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\$2.7 million in bed taxes sets new record

January sales, reported in February, beat previous year by 9.3 percent

TAMPA (March 16, 2016) – Visit Tampa Bay and Hillsborough County reported more than \$2.7 million in Tourist Development Taxes for February, an increase of 9.3 percent over the same month last year, setting a new record for the month.

February's total – collected on hotel room-nights sold in January – brings the county's total bed-tax revenue for the current fiscal year to just over \$10.8 million, nearly 13 percent ahead of the same period in 2014-15.

Hillsborough County led its 10 national rivals in January for the growth in Average Daily Rate, which increased 10.7 percent over the same period in 2015. The county was second behind Charlotte, N.C., in hotel profitability growth for the month.

At the end of January, Tampa and Hillsborough County hosted Florida Huddle, the state's annual travel-industry trade show, for the first time since 2008. The event brought thousands of tourism officials, travel agents, tour operators and travel media to Tampa Bay for three days of meetings and deal making.

"Tampa and Hillsborough County keep on building our reputation as an open, inviting tourism destination," said Santiago Corrada, president and CEO of Visit Tampa Bay, Hillsborough County's tourism promoter. "Last month, we wrapped up our hugely successful first consumer campaign in the UK. This month, Lufthansa reported that last September's launch of the non-stop from Frankfurt was their best launch ever. We are delighted that visitors to Florida are embracing Tampa Bay as an alternative to the usual destinations."

The Tourist Development Tax, also known as the bed tax, is levied on short-term stays. The revenue supports tourism marketing as well as Raymond James Stadium, Amalie Arena and the Tampa Convention Center.

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About Visit Tampa Bay

Visit Tampa Bay encourages adventurous travelers to unlock our destination's trove of unique treasures. We are a not-for-profit corporation that works with more than 750 partners to tell the world the story of our home – the hip, urban heart of the Gulf Coast of Florida.

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