

2025

Annual Report

Port Aransas, The Island Life

Dichotomy

PORT ARANSAS can be found “**IN BETWEEN.**” It’s where the **SAND MEETS THE SEA** and where **ECONOMIC** needs meet **COMMUNITY** needs. In the **DICHOTOMY** of Port A, there are all the makings for a **NEW ERA OF THRIVING.**



PORT ARANSAS
the island life

A note

from the president

The word "dichotomy" suggests a contrast between two opposing things. But on this island, dichotomy doesn't feel like separation. It feels like harmony. Port Aransas thrives in the space between contrasts. We are resilient yet relaxed. Rooted in tradition yet boldly forward-looking. A small town with a big reach.

That balance is not accidental—it's who we are.

We honor the fishermen heading out before sunrise just as much as the families arriving for their first beach vacation. We protect our natural environment while fueling an economy powered by tourism. We preserve the character of our island even as we invest in its future. The beauty of Port Aransas is that we don't have to choose one side of the story. The tension between them is our strength. Our team excels at defining and celebrating this tension that makes up the identity of our island home.

Together, through bold originality, we balance luxury with laidback lifestyles. Please enjoy the pages that follow showcasing our ingenuity as Port Aransas, The Island Life.

With pride,

Brett Stawar, President & CEO

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 Values

Community
Tradition
Quality of Life
Fun
Respect

Community Engagement

At May's Tourism Rally, we recognized 34 industry representatives as Hospitality Heroes and five as SUPERheroes. Each of these leaders were nominated as employees who go above and beyond as ambassadors for the island. That's a slam dunk for Port A!

HOSPITALITY SUPERHEROES

Harry Collins

Port A Escapes

Rudy Fairchild

Cinnamon Shore

Michelle Garrett

Port Aransas, The Island Life

Katelyn Gray

Sandcastle Condominiums

Tressy Merrill

Port Royal Ocean Resort & Conference Center



HOSPITALITY HEROES

Ruby Acuna
Richard Flenniken
Dystanie Law
Jose Sanchez
Mary Andrews
Addie Belcher
Hilda Cantu
Maria Chavez
Scott Clanton
Ray Dillahunty
Rosita Fielder
John Genuino
Don Gillespie
Delia Gonzaleso
Eva Gonzalez
John Grant
Emma Henson
Spencer Iezzi
Meredith Medley
Sue Miles
Colby Minnick
Catrina Michelle
Jessica Molina
Jerry Oltremari
Patty Oltremari
Porsha Peck
Christian Pitney
Tristyn Seymore
Ryan Speegle
Renee Tilley
Matthew Trent
Candi Villagomez
David Walsh
Amber Young
Sarah Ziegler

GIVING BACK

Our partners, along with special events, sponsorships, and fundraisers, contributed to the \$77,000+ we donated to nonprofit organizations toward causes like PAISD scholarships, conservation, and more.



3,994

Foot Traffic

Visitor foot traffic at Port Aransas Welcome Center

316

Total Partners

Partner benefits include networking, referrals, ad opportunities, a web presence, and more.

32

New Partners

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

WEB TRAFFIC

As search behavior continues to evolve, traditional traffic metrics alone no longer tell the full story of organic performance. Success is now influenced by:

- Visibility in Google's AI-generated summaries
- Presence in AI Mode and conversational search
- Citations within AI chat engines
- Continued ranking stability and authority

467,735 *Organic Users*
[-8.85% YoY]

555,921 *Engaged Sessions*
[-9.21% YoY]

223 *Keywords triggering AI-generated summaries*
[+4,360% YoY]

62 *Pages appearing as cited sources*
[+1,140% YoY]

- Home *Top 3 Traffic Pages*
- Webcams
- Events

While clicks decline, visibility is expanding across discovery surfaces, allowing the website to influence traveler decision-making in new ways.

VisitPortAransas.com maintains strong search visibility, earns citations in AI-generated answers, and supports travelers across multiple discovery channels.

PROMOTING PORT A THROUGH PARTNERSHIP



PORT ARANSAS
Restaurant
WEEK
JANUARY 17-FEBRUARY 2, 2025

Prix-fixe specials at partner restaurants highlighted Port A's culinary scene. In 2025, we extended the event to three weekends for maximum foodie fun and slow-season benefit to our dining partners.



Now three weekends.



MARGARITA MADNESS
PORT ARANSAS

In our fifth and final year tradition of trading poor officiating for official pours, March Madness celebrated craft coastal cocktails all month long! 10 bar and restaurant partners made up the roster.





MARGARITA MADNESS
Your Favorite Port A Margaritas
All March Long
to see the full lineup, visit portaransas.com/margarita-madness
*Taxi Required

er events partner events partner events partner

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.






FESTIVE FUN

This holiday season, we launched Santa Soirée, uniting the Lighted Boat Parade, Holiday Drone Show, Holiday Shop Around, and the new Bingo Bells into a celebration encouraging holiday shopping, dining, and activities. Santa Soirée complemented the beloved Sand Santa sculpture and New Year's Eve fireworks, rounding out a robust holiday lineup.





WHOOPING CRANE

Festival

PORT ARANSAS, TX



Even with bad weather, the 29th annual Whooping Crane Festival was a record-breaking success celebrating the most endangered crane in the world. The event featured our usual hot-ticket items, plus new experiences like a scientific boat trip aboard the R/V Katy and innovative speakers.

Thank you to the incredible birding guides, volunteers, business partners, friends at the Port Aransas Nature Preserve, and University of Texas Marine Science Institute who make this event possible. Stay tuned for 2026 numbers!

WCF 2025 in Numbers

2,419
Individual tickets sold



\$52,000+
Proceeds donated



\$150,000+
Total sales



Weekends in "Beachtober" were bursting with local flavor and celebrations. Signature events like Shoptober and Flynn's Beach Run were joined by two month-long trails: the Taco & Margarita Trail and the Sweet Traditions Dessert Trail.

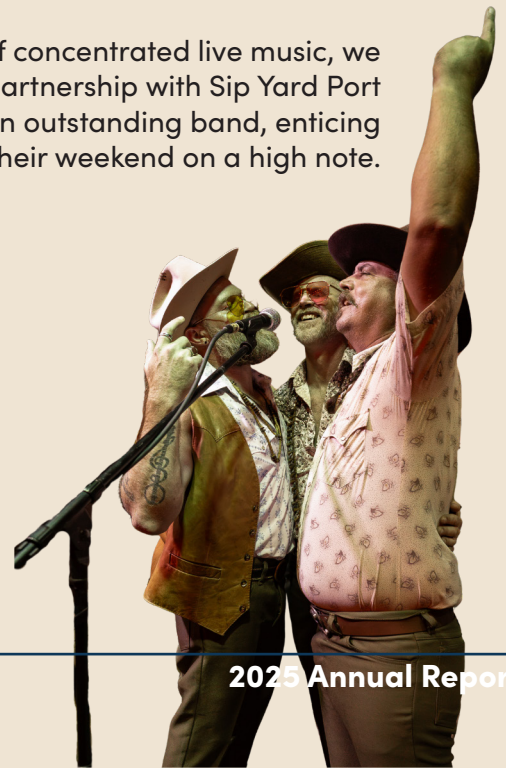
This year, instead of one weekend of concentrated live music, we sponsored Beachtober Beats in partnership with Sip Yard Port Aransas. Each Friday featured an outstanding band, enticing visitors to come in early and start their weekend on a high note.

The Results?

36%
Increase in short-term rental revenue



18,500
Short-term rental guest nights



turning the tide

On October 21–22, 2025, we launched a first-of-its-kind regenerative tourism summit we dubbed "Turning the Tide." The tagline? "Forging the future of Gulf Coast tourism."

The Gulf Coast is a treasure, and regenerative tourism offers a powerful vision to ensure it thrives environmentally, socially, and economically. Turning the Tide was our chance to invite industry leaders to put heads together and evolve beyond traditional approaches to create a legacy of renewal.

This first year, we invited speakers from as far off as Hawai'i and as near as our own University of Texas Marine Science Institute. We had a day full of learning and capped it all off with a once-in-a-lifetime, locally-sourced dinner at the Lydia Ann Lighthouse.

The resounding feeling at the end? Hope. Inspiration. And a clearer vision for the future.

Stay tuned: Turning the Tide returns October 25–28, 2026



Expansion was the word of the year in the Public Relations and Earned Media departments.

We newly partnered with Madden Media for public relations services, allowing for frictionless integration of our paid and earned efforts.

In addition to the tried-and-true methods of earning coverage, we also hosted our first ever media events! The first was an intimate dinner with Austin-area journalists in tandem with our Beach Reads activation, and the second was a "Coastal Tailgate" in Dallas. At the coastal tailgate, our team welcomed nearly 25 DFW-area journalists to dine on coastal cuisine, sip cocktails from Lelo's Island Bar, interact with a master sand sculptor, and design their very own coastal cowboy hat. Both events yielded coverage and in-market visits, plus long-standing relationships we will continue to nurture.

Travel Writers

6 travel writers hosted, four from the United States and two from the United Kingdom.



Influencers

followers reached across five influencers hosted.

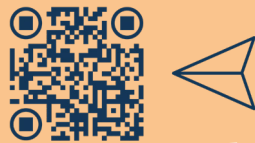
2M+



Media Highlights

- Southern Living*
- The Independent*
- Wall Street Journal*
- USA Today*
- Garden & Gunn*
- Forbes*
- Islands*
- Convention South*
- Medium*
- Midwest Living*

Read the stories:



Introducing... Media Events



↑ beach reads media dinner



↓ coastal tailgate

Research Project



We engaged internationally-respected market research firm Longwoods International to complete a program to measure our efforts' effectiveness. The scope was three-fold: advertising awareness, brand health assessment, and halo effect.

Campaign Dates:
January–July 2025

Media Types:
**Social, Display/Digital, Video,
Audio, Print & OOH**

Survey Respondents:
**1,000 total, distributed across key
markets (Austin, DFW, San Antonio,
Houston & Waco-Temple-Bryan)**

Key Findings

CAMPAIGN EFFECTIVENESS

The 2025 Visit Port Aransas campaign improved the reputation of the destination as a place travelers would really enjoy visiting, with travelers aware of the advertisements rating Port Aransas 16-points higher than those who were unaware of the ads.

TOP DRIVERS FOR POTENTIAL VISITORS

Travelers from Visit Port Aransas's key markets seek an emerging, scenic destination that offers relaxation, outdoor recreation, and a fun atmosphere compelling enough for repeat visits.

HALO EFFECT OF TOURISM ADVERTISING

Tourism advertising and subsequent visitation to Port Aransas created a strong Halo Effect, improving public perceptions of the destination's economic development by at least 20 points across all measured attributes.

Tourism Economics

VISITATION BY THE NUMBERS

FERRY COUNT TO PORT A
1,899,488

Total Passengers Through
December 2025

Source: TXDOT

FERRY COUNT TO PORT A
1,039,386

Total Vehicles Through
December 2025

Source: TXDOT

AVERAGE LENGTH OF STAY
3.7 DAYS

Source: KeyData

GUEST NIGHTS
290.5K

15% increase over 2024
Source: KeyData

HOT TAX COLLECTION
\$11.4 MILLION

Source: City of Port Aransas FY 25

SALES TAX COLLECTION
\$4.3 MILLION

(including general fund and RDC)
Source: City of Port Aransas FY 25

TOP 5
ORIGIN MARKETS

1. San Antonio
2. Austin
3. Dallas/Fort Worth

4. Houston
5. Waco/Temple/Bryan

Built by Tourism Tax

AMENITIES FOR ALL

For a town of approximately 3,300, Port Aransas has an extraordinary collection of high-quality community amenities. Long before the term “regenerative tourism” was coined, the city began pouring proceeds of its vibrant tourism economy into facilities and programs that enhance local quality of life and provide quality experiences for visitors. By investing several hundred millions of local hotel and lodging tax (HOT tax) dollars in community improvements, Port Aransas has long been a beacon for channeling tourism as a regenerative force.

Local HOT tax revenues are supplemented with a dedicated coastal community rebate from the State of Texas HOT tax collections. These revenues, along with sales taxes generated mainly by visitors, support numerous local assets that contribute to quality of life and quality of place. These include:

ASSETS & AMENITIES



7.5 miles of beach on the Gulf of Mexico

City employees remove trash daily and maintain a drivable beach with open camping year round.

Port Aransas Nature Preserve

Trail expansion, maintenance, and staffing of the four nature preserve sites are supported in part by lodging tax and grants. These sites are: Leonabelle Turnbull Birding Center, Port Aransas Nature Preserve at Charlie’s Pasture, Scott & Joan Holt Paradise Pond, and Wetland Park.

Port Aransas Civic Center

Soon to be renovated and expanded, the center has room for civic and private functions and meetings.

Fishing Piers

The Roberts Point Park pier, Ancel Brundrett pier, and Charlie’s Pasture pier are free and open to the public.

Dennis Dreyer Municipal Harbor

The city-operated marina has boat ramps, floating docks, rental slips, and a fish cleaning station. The harbor also has a brand-new Harbor Master Facility and the Fred Rhodes Memorial pavilion, which serves as home base for many of the town’s popular fishing tournaments.

Port Aransas Community Center

The site of many community events, the center is also available for rentals.

Roberts Point Park

A 50-acre park protects the marina while providing fishing access, recreation, and views of Gulf wildlife.

Community Park

The park offers ball fields, a pool facility, splash pad, skate park, disc golf, pickleball courts, a dog park, and walking trails.

Jerry McDonald Field

The newly-renovated Jerry McDonald Field facility offers a lighted softball field with seating.



PUBLIC SAFETY



Port Aransas Surf Rescue

Lifeguards and surf rescue towers promote safe use of the beach with daily monitoring through the primary season.

Code Enforcement

Code enforcement officers monitor visitor behavior, parking, and other regulations to maintain the quality of the beach experience.

Police & Fire

Port Aransas police and the volunteer fire department draw support from lodging tax.

CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS



Port Aransas Art Center

Formed in 1995 by local artists, the center shares exhibits and offers classes and a gift shop year-round.

Port Aransas Community Theatre

Showcasing local talent of all ages, the nonprofit shares several high-quality productions every year.

Port Aransas Preservation & Historical Association

The volunteer-led nonprofit offers walking tours, a lecture series, and events at the Farley Boat Works.

ON THE HORIZON



Recreation Center

Next to the city pool, a new recreation center will provide sports courts, a gymnasium, and multi-use indoor and outdoor spaces.

Roberts Point Park Playground

A new \$2 million all-abilities, marine-themed playground is designed for multigenerational fun.

Old Town Square Park

This new 'postage-stamp' park in the town center will create both a sense of place and a place to meet.

Port Aransas Nature Preserve

Kayak trail access to Corpus Christi Bay.

...AND MORE



Streetscape & Wayfinding

Beautification and navigation enhancements to help Port Aransas become a more welcoming and walkable community.

Property Acquisitions

Includes parking lots, land for wetlands/nature park improvements, future beach road expansion, and more.

Brand refresh...

As we continue to develop as a destination and as an organization, it's our top priority to represent what we do and who we are as accurately as possible. With this in mind, we decided to revisit our branding from both an internal and external standpoint. Our goal with the Port Aransas brand is to be a reflection of the soul of our town. Every word, image, and brand interaction should capture the salty, laid-back spirit that makes the island life unforgettable. Through several intense creative sessions with our team, agency partners, and stakeholders, plus a dive into community surveys and advertising data, we developed a new brand. We feel that this brand refresh represents Port Aransas, honoring our past and aspiring to our regenerative future as the Gulf Coast's premier family beach destination.



Sub Brands

PORT ARANSAS
the island life



...and a name change

With our brand refresh came a considerable weighing of our organization's name. On paper, we are the Port Aransas Tourism Bureau & Chamber of Commerce, but as the years have progressed, our role has evolved. Yes, we are "Visit Port Aransas," but we are also a staunch supporter of local businesses as a chamber of commerce, a champion for growth as the spearhead of the "Envision" economic development committee, a voice for destination development, and so much more. When it comes down to it, we are a proponent for the Port A way of life—which is why "Port Aransas, The Island Life" just feels right as our new name. Going from eight words to five may not seem like a huge leap, but Port Aransas, The Island Life feels not just like how we live, but who we are, and like the mantle we want to carry into the future.



to type styles

Brand Samples



Matador x Columbia PFG Partnership Video

Views
2,337,523

Clicks
10,941



Salty Stories



Views
1,534,850

Reach
316,330



Island Magazine

Printed
150,000
75,000 full-sized magazines
75,000 16-page "micro magazines"

Polybagged
128,500
75,000 in *Texas Monthly*
17,500 in *405 Magazine*
36,000 in *5280 Magazine*

Impressions
8,454,906




Advertising

PAID PROMOTIONAL efforts in 2025 focused on three **KEY BUSINESS OBJECTIVES**: create the Port A **LIFESTYLE BRAND**, grow **BRAND AWARENESS** in key markets, and maintain **STRONG OCCUPANCY** and **OFF-PEAK INTEREST**. A few of our **STRATEGIES** to attain those objectives are showcased here.

Campaign Totals MADDEN

Includes only campaigns run with our AOR, Madden Media. These represent a slice of total marketing efforts. Included campaigns: General Leisure, Whooping Crane Festival, Texas SandFest, Salty Stories, Deep Sea Roundup, Winter Texan, Island Magazine, Respect Our Island Home, Q4 Add-On, Beach Buddy, Domain, Beach Reads, and Cowboys Support.


Clicks
1,141,413


Impressions
1,141,413


Reach
7,565,958


Engagements
1,310


Views
12,914,528


Completion Rate
62.61%


Leads
10,603


Room Nights
20,863


Gross Bookings
\$10,061,407

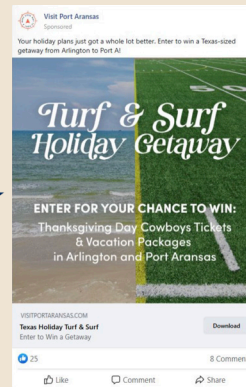
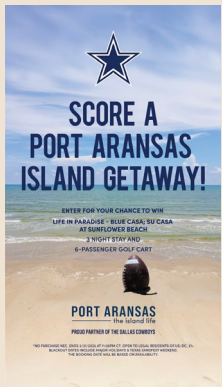

ROAS
\$71

Dallas Cowboys Partnership

We have seen strong returns over the last couple years with our Dallas Cowboys partnership, and we built on that foundation in 2025. We kept things fresh with an exciting opportunity for a family to win a sandcastle building lesson with a Cowboys alumni player, unique ad placements at The Star in Frisco, a "turf & surf" holiday getaway partnership with Visit Arlington, and over a million impressions on paid advertising placements.



WATCH THE FULL PARTNERSHIP RECAP



FIND YOUR BEACH BUDDY

This DFW-based activation invited kids (and kids at heart) to "adopt" their favorite Port A beach buddy, outfit their plush with accessories, and convince their parents it was time for a beach trip! The event was a massive success—a beach buddy was adopted every 22.5 seconds!



Find What You Need in Port Aransas

FIND YOUR BEACH READ

We opened a Port A chapter at the largest independent bookstore in Texas—BookPeople! We hosted a children's book reading with Flynn, a book charm bar, an ice cream truck, and an author talk with beach reads writer Mary Kay Andrews.

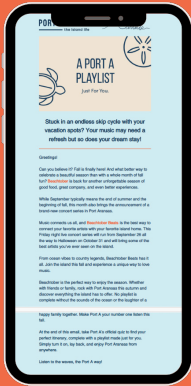


2025 was all about building on the success of our guerilla marketing campaign "Find What You Need on the Beach." Two distinct activation concepts emerged: "Find Your Beach Buddy" and "Find Your Beach Read," plus a simplified version of the original concept.

Activations

EMAIL MARKETING

Email marketing was a star component of our marketing efforts in 2025. We expanded our lineup with two new emails: "Diving into Data," a data-focused newsletter for industry partners, and the revamp of our quarterly interest-based newsletters. Overall, open rates were up by 10% in 2025!



Consumer News

12 sent (monthly cadence)

Reaching nearly 60,000

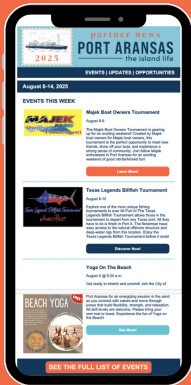
Average 43% open rate

Average 2% clicks

Reimagined with creative content

like a Port A Playlist and a Port A "Clue"

game in October.



Partner News

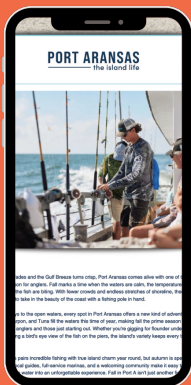
52 sent (weekly cadence)

Over 156 local events highlighted

Reaching 600+ stakeholders

Average 47% open rate

Average 3% clicks



Interest News

21 sent (quarterly cadence)

Reaching 11,000+

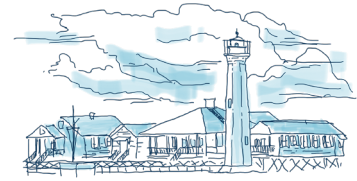
Average 45% open rate

Average 3% clicks

Resurrected and redone to emphasize interest in Things To Do, Fishing, Birding, Relaxation, and Shopping.

Owned

envision port aransas



Last year, we presented the Envision Port Aransas, our organization's strategic plan for 2024–2027. We are pleased to report here that many strides were taken towards achieving the two primary goals laid out in that plan: enhance island living and foster a healthy visitor economy. We are excited to continue building these programs out in 2026 and beyond.



GOAL 1: ENHANCE ISLAND LIVING

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



GOAL 2: 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.

UPDATES & OPPORTUNITIES



Free Public Wi-Fi program launched through a partnership with Brightspeed and Calix



Workforce survey conducted, 422 responses received



Continued development of wayfinding program with the City of Port Aransas



New Winter Texan campaign and expansion of Respect Our Island Home messaging.



Turning the Tide regenerative tourism conference established



Envision Port Aransas committee formed to pursue economic development opportunities for the island.

We will continue to embrace the island life dichotomy in 2026, especially as we make strides towards a holistic business development plan that will unify all efforts. On the promotional front, we are excited to jump on every timely opportunity. We have tailored a campaign toward the FIFA World Cup audience who will be heading to our Texas neighbors in 2026 and we have partnered with Wheel the World for our first accessibility-focused marketing initiative. We have another big activation planned (Ring ring! The island life is calling!) and are inviting empty nesters to "accept" the island life through an innovative direct mail campaign. We keep our foot on the golf cart pedal as we press on to this new era of thriving!

Looking AHEAD



Save the Date

April

10–12: Spring Fling Shop Around
21: Shred Day

May

3–9: National Travel & Tourism Week
5: Tourism Rally & Hospitality Heroes Ceremony
7: Tourism Summit

Beachtober

Taco & Margarita Trail
Sweet Traditions Dessert Trail
Fridays: Beachtober Beats
16–18: Shoptober
18: Island Science Day
24: Flynn’s Beach Run
25–28: Turning the Tide

December

Sand Santa
11–13: Holiday Shop Around
12: Santa Soirée (Holiday Drone Show, Lighted Boat Parade, and Bingo Bells)
31: New Year’s Eve Fireworks



Awards

Port Aransas took home the trophy at U.S. Travel's ESTO awards in the Immersive Experiences category for our "Find What You Need in Port A" guerrilla campaign. The ESTO awards are the tourism industry's top honor, making this was a once-in-a-career win for our team. Huge thanks to our partners at Madden Media for helping us achieve this dream. We couldn't be prouder!



PORT ARANSAS

the island life

Our Team

- Brett Stawar**
President & CEO
- Heidi Cluck**
Office Assistant
- Melinda Compton**
Marketing & Communications Director
- Joan Garland**
Community Impact & Sustainability Manager
- Michelle Garrett**
Visitor Experience & Program Coordinator
- Michelle Kelman**
Office Assistant
- Kyra Mangum**
Content Curator
- Jackie Peaslee**
Finance & Administrative Director
- Trisha Perrine**
Visitor Experience & Office Coordinator
- Sheri Stawar**
Office Assistant
- Meridith Taylor**
Office Assistant
- Shelley Witcher**
Business Development & Sales Director

Our Board

- | | |
|---|---|
| Keith McMullin
Chairperson
Real Estate/Developer | Chris Collins
Bar/Restaurant |
| Laurie Soechting
Vice Chairperson
Restaurant/Bar | Shannon Lafayette
Professional Services |
| Celeste Edwards
Secretary
Hotel/Lodging | Regina Love
Hotel/Lodging |
| Fred Samudio*
Treasurer
Hotel/Lodging | Marnie Pate
Hotel/Lodging |
| Greg Carr*
Treasurer
Hotel/Lodging | Marsha Starkey
Hotel/Lodging |
| Ed Buskey
At Large | Greg Stunz
At Large |
| Scott Clanton
Hotel/Lodging | Kim Winton
Retail |
| Will Cocke, Jr.
Fishing/Marina | Tanya Chambers
Ex Officio |
| | David Parsons
Ex Officio |
| | Brett Stawar |

*Position transfer in September 2025