

2024

Annual Report

Port Aransas Tourism Bureau & Chamber of Commerce

envision

Community

Fun

Tradition

Quality of Life

Respect



PORT ARANSAS
the island life

A NOTE from the president

Envision Port Aransas: A Shared Vision for Our Future

Community, Tradition, Quality of Life, Fun, and Respect—these are the values we embraced together in 2024 to ENVISION Port Aransas! With a renewed vision to establish ourselves as the premier family beach destination in Texas, we are now focused on welcoming visitors who share our love for the Texas Gulf Coast and who positively contribute to our quality of life.

As we reflect on the past year, our new three-year plan, which took shape during the 2024 Tourism Summit, is already paving the way toward our core pillars—enhancing island living and fostering a thriving visitor economy. The progress outlined in this report is a testament to the collective dedication to these goals.

Yet, our journey has not been without challenges. Natural disasters and personal losses have tested our resilience. This past year, our community was deeply affected as Lisa Shelton, a cherished member of our organization, faced life-changing circumstances. Her absence has been profoundly felt, and we continue to pray for her recovery, hoping she will soon rejoin us in our mission to Envision an even more remarkable Port Aransas.

Looking ahead, 2025 holds immense promise for our beloved island. As a community, we remain steadfast in our commitment to shaping Port Aransas into the best place to live on a barrier island. Thank you to everyone who has contributed their unwavering support in setting this vision into motion.

Live Port Aransas—Traditions Anchor Here!



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

partner updates

Heroes Among Us

At May's Tourism Rally, we recognized 34 industry representatives as Hospitality Heroes and five as SUPERheroes. Each of these leaders were nominated by management as employees who go above and beyond as ambassadors for the island.

Myra Barreiro	Su-z Kleinhans	Merrick Roy
Kat Billington	JJ Lee	Cheryl Sain
Jules Brown	Gabe Lopez	Chance Sessions
Kati Cook	Mauricio Magdadaro	Jay Sesso
Spencer Cox	Sally Marco	Sharon Spence
Judi Flores	Earl Maxwell	Maddie Stanfield
Severa Flores	Tim Parke	Mike Stevens
Nikko Fowler	Taylor Parker	Patricia Stewart
James Garrett	Tricia Perrine	Raeanna Valadez
Courtney Hanna	Dana Pope	Fred Williams
Karen Harris	Tiffany Price	
Marcilee Hinda	Erin Reaves	

HOSPITALITY HEROES

HOSPITALITY SUPERHEROES

Mike Lynch

Ace Hardware

Tjoe Miguez

Neptune's Charters

Jeff Moss

The Crazy Cajun

Tim & Crystal Oestreich

Dolphin Dock, Inc.

Linda Zahn

Community Presbyterian Church

GIVING BACK TO PORT A

Our partners, along with special events, sponsorships, and fundraisers, contributed to the more than \$75,000 we donated to nonprofit organizations this year.



2024 Total Giving
\$75,000+

4,028

WELCOME CENTER VISITORS

Visitor foot traffic at Port Aransas Welcome Center

316

TOTAL PARTNERS

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

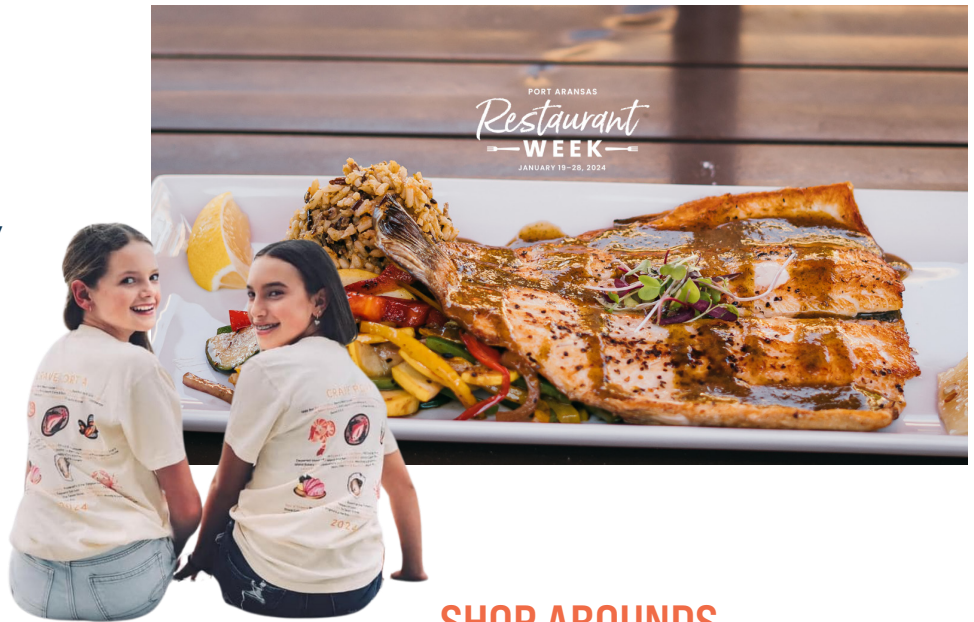
22

NEW PARTNERS

These organizations share our vision of a bright future for Port Aransas where the island life (and local businesses) thrive.

PORT ARANSAS
Restaurant
WEEK
JANUARY 19-28, 2024

Prix-fixe specials at partner restaurants highlighted the culinary scene. In 2024, we added brunch to the lineup! We also created "Crave Port A," a custom design merchandise campaign to promote Port A restaurants all year.



SHOP AROUNDS

Boutiques brought the deals during four annual Shop Around events: Chocolate Crawl & Valentine's Day Shop Around, Spring Fling, Shoptober, and Holiday Shop Around.

Partnering Together to Make Port A Shine partner events & initiatives

HOLIDAY EVENTS

We were proud to be a part of holiday events across December, including the Lighted Boat Parade, second annual Drone Show, Sand Santa sculpture, and New Year's Eve fireworks. Thank you to the sponsors who made it possible!



March's month-long margarita trail, Margarita Madness, celebrated coastal cocktails with fifteen bar and restaurant participants. Cheers to the mixologists who take "beach drinks" to the next level!



signature events



The 28th annual Whooping Crane Festival was another record-breaking event! This four-day festival celebrates the cranes and raises awareness about their endangered status.

Boat tours, photography workshops, birding walks, sponsorships, and more contributed to the nearly \$130,000 in total sales.

The event would not be possible without our incredible birding guides, volunteers, business partners, friends at the Port Aransas Nature Preserve, University of Texas Marine Science Institute, and more.

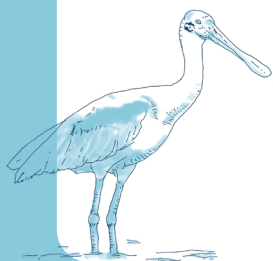
quick facts

65 Experiences

30+ Trade show vendors

2,500+ Individual tickets sold

\$55,000+ WCF proceeds donated



Autumnal bliss descended in "Beachtober." Weekends were full of celebrations of island culture, from the annual Port A Live Music Weekend to Flynn's Beach Run. Two month-long trails, the Taco & Margarita Trail and the Sweet Traditions Dessert trail, added to the festivities!



live music fest



island science day



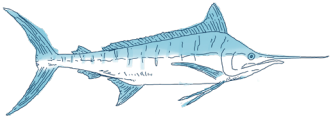
flynn's beach run
...and much more!

Public Relations

\$548.5 million

value

Estimated value, January through December 2024



31.7 million

impressions

Estimated combined impressions, January through December 2024



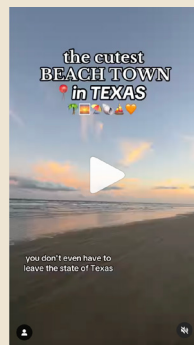
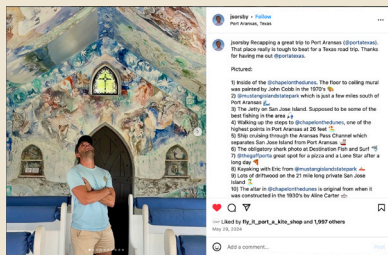
497

features

Combined secured and organic print, online, broadcast, and social media, January through December 2024



INFLUENCER PARTNERSHIPS



Influencers helped us build relationships within Port A's target markets in niches like outdoor activities, travel, and family. These partnerships increased awareness and drove traffic to local websites and social media pages.

read all about it

extra

THE ASTIN CHRONICLE
Day Trips & Beyond: April Events Roundup

TRAVEL+LEISURE
Beach Towns in Texas, According to Locals

Southern Living
17 Multigenerational Trip Ideas in the South Perfect for the Whole Family

Southern Living
For a Sea-Soaked Weekend

Texas Monthly
Why? Our School Grads Are Back in the Biz

Texas Highways
Small Town Stays with Big Histories

AFAR
12 of the Best Small-Town Weekend Getaways in Texas

AAA
7 Totally Cool Texas Getaways

CHRON.
How to eat, drink your way through Port Aransas this summer

Southern Living
10 Best Beach Towns For Girls' Weekend Getaways

San Antonio
4 Beach Destinations for Summer Break

GARDEN+GUN
How to eat, drink your way through Port Aransas this summer

extra

Scan to see our top 10 media highlights!

tourism economics

VISITATION BY THE NUMBERS

FERRY COUNT TO PORT A
1,825,882
TOTAL PASSENGERS AS OF DECEMBER 2024
Source: TXDOT

FERRY COUNT TO PORT A
1,018,147
TOTAL VEHICLES AS OF DECEMBER 2024
Source: TXDOT

AVERAGE LOS* (DAYS)
3.9
*LOS: Length of Stay
Source: KeyData

HOT TAX COLLECTION
\$10.2 MILLION
Source: City of Port Aransas FY 24

\$3.9 MILLION
(Including general fund and RDC)
Source: City of Port Aransas FY 24



**TOP FIVE
Origin Markets**

1. San Antonio
2. Austin
3. Dallas/Fort Worth
4. Houston
5. Waco/Temple/Bryan

**TOP FIVE
SPEND CATEGORIES**

1. Food
2. Retail
3. Gas & Service Stations
4. Accommodations
5. Transportation

DFW
Highest spend by
percentage

respect our island home

More Than A Messaging Campaign

In 2025, the Respect Our Island Home campaign continued to teach visitors how to do things the Port A way through videos, geotargeted advertising, in-market touchpoints, and more.

Flynn, Dottie, and Captain Riley served as the face of the campaign. We debuted Dottie and Captain Riley plushes, created a new, smaller-sized reusable tote bag, and more. Keep an eye out at local restaurants for the newest kids' coloring menu featuring Flynn and friends!



FLYNN MASCOT DEBUT



RESPECT[®]
OUR ISLAND
HOME PORT 
ARANSAS

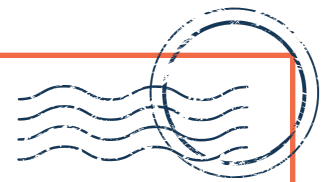
innovative solutions on world tourism day

On September 27, 2024, we took part in Destination Think's launch of "100 Travel Innovations," a transformative resource for those who are ready to take action on challenges we all share.

The site began with 100 innovations and continues to grow. As of its launch, the collection represented six continents and more than 35 countries. Port Aransas was the only Texas destination represented.



envision port aransas



By drawing upon the ingenuity of locals and the strength of the tourism economy, the Envision Port Aransas plan aims at providing a roadmap to community-positive tourism outcomes. This plan came about after: 414 survey responses, 60+ in-depth interviews, 2 community forums, and 2 ideation sessions.

What Does Port A Care About?

COMMUNITY

Even though Port Aransas attracts a million-plus visitors a year to its wide-open beaches, it's also a place where real people live and make their homes. Local life revolves around the schools. People who don't even have kids go to the games and attend education fundraisers for the good of local education. Port Aransas is a place that's real, where not everything is picture-perfect, and it's filled with genuine people ready to share a friendly exchange. Anyone who shares this spirit can feel at home.



TRADITION

Port Aransas is a place with a past. As the "Fishing Capital of Texas," it attracts major celebrities, remains home to a boatworks that innovated the fastest fishing boat of its time, and still hosts the Gulf Coast's longest-running fishing event. It's also where many come to make new memories. Port Aransas is one of those places that families have visited for generations, often because they want their kids to enjoy the simple pleasures they did growing up. Locals say they hear that all the time. It's part of why not changing Port Aransas too much is important to many people.



QUALITY OF LIFE

It takes grit to make a life in Port Aransas. Living in this community requires an ability to withstand ebbs and flows in the local economy, times when the town is packed with visitors, and the seasonal potential hurricanes. But the rewards are many for those who want to live in a laid-back small town where they can also fish, surf, and go to the beach. For many, it's a top priority to give more people a chance to make a home or keep their homes in this island paradise.



FUN

Port Aransas is a place with a carefree vibe, where socks aren't necessary, bathing suits are acceptable attire, and business owners might close their stores to surf or fish. The opportunities for enjoyment are abundant, and much of it either doesn't carry a price tag or is light on the wallet. An annual beach pass is just \$12, and you can even pitch a tent on the sand. If you're bored, says one resident, it's because you want to be. Having fun is a way of life in Port Aransas—as long as your fun doesn't come at the expense of someone else's.



RESPECT

When people head into the Gulf on a Port Aransas fishing boat or cruise, they know they're on the water with someone who knows what they're doing. There's respect there, and it's part of why people choose Port Aransas as their vacation spot. Respect is also the theme of the stewardship campaign the community began sharing in 2022, asking visitors to "Respect Our Island Home." Anyone who comes to Port Aransas is welcome. All that's asked in return is respect for the local way of life and the marine environment that makes this place special.



envision port aransas

One Goal At A Time

ENHANCE ISLAND LIVING

A major goal of regenerative tourism is to achieve a balance where businesses prosper and locals enjoy a high quality of life from the spending and contributions of visitors who appreciate what their community offers. With a Tourism Bureau & Chamber positioned to lead with strength, create economic opportunities for more people, and address top community priorities, Port Aransas can foster a tourism economy that does well and does good.

goal

1

FOSTER A HEALTHY VISITOR ECONOMY

Amid signs of a slowing economy, it's imperative for the Tourism Bureau to keep building the Port Aransas brand and the visitor experience. While Port A continues on a path to be the premier family beach destination in Texas, it can build demand during less-busy times by targeting new high-potential traveler segments. And by taking active steps to reduce environmental impacts and attract visitors whose presence is positive, Port Aransas can support the health of its economy while supporting the health of its community.

goal

2



2024- 2027



objectives

ENHANCE ISLAND LIVING

1. Continue to develop organizational excellence.
2. Create more economic opportunity.
3. Advance the Port Aransas way of life.

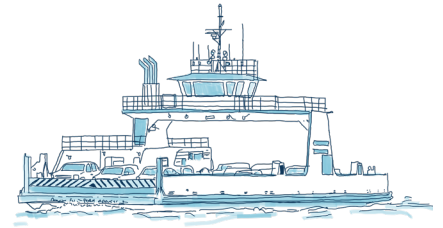
objectives

FOSTER A HEALTHY VISITOR ECONOMY

1. Attract visitors who care about what Port Aransas offers.
2. Make Port A the Gulf Coast's most sustainable destination.

web traffic

New Look, Same Outstanding Resource



This year, we refreshed VisitPortAransas.com to make our website a sleeker, faster, and, quite frankly, more beautiful resource for visitors. We update that resource constantly to make sure we're on top of all Port A has to offer—we published 45 blogs this year! We also continued an SEO contract that resulted in an almost 30% increase in organic search traffic! And we're stepping into the future with Satisfi Labs, an AI-powered virtual concierge which allows users to ask "Flynn" for real-time answers to all their burning questions.

TOP SESSIONS BY TOPIC

1. Navigation & Home Page
2. Logistics & Planning
3. Outdoor Recreation
4. Events
5. Accommodations

USERS

1.9 MILLION

PAGEVIEWS

5.1 MILLION

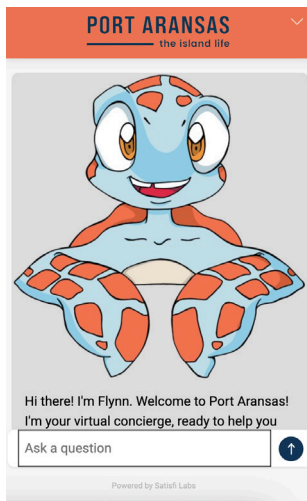
ORGANIC SEARCH TRAFFIC

↑ 29.1%

TOP VISITED WEBPAGE

VisitPortAransas.com/plan/webcam/

↑ 159.34%
in page views



Satisfi Labs' conversational AI platform is dedicated to the tourism industry. Their engine has powered AI Chat on our website since August, and will soon be implemented on social media!

artificial intelligence

3,076 messages
118 work hours saved

owned channels

Email Marketing

The "Currents" newsletter continued to deliver current events, updates, and island happenings to 80,000+ email boxes each month.

Halfway through 2024, we invested in a re-engagement campaign. Email marketing is a valuable owned channel, and we want our messages to reach audiences who want to hear them. As a result, open rates increased from 29% to 34%.

PARTNERS:

Check your email on Fridays for our weekly partner newsletter! That's the first place we'll share opportunities and must-know info.

Currents

33% open rate*

1 MILLION emails sent

*Average for all of 2024. Re-engagement delivered an increase from 29% to 34% in the latter half of the year.



65 million impressions

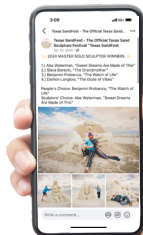
15.6% increase

209,188 following along

26.6% net audience increase

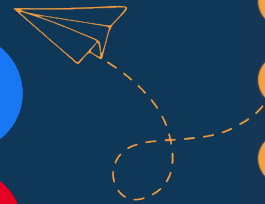
8 million video views

15.6% increase



Social Recap

This year, we partnered with Texas SandFest to expand their social media reach. We are grateful for their trust and excited about the growth we have already seen!



paid promotions

Building on an Unshakeable Foundation

Generations have made their way to Port Aransas shores for relaxation, connection, and fun, and we did a little bit of all of that in our advertising this year. We relaxed in strong digital strategy, had some fun with Carvertise and interactive fishing games in mall thoroughfares, and made decisive connections with audiences old and new.

In late 2024, we signed a new contract with our incumbent agency of record, Madden Media. Our trusted team at the agency will be beside us every step of the way from 2024–2027 as we explore new paid advertising avenues, get creative in the old ones, and hone in our efforts on community-positive tourism.

salty stories 3.0



campaign stats:

- Impressions: 2,884,805
- Clicks: 129,173
- Views: 50,170
- Through Plays: 215,267

ANNUAL MEDIA PERFORMANCE

	SEM	Cross-Network	Paid Social	Display
Click	185,772	271,327	785,343	91,264
Impressions	2,165,072	15,477,145	37,796,768	18,541,760
CTR	8.58%	1.75%	3.20%	0.38%
Users	357,555	108,982	532,580	93,031
Engagment Rate	50.27%	51.73%	32.20%	31.19%

TOTALS

83,840,779 impressions

1,343,906 clicks to site

\$13.87 cpm

\$0.48 cpc



ISLAND GUIDE

printed: 75,000

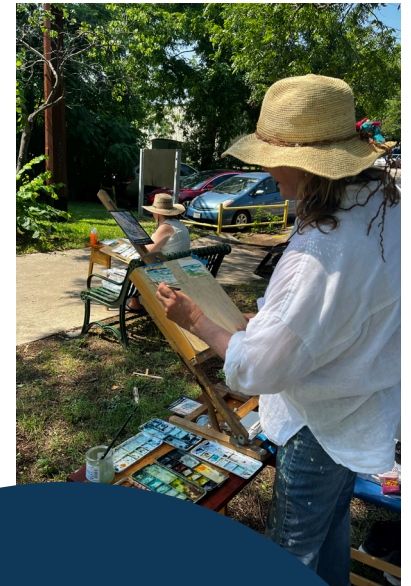
polybagged in texas monthly: 55,000





message in a bottle

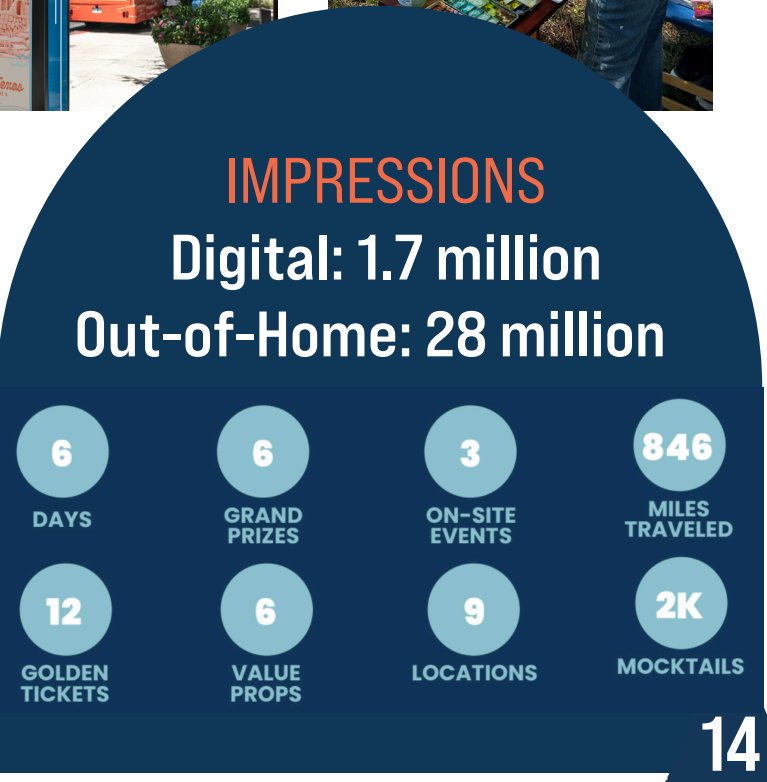
Find What You Need in Port Aransas



This guerilla experiential campaign was created to transform advertising into an exciting adventure. Participants were engaged through a treasure hunt experience, encouraged to share their finds on social media, and connect with the serene, adventurous, and family-friendly aspects of Port A.

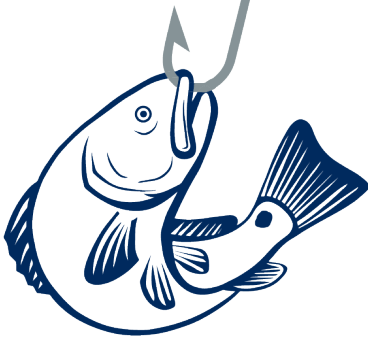


By blending guerilla out-of-home advertisements with interactive, playful elements, we created a memorable brand experience that stood out in the cluttered advertising landscape demonstrating that whatever you need, you can find it in Port A.



dallas cowboys partnership

America's Vacation Destination



Our partnership with the Dallas Cowboys isn't all touchdowns and pom poms. We are seeing real results from increased efforts in the DFW area tied to the Cowboys partnership. From the fans we've met at game day activations to anyone who hopped in an Uber or Lyft during our Cowboys-focused Carvertise campaign, these audiences are spending more and staying longer in Port Aransas.



PORT ARANSAS

the island life

PROUD PARTNER OF THE DALLAS COWBOYS



PORT ARANSAS



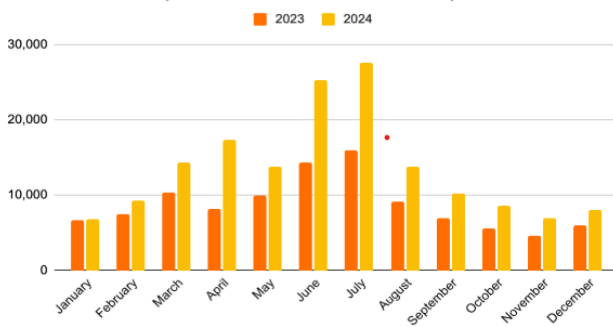
Proud Partner of the Dallas Cowboys



VisitPortAransas.com

DFW SITE TRAFFIC GROWTH

DFW TRAFFIC (SEO & DIRECT CHANNELS)



+80%
3 minutes 43 seconds
Average Site Duration Y/Y

+80%
SEO Engaged Sessions Y/Y

+54%
Traffic Y/Y



THE CATCH OF A LIFETIME



PORT ARANSAS
the island life

VISIT THE FISHING CAPITAL OF TEXAS

Impressions:
4,409,655

Clicks:
85,397

CTR:
1.94%

Seat Sweeps Submissions:
3,712

THE CATCH OF A LIFETIME



sweepstakes fishing trip with alumni player tony casillas

Taking The Island Life to The World Stage

awards



MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE

Platinum–Best in Category, HSMIAI Adrian Awards

The Hospitality Sales & Marketing Association International (HSMIAI) recognized Port Aransas with a platinum award for the “Find What You Need in Port A” campaign in the Advertising–Brand Campaign category. In this guerilla experiential campaign, Austinites treasure hunted for 500 “message in a bottle” prizes themed after what Port Aransas offers: Serenity, Natural Wonder, Vitamin Sea, Inspiration, Quality Time, and Adventure. This is a prestigious international honor, and our team will be heading to New York to pick up the award in person!

MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE

First Place Winner, Texas Destination Excellence Awards

The Texas Association of Convention & Visitor Bureaus (TACVB) also regarded Port A’s “Find What You Need in Port A” campaign highly. The guerilla campaign took the top spot award for judge’s choice in the Leisure Tourism Marketing Campaign category.

ISLAND MAGAZINE

Bronze, HSMIAI Adrian Awards

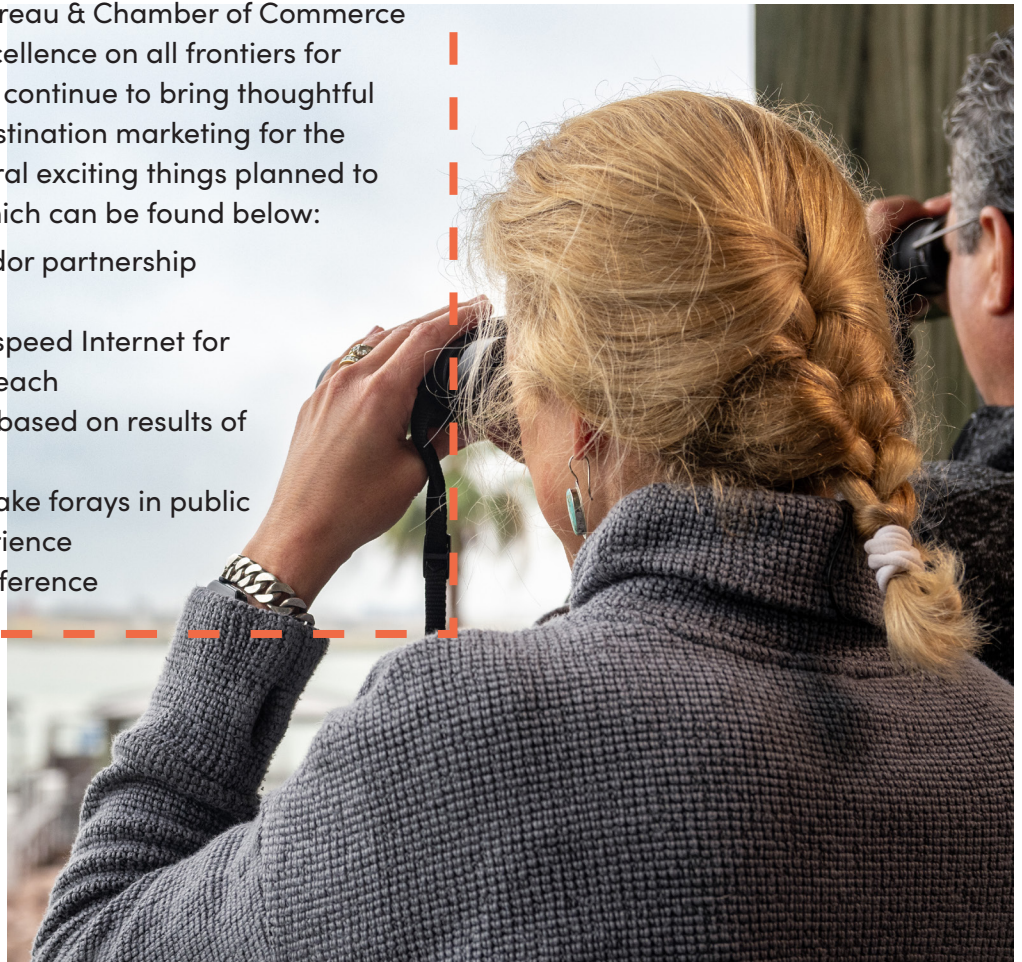
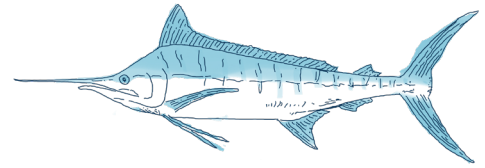
Port Aransas received another Adrian Award from HSMIAI in the Advertising–Print Collateral category for the 2024 Island Magazine. The guide is an interactive, inspirational magazine that rises above the traditional destination guide both in content and distribution.

looking ahead

A Regenerative Future

Your Port Aransas Tourism Bureau & Chamber of Commerce is dedicated to continuing excellence on all frontiers for 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 2025, a sample of which can be found below:

- Columbia PFG and Matador partnership video debut
- Pilot program with Brightspeed Internet for free public Wi-Fi on the beach
- Workforce developments based on results of late 2024 survey
- New team members to make forays in public relations and visitor experience
- Regenerative tourism conference



save the date

February

12: Port Aransas Tourism Summit
13: Chocolate Crawl
20–23: Whooping Crane Festival

March

Margarita Madness
5: Port A Day at the Capitol

April

11–13: Spring Fling Shop Around
24: Shred Day
25–27: Texas SandFest

May

4–10: National Travel & Tourism Week
6: Tourism Rally & Hospitality Heroes Ceremony

September

25: Beachtober Bash

Beachtober

Taco & Margarita Trail
Sweet Traditions Dessert Trail
Sustainability Conference
10–12: Shoptober
18: Island Science Day
25: Flynn's Beach Run

December

Sand Santa
12–14: Holiday Shop Around
13: Santa Soirée (Holiday Drone Show, Lighted Boat Parade, and Holiday Collaborations)
31: New Year's Eve Fireworks

January 2026

Port Aransas Restaurant Week

looking ahead

It's Not A Vacation, It's A Lifestyle

PORT ARANSAS the island life



Perhaps the biggest change to our marketing approach in 2025 is a change in mindset. We will now be thinking of and positioning Port Aransas as a “lifestyle brand,” at which the island way of life is at the core. Who is the ideal visitor to Port Aransas? What do they like to wear on vacation? Where do they like to go out to eat or drink? What scents remind them of the beach? In other words, who lives the island life all the time?

We will continue to lean on “Traditions Anchor Here” as a sub-header for the brand, but also expand our branding (you can see our refreshed logo above!), explore new brand partnerships with other nationally-known brands (Yeti, anyone?), and take a hard look at our organization’s name (Port Aransas Tourism Bureau & Chamber of Commerce is a mouthful, isn’t it?).

Thank you for coming around for the ride! We are grateful to know that we are well on our way to being known as the premier family beach destination in Texas.



PORT ARANSAS

the island life

the mission

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

the vision

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

the purpose

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



our team

Brett Stawar
President & CEO

Melinda Compton
Marketing & Communications
Director

Cameron Fowler
Stewardship & Branding
Specialist

Michelle Garrett
Visitor Experience &
Program Coordinator

Shelley Witcher
Business Development &
Sales Director

Jackie Peaslee
Finance & Administrative
Director

Kyra Mangum
Content Curator

Tricia Perrine
Visitor Experience &
Office Coordinator

our board

Keith McMullin
Chairperson
Real Estate/Developer

Celeste Edwards
Secretary
Hotel/Lodging

Marnie Pate
Hotel/Lodging

Kim Winton
Retail

Shannon Lafayette
Professional Services

Tanya Chambers
Ex Officio

Laurie Soechting
Vice Chairperson
Restaurant/Bar

Fred Samudio
Treasurer

Scott Clanton
Hotel/Lodging

Greg Stunz
At Large

Ed Buskey
At Large

David Parsons
Ex Officio

Greg Carr
Hotel/Lodging

Marsha Starkey
Hotel/Lodging

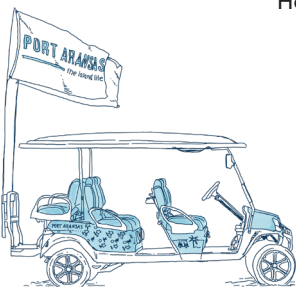
Chris Collins
Bar/Restaurant

Will Cocke Jr.
Fishing/Marina

Regina Love*
Hotel/Lodging

Brett Stawar

*Incoming 2025 board member



A huge THANK YOU to Bill Bauder for his 30 years of service to the Port Aransas Tourism Bureau & Chamber of Commerce board! We are grateful for his consistent wisdom over the years and wish him all the best!