competitive set, Mississippi Gulf Coast has several important weaknesses:**
  - ✓ Provides a unique vacation experience.
  - ✓ Sense of adventure.
  - ✓ The sightseeing experience, including lots of things to see and do, truly beautiful scenery, beautiful gardens and parks, interesting cities and towns.
  - ✓ A place I would feel welcome.
  - ✓ Good place for families to visit, children would especially enjoy.
  - ✓ First class hotels/resorts.

Source: Longwoods International

# Conclusions and Recommendations



➤ **Less important weaknesses of the Mississippi Gulf Coast are:**

- ✓ Great for golfers.
- ✓ Great shopping.
- ✓ Well known destination.
- ✓ Great spectator sports venues.

Source: Longwoods International

# Conclusions and Recommendations



➤ **The good news is that Mississippi Gulf Coast image's is greatly affected by visitation. Once a traveler has visited Mississippi Gulf Coast, their opinion of the state soars.**

- ✓ In comparison to most destinations that we have measured over the years, visitation to Mississippi Gulf Coast has a far greater effect on perceptions.
- ✓ For the typical destination we generally see improvements in ratings in the order of 10-15% for a few dimensions, but mainly lower shifts created by visitation.
- ✓ In contrast, for Mississippi Gulf Coast, the shifts reach between 20 and 43% for many attributes including major divers of destination interest.

➤ **These shifts tell us that people are genuinely surprised when they come to the region, and suggest that the main issue is lack of awareness, not product absence or shortcomings.**

Source: Longwoods International

# Conclusions and Recommendations

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- **Another beneficial outcome of visitation by tourists is positive impacts on your image with respect to economic development. On every individual aspect tested in this research (ranging from being thought of as a great place to live to starting a career or business in the state), visitation significantly improved people’s image of Mississippi Gulf Coast.**
  
- **When we look across all of these measures, we conclude that:**
  - ✓ The core positioning for Mississippi Gulf Coast should be excitement.
  - ✓ It is one of the most important drivers of destination interest in your competitive set.
  - ✓ Even though you are not leading yet in this area, you are considered the equal of others in top spot, and your visitors are saying that you can talk about excitement without fear of overpromise, because you are delivering on it.

Source: Longwoods International

# VMGC Assessment Findings and Opportunities

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# Magical Moments





Joy of Life





# The Ultimate Driving Machine







# Safety





## VMGC Two-Way Communication and Engagement Matrix



VMGC Professional Team	VMGC Board of Commissioners and County Board of Supervisors
Municipal, State Governments and State Legislature	Media (Local and National)
All Industry Stakeholders	Mississippi Gulf Coast Community

**ALL IN !!**

# VMGC Transformational Role



**Curators** of destination content

**Adopters** of business intelligence and data science

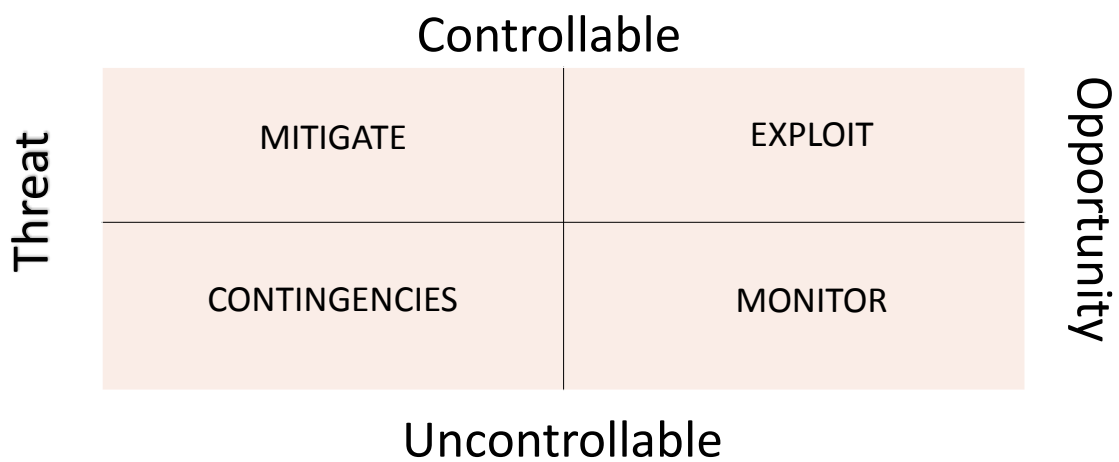
**Catalysts** of economic development

**Activists** in community place making

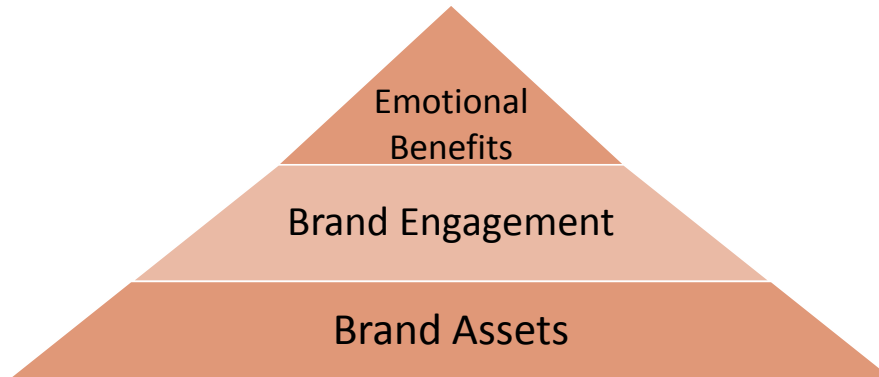
**Collaborators** within strategic networks



# VMGC Innovation & Opportunity Map



# VMGC Brand Evolution Levels



**IT IS NOT ABOUT US, IT'S ABOUT THEM!!**

# VMGC Innovation and Strategic Plan



## **PILARS:**

- New Brand
- Cohesive Message
- Content Development and Management
- Reformulation of VMGC Business Model (Brand/Sales)
- Create New Demand
- New Metrics and Reporting System/ROI Focus
- Accountability Culture
- Laser Focus Public Relations and Communications Plan
- Leisure Business Development based on Markets Sub-Segmentation and Collaborative Efforts with Key Partners
- Social Media Engagement Driven Strategy
- Partnership Driven Group's Development Strategy

GOAL: New Groups Development Strategy



OBJECTIVE: Leverage Mississippi Gulf Coast Key Industries to Solicit and Secure New Business

Industry Segment (SIC)	VMGC Tactical Re-Configuration	Local Subject Matter Expert Integration	Stakeholders Integration	PR/Social Media Support	Accountability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maritime Biology Research</li> <li>Nature Based Organizations</li> <li>Aerospace</li> <li>Port Related</li> <li>Golf</li> <li>Petroleum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assign Budget</li> <li>Assign Sales Managers and Support Team</li> <li>Educate/Prepare VMGC Team</li> <li>Data and Intelligence Gathering on Segments</li> <li>Approach Key Industry decision makers and Influencers</li> <li>Develop Collateral Support Material</li> <li>Participate in Trade Shows and Conferences</li> </ul>	<p>Identify and approach, preferably local and Gulf Coast based, industry experts that could become Ambassadors and/or Facilitators to attract and assist in closing those business opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coliseum and Convention Center</li> <li>Hotels</li> <li>Venues</li> <li>Transportation</li> <li>Chambers of Commerce</li> <li>Local or Regional Associations</li> <li>Municipal Leadership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify Spokespersons</li> <li>Press Trips of Specialized Media</li> <li>Targeted Social Media Efforts</li> <li>Editorials</li> <li>Bloggers/Vloggers</li> <li>Strategic Placement in trade publications, mostly digital</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set Goals</li> <li>Develop Key Performance Indicators</li> <li>Assessment Cycle</li> <li>Re-Visit Strategy</li> <li>Quantify Economic Impact</li> </ul>



# Thank you!

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**Visit Mississippi Gulf Coast**  
**Milton Segarra, CDME- Chief Executive Officer**

