2023 Annual Report

Port Aransas Tourism Bureau & Chamber of Commerce

THE CATCH OF A LIFETIME Living, protecting, and sharing the dream life

VisitPortAransas.com

PORT ARANSAS the island life

A NOTE from the president

Living, protecting, and sharing the dream life. It's our privilege as residents, business owners, and workers in Port Aransas. As each year passes, we see people embrace our island home, positively influencing our growth and helping define Port Aransas. The same holds true for each of you and your involvement with this organization, the Port Aransas Tourism Bureau & Chamber of Commerce.

In 2023, we made significant strides in organizational excellence and supporting the quality of life here in Port A. We increased our sustainability messaging and conservation focus throughout the year, from the promotional "Respect Our Island Home" campaign to the weekly beach cleanups with Flynn's Beach Squad. We continue to find new paths to connect with nature and each other while sharing the dream life with all.

We introduced new events, new promotions, and even a new focus on how we tell the narrative of this place, all while we enjoy the soul of this barrier island and one another. Our tourism promotion efforts continue to be trendsetters for others to follow, while bringing in a respected focus to this place. We've found creative ways to rise above the clutter and shine on.

With every paragraph and page turn of this annual report, the results speak for themselves with awards, accreditations, and top-notch communications. Time and time again we continue to refocus, realign, and cast that net as best we can, equipped with the clarity of top research tools and a dedicated team of professionals. The efforts pay off in new visitors, repeat visitors, new homeowners, new businesses, and an enhanced place that we all get to call home.

Port Aransas is the "Catch of a Lifetime!"

BRETT STAWAR PRESIDENT & CEO Port Aransas Tourism Bureau & Chamber of Commerce

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Save the Date

anuary

26: Tourism Summit 19—28: Restaurant Week

February

6–7: Envision Port A Workshops 8: Port Aransas Chocolate Crawl 22–25: Whooping Crane Festival

March Margarita Madness

April

12-14: Spring Fling Shop Around 19–21: Texas SandFest 25: Shred Day

May

19–25: National Travel & Tourism Week 21: Tourism Rally & Hospitality Heroes Ceremony

Beachtober

Taco & Margarita Trail Sweet Traditions Dessert Trail Port A Live Music Fest Beachtober Bash Flynn's Beach Run 18–21: Shoptober

December

Holiday Shop Around Sand Santa and Holiday Collaborations Drone Show

Our Organization 7 💥 🎽



Port Aransas will be known as the premier family beach destination in Texas.

THE MISSION

We work to enhance the community's quality of life by attracting visitors who share our love of the Texas Gulf Coast.



Brett Stawar President & CEO

Shelley Witcher Business Development & Sales Manager Lisa Shelton Special Events & Community Relations Manager

Marnie Pate

Hotel/Lodging

Scott Clanton

Hotel/Lodging

Hotel/Lodging

Celeste Edwards

Candy Kelly Bookkeeper

THE PURPOSE

We support our community by advocating for sensible development and leading the marketing of Port Aransas and Mustang Island.

Melinda Compton Marketing & Digital Content Manager

Cameron Fowler Stewardship & Branding Specialist

Kyra Hannak Content Curator Rhonica Stuart Operations Analyst

Michelle Garrett Welcome Center Assistant

Tricia Perrine Welcome Center Assistant

Board Members

Keith McMullin Chairperson Real Estate/ Developer

Laurie Soechting Vice Chairperson Restaurant/Bar

Marsha Starkey Secretary Hotel/Lodging Fred Samudio Treasurer

Greg Carr Hotel/Lodging

Bill Bauder Hotel/Lodging Kim Winton Retail

> Greg Stunz At Large

Chris Collins Bar/Restaurant Shannon Lafayette Professional Services

Ed Buskey At Large

Will Cocke Jr. Fishing/Marina Tanya Chambers Ex Officio

David Parsons Ex Officio

Brett Stawar

Partner Updates

Rallying for Our Tourism Community

The "island life" is defined by the resident and small business community that make it up. This town is about so much more than the beach, as demonstrated by locals who welcome visitors with open arms and hearts full of salty stories about their love for Port Aransas.

We recognize the dedication of our partners through our Partner of the Week and Hospitality Heroes programs. At the Tourism Rally in May, our annual National Travel & Tourism Week celebration, we recognized 21 industry representatives as Hospitality Heroes. Each of these leaders were nominated by management and peers as employees who go above and beyond as ambassadors for the island and contribute to a positive working environment. It is thanks to them, and our entire small business community, that Port Aransas continues to be an anchor of traditions statewide.



2023 Hospitality Heroes

Danyel Boysen Amanda Campbell Jeff Comstock Robin Comstock Carl Dittmaier Brenda Garrison Sheila Garza Olga Guerra Kelli Hartig Julie Johnson Heather Miller Henry Minor Judy Parker Mari Ramos

Pete Ross Kimberly Shaw Lisa Shelton Kristina Stevens Cliff Strain Hannah Viducic John Vojtanic

GIVING BACK TO PORT A

The Port Aransas Tourism Bureau & Chamber of Commerce Foundation gave back over \$60,000 to the community of Port Aransas. Our partners, along with proceeds from special events, sponsorships, and fundraisers, contributed to these awards.



337 TOTAL PARTNERS

Partner benefits include networking opportunities, referral services, unique advertising opportunities, a web presence, and more.

39 NEW PARTNERS

These businesses have "cast a line" with us to invest in the future of Port Aransas, promote island life, and keep business booming.



Partner Events & Initiatives

Partnering Together to Make Port A Shine

PORT ARANSAS



Prix-fixe lunch and dinner specials at partner restaurants highlighted the local culinary scene during Port Aransas Restaurant Week in January. Advertisements on social media as well as in The Bend Magazine, local radio ads, and spots on Coastal Living TV generated buzz to drive traffic into restaurants during the off season.

Shop Arounds

Boutiques brought the deals during our four annual weekend-long Shop Around events: Chocolate Crawl & Valentine's Day Shop Around, Spring Fling, Shoptober, and Holiday Shop Around. To maximize traffic across each event, we shifted the dates of the Holiday Shop Around this year to land closer to the holidays and encourage Christmas shopping in Port Aransas.







In 2023, Margarita Madness took on a new spin. Instead of a contest, we celebrated the island's variety of these coastal cocktails with a month-long margarita trail. Over a dozen restaurants participated, highlighting new creations and tried-and-true favorites. Cheers to that!

Holiday Events

We were proud to be a part of holiday events that spanned December. The Lighted Boat Parade continued to be a smash hit, and this year was complemented by the first ever holiday drone show on the island. The Sand Santa sculpture was one of many highlights of the "Santa in the Park" celebration, and we rang in 2024 with a fireworks show on New Year's Eve. Thank you to the sponsors who made it all possible!





Port A Day at the Capitol

In April, a group of Port Aransans took to the Texas State Capitol for the official proclamation of "Port A Day." We hosted legislative visits, speakers, and a beachy fun reception with the help of Representative Todd Hunter and Senator La Mantia. The goal was to keep Port Aransas front and center in the minds of lawmakers.



The 26th annual Whooping Crane Festival was another record-breaking event! This four-day festival celebrates the return of this magnificent species to the area and raises awareness about their highly-endangered status. Boat tours, photography workshops, birding walks, sponsorships, and more contributed to the more than \$130,000 in total sales. The event would not be possible without help from our incredible birding guides, volunteers, local business partners, friends at the Port Aransas Nature Preserve, University of Texas Marine Science Institute, Signature Events

QUICK FACTS

60	Excursions, classes & workshops
30+	Trade show vendors
1,000+	Volunteer hours
2,400+	Individual tickets sold
\$50,000	WCF proceeds donated to local nonprofits and scholarships



and more.





OVERVIEW

6-8: Port A Live Music Weekend and Port A Days
20-22: Shoptober and Wooden Boat Festival
28: Flynn's Beach Run
All month long: Taco & Margarita Trail and Sweet
Traditions Trail



Autumnal bliss descended in October, or "Beachtober" as we like to call it. Weekends were full of celebrations of island culture, from the annual Port A Live Music Weekend to the inaugural Flynn's Beach Run, a 5k, 10k, and family fun run. Two month-long trails added to the festivities, the Taco & Margarita Trail and the first-ever Sweet Traditions Dessert Trail!

Destination Stewardship

In the second year of the stewardship campaign, we took "Respect Our Island Home" far beyond the realm of digital marketing. In 2022 workshops, we heard from you, the community, that the Respect Our Island Home campaign should be a prominent presence in the community and beyond. To that end, we worked on making Flynn the sea turtle and the Respect Our Island Home message tangible.



Flynn's Beach Squad Volunteers Summer 2023

2023, We Launched: A series of four videos featuring Flynn and local characters, our Port A chief of police and an educator at the Patton Center at UTMSI. These videos educated viewers on golf cart safety and beach courtesies in a fun, friendly manner. A Flynn plush doll, which we distributed to all elementaryaged children in Port Aransas ISD at our Earth Day Presentation and continue to offer for sale at local retailers. A recycled, reusable tote bag available for sale at Family Center IGA and other retailers around town. Flynn's Beach Squad, a weekly volunteer opportunity which invites visitors and locals to clean up the beach, Roberts Point Park, and other in-need areas around town. Flynn's Beach Run, a 5k, 10k, and 1-mile family fun run on the beach during Beachtober that used Flynn as its mascot and raised money for the Port Aransas ISD Cross Country Team. Respect Our Island Home coloring books and sticker sheets that invite kids to get involved with Flynn's sustainability messaging. A pop-up experience at Port A Days, which we hope to

A pop-up experience at Port A Days, which we hope to develop into a larger Flynn-focused event in 2024.



Flynn's Beach Run Participant October 2023



Flynn Photo Op at Flynn's Beach Run October 2023



Watch The Videos By Scanning The QR Code!





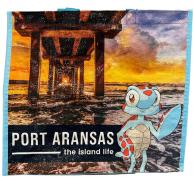
Respect Our Island Home continued to find wins with our visitors, too.



Flynn Plushie



Flynn Wants to Drive ROIH Video



Flynn Reusable Tote Bag



Flynn Photo Op at Texas SandFest April 2023

Meet Dottie \$

aptain Riley



Flynn Sand Sculpture at Texas SandFest April 2023

In 2024, we will continue to build on the success of the campaign. Respect Our Island Home will be partnering with Keep Port Aransas Beautiful on developing and releasing a Sustainable Events Plan that local businesses and organizations can use as a guide to make their events more environmentally friendly. We have invited Cathy Ritter with Better Destinations, LLC back to the island to conduct another round of community workshops called "Envision Port Aransas." In 2023, we also concepted and designed two new characters, friends of Flynn who will spread stewardship messaging with different personalities and approaches in 2024.

Dottie is more mature, wise, and confident in her tone, making her more suitable to address serious matters targeted at adults. friendly and approachable but with an older voice to reach teens and young adults about topics like beach safety and ocean conservation.

Captain Riley, like Flynn, is

SUSTAINABILITY AD STATS

1,233,395 Impressions 4,875 Clicks 656,046 Views 20,472 Video Through Plays

EARNED MEDIA

2/3 Earned Media Stories

Total earned mentions of Port Aransas in print, online, and broadcast, January through December 2023

> 530,899,004 Media Impressions

Combined with broadcast, print, and online coverage, January through December 2023



Estimated earned media value for Port Aransas, January through December 2023

INFLUENCER PARTNERSHIPS

We launched our first full-blown influencer campaign in the spring and summer. We built relationships within Port A's target markets by focusing on five content niches: outdoor activities, birding, fishing, travel, and family. Our effort increased awareness and drive traffic to the Visit Port Aransas website and social pages as well as local businesses.





Awards

DMAP ACCREDITATION

Destinations International

This year, the Port Aransas Tourism Bureau & Chamber of Commerce embarked on a journey to receive our Destination Marketing Accreditation Program (DMAP) certification. Destinations International describes the program, "The globally recognized Destination Marketing Accreditation Program (DMAP) serves as a visible industry distinction that defines quality and performance standards in destination marketing and management."



DMAP requires compliance with over 100 organizational performance standards that span categories from Advocacy to Research and Marketing Intelligence and everywhere in between.

Visit Port Aransas achieved DMAP status at the summer 2023 Destinations International Annual Convention and now proudly bears the seal!

SALTY STORIES

First Place Winner, Texas Destination Excellence Awards

The Texas Association of Convention & Visitor Bureaus (TACVB) awarded Port A's "Salty Stories" series with first place in the Video, Storytelling, and Podcast Series category. This is an award in which professional tourism peers across the state voted for Port Aransas out of all other destinations in Texas!

RESPECT OUR ISLAND HOME

Bronze, HSMAI Adrian Awards

The Hospitality Sales & Marketing Association International (HSMAI) recognized Port Aransas with a bronze medal for the "Respect Our Island Home" campaign in the Environmental, Social, and Governance category. This year, Flynn and the Respect Our Island Home campaign expanded into plushies, recycled bags, and wider community initiatives like Flynn's Beach Squad.

SALTY STORIES Bronze, HSMAI Adrian Awards

Port Aransas received another Adrian Award from HSMAI in the Advertising Brand Campaign category for the "Salty Stories" video series. 2023 Salty Stories highlighted the personality of this unique coastal town with videos on Alicia Walker and the Amos Rehabilitation Keep; Mark Landrum, Port Aransas Sandcastle Guy; Dee Wallace, renowned fisherman and tournament director; and Brittany & Magen, representatives of the local surfing scene.

Digital Marketing E-NEWS

The monthly Port Aransas newsletter continued to deliver quality content throughout the year. As utilizing and growing owned audiences continues to increase in importance, we opted to give the newsletter its own life with a more personal touch. The island life newsletter is now called "Currents," and it delivers just that. Current events, fun updates, and island happenings hit more than 80,000 email boxes each first Thursday of the month.

PARTNER TIP:

Make sure you check your email on Friday mornings for our weekly partner newsletter! This newsletter is chock full of exciting opportunities and need-to-know information.

Scan the QR code to sign up for our Partner E-News!



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52,403,311 Impressions	1,912,853 Engagements	683,007 Post Link Clicks



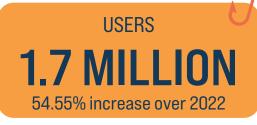
NEW THIS YEAR!

In July 2023, Google launched Google Analytics 4, which they describe as "the next generation of Analytics which collects event-based data from both websites and apps." GA4, as it's colloquially known, shifted some previously used measurements, but has also expanded our ability to understand the consumer journey with new visualizations and freedom to explore within the data.

We continued to expand and optimize the VisitPortAransas. com website in 2023, and it has become a true powerhouse of Port A knowledge. One new addition was a widget on the home page that pulls the latest from our social media feeds. This creates cross-platform integration and allows the website user to get the most up-to-date information from social media as it happens. We also launched a new home page map widget. This interactive map highlights visitor hotspots and related topics in which the user might find interest.









- 1. Navigation & Home Page
- 2. Logistics & Planning
- 3. Outdoor Recreation
- **SESSIONS** 4. Events By content topic
 - **5. Accommodations**

Paid Advertising

ANCHORED TRADITIONS CONTINUE TO BUILD

Down here on the true Texas coast, it's all about traditions. Generations have made their way to these shores for relaxation, connection, and downright fun, and we focused on that in our advertising efforts this year. In 2023, the Port Aransas Tourism Bureau & Chamber of Commerce continued to work with Madden Media as our agency of record. Media campaigns were divided into seasonal and events-based focuses and targeted to key audiences within Texas and touch states.



We were able to reach potential tradition-makers with new-tous platforms like the "Out of Home" advertisements we placed in the Austin Domain and Stonebriar Mall in Frisco. We were able to build onto and dig deeper with our audiences using tried-and-true digital buys like Meta, VRBO, and Google Ads.





MADDEN



Annual Media Performance

SEM	PAID SOCIAL	DISPLAY	AUDIO	VISUAL	
167,687 Clicks 1,371,317 Impressions 12.23% CTR 358,342 Site Users 46.81% Engagement Rate	764,099 Clicks 54,372,255 Impressions 1.2% CTR 36,482 Site Users 18.81% Engagement Rate	316,315 Clicks 51,534,600 Impressions .23% CTR 146,026 Site Users 32.21% Engagement Rate	2,070 Clicks 5,876,549 Impressions .04% CTR 1,920 Site Users 15.08% Engagement Rate	11,802 Clicks 8,465,359 Impressions .22% CTR 3,586 Site Users 30.12% Engagement Rate	121.6M EST. IMPRESSIONS 1,261,973 CLICKS TO SITE \$9.32 CPM \$2.12 CPC







Paid Advertising SALTY STORIES 2.0

At the core of the "island life" experience are the salty souls who live, breathe, and love Port A. That's why, in 2023, we launched the second round of Salty Stories videos. Our features highlighted the Amos Rehabilitation Keep, the Port Aransas Sandcastle Guy, Captain Dee Wallace, and two women making waves in the local surfing community. Each video was released a month apart to allow for maximum impact. These videos showed off our proud local spirit, but were also a great way to remarket to previous visitors who wanted to dig deeper or those already interested in a Texas beach vacation.



We will continue to grow the series in 2024, with highlights on the local scientific community, a family with a Port A vacation tradition, our lighthouse keeper, and local icons Duncan & Georgia Neblett already well underway!

Salty Stats

2,768,421 IMPRESSIONS 168,102 CLICKS 8,321,060 VIEWS 118,848 THROUGH PLAYS





Salty Stories, Behind the Scenes





AUSTIN ACTIVATION

To build off the success of the 2022 Austin Activation, we chose to return to the Domain NORTHSIDE in February 2023 for another day highlighting "Austin's Beach." Event marketing like "Out of Home" buys drew shoppers to the space for an interactive photobooth, sand sculpting demonstration, giveaway entry, and interaction with Port Aransas representatives telling them all about the island life. Several hundred leads were generated from the event, and we look forward to continuing growth in our key Austin markets.



The Domain - Austin



Group Sales 🐋

IPW In San Antonio

For the first time since 2000, U.S. Travel Association's IPW was hosted in the state of Texas! IPW is the industry's premier international trade show and the largest generator of travel to the U.S. This year's IPW was hosted in San Antonio, and Port Aransas attended to share our beach town with the world!

We created an island oasis in the convention center, where beach scenes and custom-built furniture from Herb Lancaster Co. welcomed international travel industry representatives to learn about Port A. Additionally, we sponsored the closing ceremony of the event and partnered with one of Texas SandFest's very own sculptor coordinators to create a spectacular sculpture and space where attendees could try their hand at the art.







Partnerships

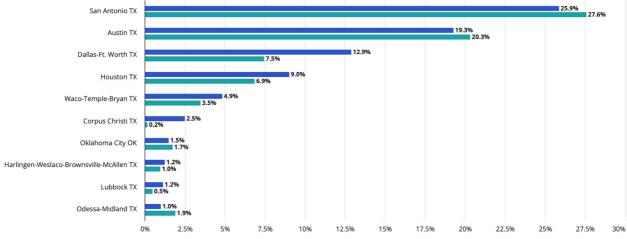
To expand our reach in our target markets, we partnered with Travel Texas and others to attend events in Texas and beyond. We had representation at the Chicago Auto Show, Austin's Circuit of the Americas Formula One race, the Oklahoma City Travel & Adventure Show, and the Dallas Travel & Adventure Show. Attendees fell directly in our target audience range and were impressed to hear about a new or favorite destination.

While we fostered international relationships at IPW and across the state and country, we also continued to nurture relationships we've built on the home front. We sponsored over a dozen groups in 2023 and encouraged them to continue to choose Port Aransas as their destination headquarters.





Tourism Economics **VISITATION BY THE NUMBERS FERRY COUNT TO PORT A** 1,860,134 HOT TAX COLLECTION **TOTAL PASSENGERS AS OF DECEMBER 2023 \$10.5 MILLION** Source: TXDOT Source: City of Port Aransas FY 23 **FERRY COUNT TO PORT A** 1,045,433 SALES TAX COLLECTION **\$3.86 MILLION TOTAL VEHICLES AS OF DECEMBER 2023** Source: TXDOT (Including general fund and RDC) Source: City of Port Aransas FY 23 **AVERAGE LOS* (DAYS)** 1. San Antonio 1. Accommodations 2. Austin 2. Outdoor Recreation 3. Food 3. Dallas/Fort Worth 4. Houston 4. Retail *LOS: Length of Stay 5. Gas & Service Stations 5. Waco/Temple/Bryan Source: KeyData **ORIGIN MARKETS BY SPEND PERCENTAGE** Top 10 Origin Markets - % Visitation & % Visitor Spend ~ Visitors % of Total Visitor Spending % of Total 25.9% San Antonio TX 27 6%



Source: Zartico Spend Data, Zartico Geolocation Data

400

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Looking Ahead TRADITIONS ANCHOR HERE, NOW AND IN THE FUTURE

Your Port Aransas Tourism Bureau & Chamber of Commerce is dedicated to continuing excellence on all frontiers for Port Aransas. We know that all of us on the island have made "the catch of a lifetime" by living in Port Aransas. As such, we will continue to bring thoughtful innovation to the arena of destination marketing for the island. We already have several exciting things planned to come in 2024, a sample of which can be found below:

- 🔜 Salty Stories 3.0
- **Envision Port Aransas**
- Carvertise campaign
- New creative concepts
- Respect Our Island Home expansion:
 - Physical Flynn mascot
 - Stewardship-centered events
 - New Characters, Captain Riley and Dottie
- 🛵 VisitPortAransas.com design refresh
- Partnership Matador Network and Columbia PFG to reach niche interest audiences.

We are excited to continue to work with our city leaders, residents, and business community to ensure Port Aransas continues to be the "catch of a lifetime" in 2024 and beyond. Thank you for all that you do!



Looking Ahead

THE CATCH OF A LIFETIME, ON AND OFF THE FIELD



PROUD PARTNER OF THE DALLAS COWBOYS

🕂 VisitPortAransas.com

The Dallas/Fort Worth market consistently performs high for Port Aransas visitation, so why not capitalize on that by partnering with America's team? Our partnership with the Dallas Cowboys will allow us to reach all-new audiences and strengthen brand perception by aligning Port Aransas with a brand that has been known and loved for decades.

We have been able to give away home game tickets and have received 7,818 validated entries with whom we can now share the appeal of island life! Additionally, we have run advertisements with "Traditions Anchor Here" messaging at AT&T Stadium throughout the season. This partnership will grow in strength in 2024, as we host activations at The Star in Frisco and conduct a sweepstakes for a Port Aransas fishing trip with a Dallas Cowboy alum.

We look forward to seeing how we can continue to leverage this partnership to showcase Port Aransas for what it is—the catch of a lifetime.

PORT ARANSAS Strength Provid Partner of the Dallas Cowboys









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Like Comment & Share



PORT ARANSAS the island life

PROUD PARTNER OF THE DALLAS COWBOYS