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Hillsborough bed taxes hit a new record in March *Collections top \$2.8 million, up more than 11 percent from 2014*

Hillsborough County recorded \$2.8 million in Tourist Development Taxes in March, setting a new record for the month.

The taxes were collected on hotel room sales in February, a month that included the Florida State Fair, Gasparilla Distance Classic, Florida Strawberry Festival and the Lights on Tampa arts festival.

Collections were 11.3 percent higher than March 2014. They bring the county's total bed tax revenue half-way through the 2015 fiscal year to \$12.4 million, a 14.7 percent increase over the same period last year.

"These new bed-tax numbers show how well Tampa Bay's story resonates with travelers across the country and the world," said Santiago Corrada, President and CEO of Visit Tampa Bay, the not-for-profit company charged with managing the county's tourism efforts. "We truly have something for everyone, whether they love art, rollercoasters, craft beer or our sparkling waterfront."

In February, Hillsborough County's hotels reported occupancy at 85.7 percent and average daily revenues of nearly \$119.50. Overall, hotel revenues for the month topped \$62.8 million – nearly 20 percent higher than the same month in 2014, according to Smith Travel Research.

Those increases boosted Tampa-Hillsborough County above its 10 competitors – including Orlando and Fort Lauderdale -- in terms of occupancy growth for the month and revenue per room for the first two months of 2015.

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About Visit Tampa Bay

Visit Tampa Bay encourages adventurous travelers to unlock its trove of unique treasures. It is a non-profit company with more than 700 partners who help promote Tampa Bay as the ideal destination for family vacations, sporting events, corporate meetings, festivals, and conventions.