

Amelia Island Tourism Making Rapid Rebound

Successful Amelia Island Concours Week, Memorial Day Help Spur Recovery

AMELIA ISLAND, Fla. (June 11, 2021) – After a tumultuous 2020, the Amelia Island Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) is seeing much-needed improvement for Nassau County's beleaguered tourism industry. Estimated lodging taxable sales in April were a near record \$18.4 million, resulting in bed tax collections 70% over budget for the month, and May is expected to show similar increases, due in large part to a successful Amelia Island Concours Week (May 19-23) and Memorial Day weekend.

"The increases we're seeing are from a combination of pent-up demand, strong pricing among our lodging partners, and consistent messaging to travelers," said Gil Langley, President and CEO of the Amelia Island Convention & Visitors Bureau. "Clearly more people are ready to return to travel, and Amelia Island is more appealing than ever, which is driving a faster than expected recovery."

At more than \$18.4 million, estimated taxable sales on lodging in April were a near record, second only to the \$20.5 million in July of 2019, and almost 13% (12.99%) higher than April of 2019. The resulting bed tax collections were approximately \$930,000, which was 70% over the CVB's budget for the April. In the month of May, estimated lodging taxable sales were \$17.5 million, a 21% increase compared to \$14.5 million in 2019, due largely to the Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance and Memorial Day holiday. Despite increased room inventory on the island, both events saw traditional hotel occupancies in the lower 80% to lower 90% range.

According to a study conducted by Research Data Services, Inc., off-island visitors to this year's Amelia Concours Week generated an estimated economic impact of \$26.4 million, which is just 9.3% shy of last year's event, despite the lack of international visitors who were unable to attend the award-winning car event due to travel restrictions. Although the total economic impact was slightly smaller, there was a 13.1% increase in the number of visitors staying in commercial lodging on island during Concours Week.

"Recognizing the value of Amelia Island as a host site and partner, the organizer's decision not to cancel last year's event, and to move this year's event from March to May proved to be a stroke of genius," said Langley. "That gave a huge boost to our local tourism industry at two critical times and made the Amelia Island Concours the only international car show of its kind to manage back-to-back annual events despite the pandemic."

Also bolstering local tourism in May was the Memorial Day weekend, which saw near sellouts among hotels and resorts (occupancy ranging from 85.7% to 91.4%), average daily rates (ADR) hovering near \$400, and revenue per available room (RevPAR) of \$372.62 on Saturday, May 29. According to Langley, advance bookings for June and July are very strong, with weekend dates nearly sold out.

“The trends are looking positive, so barring any major weather events or health emergencies, our local tourism industry should continue to recover and strengthen over the summer, which will benefit everyone,” stated Langley. “A strong calendar of events and plenty of outdoor options will give us an edge over competing warm-weather destinations.”

For a complete listing of special events and vacation planning resources, visit AmeliaIsland.com.

###

About Amelia Island

Northeast Florida’s coastal treasure, Amelia Island is a barrier island rich in colorful history and breathtaking natural beauty. Amelia Island offers long, beautiful beaches, abundant wildlife, and pristine waters. Upscale resorts with world-class spas, championship golf and exclusive dining blend effortlessly with a captivating collection of bed and breakfast inns and historic districts. The island is home to Fernandina Beach, once a vibrant Victorian seaport village, and now a charming downtown district of eclectic shops, attractions and eateries. Forget the everyday getaway; come make memories on Amelia Island. For visitor information and online planning, visit www.ameliaisland.com.