



For Immediate Release

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Hillsborough hotel tax hits new high for January ***Fourth month of strong growth for FY 2015***

TAMPA (Feb. 9, 2015) – Hillsborough County recorded its highest-ever hotel-tax figure for January this year, according to new figures from the county Tax Collector’s Office.

The January report, which covers hotel bed taxes collected in December, \$1.89 million, was an 18 percent increase over January 2014 and 16 percent higher than the previous record of \$1.7 million posted in 2007.

The January numbers are the latest in a string of new high points for the county’s 5 percent bed tax. Collections the first three months of the 2015 fiscal year, which started in October, were in total 14.5 percent higher than the same period in FY 2014.

The tax on hotel rooms is divided among a variety of groups, including Visit Tampa Bay, the county’s private non-profit destination marketing organization; events, such as the upcoming Gasparilla Music Festival; and venues, including the Tampa Convention Center, Amalie Arena and Raymond James Stadium.

The January report includes the week-long run-up to the 2015 Outback Bowl, when teams and fans of Auburn University and the University of Wisconsin flocked to Tampa Bay.

Analysis by Smith Travel Research shows county hotels were operating at more than 72 percent occupancy starting on Dec. 26. Occupancy peaked at 91 percent on Dec. 31 – nearly 50 percent higher than the same day the year before. Total hotel revenues for the month were up more than 12 percent.

“These are tremendous numbers for what is historically a slow period for tourism,” said Santiago Corrada, president and CEO of Visit Tampa Bay. “They show that our region is hitting its stride as a destination.”

ABOUT VISIT TAMPA BAY

Visit Tampa Bay leads the effort of economic development through tourism. The mission of Visit Tampa Bay is to create vibrant economic growth for the Tampa Bay area by selling and promoting the Tampa Bay destination. The independent not-for-profit organization represents more than 700 businesses throughout the area and works to ignite interest for Visiting Tampa Bay.

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