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Tampa Bay outpaces 10 competing destinations in CY 2015

Strong growth in hotel occupancy, profits puts Hillsborough County ahead

TAMPA (Feb. 8, 2016) – Thanks to strong growth in hotel occupancy and profitability, Visit Tampa Bay and Hillsborough County ended Calendar Year 2015 well ahead of their competitors from across the nation, according to new data from industry analyst STR Inc.

Among the top 10 destinations Visit Tampa Bay competes with for both leisure and convention business, Hillsborough County's hotel industry ended 2015 in first place for occupancy growth (73 percent for the year, up 5.1% over 2014) and first place for revenue-per-available-room, a measure of profitability (\$77.24, up 13.6 percent over 2014).

Hillsborough County placed third for average daily rate for the year (up 8.1%) behind Nashville and Long Beach, Calif., but led the pack in ADR growth for the month of December.

"Tampa and Hillsborough County continue to perform at the top of our game as a tourism destination," said Santiago Corrada, president and CEO of Visit Tampa Bay. "It's especially exciting for us to finish 2015 at the top of our group of strong competitors."

Aside from Nashville and Long Beach, the Tampa Bay region competes for business with Orlando and Fort Lauderdale; Austin, San Antonio and Fort Worth in Texas; Baltimore, Md.; Milwaukee, Wis.; and Charlotte, N.C.

The bed tax, officially known as the Tourist Development Tax, is a 5 percent levy on short-term stays. In Hillsborough County, revenue from the tax funds tourism marketing and supports major sports venues and funds improvements to the Tampa Convention Center.

Visit Tampa Bay posted another record month for bed taxes in December, according to the Hillsborough County Tax Collector's Office. The office's January report – tallying up room-night sales in December – shows bed taxes reached just over \$2 million for the month, up 6.7 percent over the previous December.

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“These numbers should remind us of the important contribution tourism makes to our local economy,” Corrada said. “And, with billions of dollars in new investment on the horizon for the Channel District, Port Tampa Bay and Tampa International Airport, our tourism industry will continue its strong growth well into the future.”

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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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