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## **Visit Tampa Bay has first \$2 million August**

### ***New bed-tax total beats record set by 2012 Republican National Convention***

TAMPA (Oct. 10, 2016) – Visit Tampa Bay recorded the strongest August for tourism in its history, firmly surpassing the previous bed-tax collection record set by the Republican National Convention in 2012.

According to the Hillsborough County Tax Collector's Office's September report, bed-tax collections in August reached \$2,038,854, passing the RNC record by more than \$101,000.

The September report brings total bed-tax revenue for Fiscal Year 2016, which ended Sept. 30, to \$29.6 million. It was the first time Hillsborough County recorded nine consecutive months with bed-tax revenue above \$2 million.

"This is tremendous news for the destination," said Santiago Corrada, President and CEO of Visit Tampa Bay. "With a new fall marketing campaign underway and rising room rates, we are on the course to hit \$30 million in bed-tax revenue by the end of the calendar year."

Reaching that threshold will put Hillsborough County into the ranks of Florida's elite high-impact tourism counties and allow the Hillsborough County Commission to raise the bed tax from 5 percent to 6 percent, in turn boosting revenue for future tourism marketing.

The August bed-tax collection number closes out the strongest summer on record for Tampa Bay tourism. Between Memorial Day and Labor Day:

- Leisure tourism grew by 10 percent compared to 2015 thanks to new co-op domestic and international marketing campaigns.
- Visit Tampa Bay's "Florida's Most" summer marketing campaign generated 40,600 visits, 66,000 room nights and \$25.5 million, about a 37 percent increase over 2015.

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- Tampa and Hillsborough County hosted six major city-wide conventions – up from 4 in 2015 -- with more than 72,000 attendees all told. That's four times the attendance of last summer's city-wide conventions generated by Visit Tampa Bay's convention sales staff.

The growth in summer business is reflected in hotel industry profits, which rose 14 percent in June compared to the same month in 2015. July's profits were up 8.5 percent. August was up 14.2 percent, according to industry analyst STR Inc.

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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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