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**Port Aransas Tourism to launch new initiative**

**defining the "Port A Way " for visitors**

(Nov. 18, 2021 – Port Aransas, TX). The Port Aransas Tourism Bureau & Chamber of Commerce invites all members of the Port A community to attend a two-hour workshop in early December to explore ways to educate vacationers about reducing their impacts on the community and beach.

Residents, businesses, community organizations and elected leaders are welcome to attend either of two sessions. The first is set for 5 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 9, at Port Aransas Independent School District Administration Boardroom, 100 South Station St., Port Aransas, Texas. The second is in the same location at 9 a.m. Friday, Dec. 10, 2021. Participants are asked to register for the workshop of their choice at this webpage at [www.visitportaransas.com/port-a-way](http://www.visitportaransas.com/port-a-way).

"Our record visitation last summer energized the local economy, but it also created situations that stressed our community," said Brett Stawar, President and CEO of the Port Aransas Tourism Bureau & Chamber of Commerce.

"Right now is the time to reset before we invite a new wave of summer vacationers," Stawar said, "This project gives our whole community an opportunity to come together around ways we can encourage visitors to blend in with, not disrupt, our very special way of life."

The two December sessions will kick off a four-month project enlisting the entire Port Aransas community in developing a new messaging campaign aimed at inspiring vacationers to "Live the Island Life—the Port A Way" while they are here.

The sessions will be facilitated by Cathy Ritter, founder of Better Destinations. The Denver-based consultancy specializes in maximizing the benefits of tourism while addressing impacts to achieve overall positive outcomes, especially for those who call a destination home.

To kick off the first workshop, Ritter will share an overview of preliminary findings from interviews with about 20 Port Aransas leaders, developers, and business owners last month. Then, discussion will center on identifying opportunities and concerns as well as potential ways of addressing them.

Participants will be invited to use a discussion tool called MentiMeter, which is designed to ensure that all voices in the room, not just the loudest ones, are heard. Participants will be able to use a phone or other device to share opinions in response to various questions. Each set of responses will lead to an open discussion.

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Additional community workshops are planned for early February and late March to gather community input into a messaging campaign that will launch in conjunction with Port A's next summer marketing campaign next April.

The project also will include research. A highly regarded national tourism research firm, Strategic Marketing & Research Insights (SMARInsights), will survey Port Aransas residents, whether full- or part-time, to gain further insights into perceptions, concerns, and best ways of addressing them. SMARInsights also will field a study to past and potential Port Aransas visitors to better understand attitudes toward Port Aransas and the best ways to encourage respectful travel here.

Another organization, The Travel Foundation, will research best practices for managing tourism to coastal and marine destinations around the globe. Learnings from these other destinations can provide inspiration for Port A to shape its tourism economy in ways that bring more benefit to residents, whether economic, cultural, or environmental.

More information about this project is available on a new page of the Port A Tourism Bureau's website [www.portaransas.org/chamber/improve/port-a-way/faqs/](http://www.portaransas.org/chamber/improve/port-a-way/faqs/).

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