



## **ON THE HORIZON IN 2013: EXCITING NEW TOURISM DEVELOPMENTS IN THE MYRTLE BEACH AREA OF SOUTH CAROLINA**

As one of the fastest-growing family and vacation destinations in the nation, the Myrtle Beach area of South Carolina currently attracts an average of 15 million visitors annually, along with thousands of new residents to the destination, each year. Known affectionately as “The Grand Strand,” Myrtle Beach continues to evolve and expand, giving way to an entirely “new” Myrtle Beach area of accommodations, attractions and events. Highlights for 2013 include the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the City of Myrtle Beach, a major expansion of the Myrtle Beach International Airport, and continued revitalization of the new Myrtle Beach boardwalk area. Here is a sneak peek at the latest new development news in the region.

**\*Updates are listed alphabetically by category**

### **~Airline, Airport & Technology~**

#### **International Technology and Aerospace Park (ITAP)**

ITAP is a 460-acre, class A aviation and technology park owned by Horry County and located on the Myrtle Beach International Airport property. The park has a public entrance in the Market Common district, known for upscale shopping and dining. Phase 1 of the park was completed in November 2011. This included the installation of utilities, access roads, storm drainage and landscaping. It is expected that as growth in the region continues and technologies flourish, the Myrtle Beach International Technology & Aerospace Park will be one of the most sought after locations along the east coast. For more information visit [www.mbitap.com](http://www.mbitap.com).

#### **Myrtle Beach International Airport Expansion**

To accommodate growing numbers of visitors arriving by air, Myrtle Beach International Airport has welcomed the completion of a \$113 million expansion project opened on April 2, 2013. This massive project, which extends the passenger terminal from six to 13 gates, has increased the airport’s capacity and efficiency for vacationers, business travelers and locals alike. Approximately 40,000 square feet of glass was installed as part of the design, which also includes several new dining facilities. The expansion also includes new parking areas and a new rental car facility. For more information visit <http://www.flymyrtlebeach.com/news>.

#### **Spirit Airlines Starts Seasonal Service to Five Markets Early & 2 New Service Markets**

Spirit Airlines moved up the start dates for its 2013 seasonal service to/from Myrtle Beach to five markets all beginning in February and March. Daily nonstop service will begin on February 14 from Chicago O’Hare and Detroit, as will three weekly nonstop flights from Latrobe/Pittsburg with service increasing to daily on April 24. Two weekly nonstop flights from Niagara Falls, N.Y./Toronto started on February 15 and two weekly nonstop flights from Charleston, W.V. started on March 2, with service to these markets increasing to four and three weekly flights, respectively on April 25. Also on April 25, new daily nonstop service from BWI (Baltimore/Washington) and PHL (Philadelphia) will begin. [www.spirit.com](http://www.spirit.com)

#### **VisitMyrtleBeach.com Website Relaunch**

In order to continue to meet the online and mobile demands of consumers, the Myrtle Beach Area Convention and Visitors Bureau has completed a comprehensive website redesign of VisitMyrtleBeach.com. The project focused on three areas of improvement; providing a better user/visitor experience, maintaining brand positioning, and

growing business for community stakeholders with more website referrals. To improve the visitor experience, functionality has been added to include improved search and navigation, vacation and group planning management, and special offers and deals. The site also features increased social media integration and an expansion of the destination's blog to include "behind-the-scenes" articles.

#### **WestJet New Carrier and Service to MYR Airport**

WestJet announced it will enter the Myrtle Beach market and commence flight operations on Thursday, May 2, 2013. WestJet will introduce twice weekly service between Toronto Pearson International Airport (YYZ) and Myrtle Beach International Airport (MYR), strategically timed to connect with 97% of its operations at Toronto Pearson International Airport (YYZ). Flights will operate on Thursdays and Sundays. [www.westjet.com](http://www.westjet.com)

### *~Attractions and Museums~*

#### **Encounters: UFO Experience**

The world's first exhibition exploring the history of UFOs debuted at Broadway at the Beach in Myrtle Beach, S.C. in early April 2013. The exhibition, entitled "Encounters: UFO Experience," presented by Intergalactic Brands, features more than 200 original artifacts, conceptual models, and documented film clips and recordings that support claims of ancient encounters through modern day sightings. Encounters will allow visitors to learn more about the evidence surrounding famous UFO events in places like Area 51 and Roswell, and to reach their own conclusions about the many conspiracy theories swirling around such events. In addition, the exhibition's abduction experience will provide site, sound and sensory involvement in an interactive experience based on thousands of eye witness accounts of alien abductions. [www.ufoexhibition.com](http://www.ufoexhibition.com)

#### **Horry County Museum**

The Horry County Museum is expanding and plans to move to a historical landmark on the National Historic Register in Conway, the former Burroughs School. This \$6.4 million renovation of 10,000 square feet will present a walk through time of the key points in the county's history. Two galleries will be focused on the American Civil War and two will be permanent-but-evolving exhibits. There will be roughly 800 custom display cases for historical artifacts and a new 600-seat auditorium which will be used for public programming and educational events. The new museum plans to open by fall 2013. For more information, visit [www.horrycountymuseum.org](http://www.horrycountymuseum.org).

#### **Family Kingdom Amusement and Water Park**

Family Kingdom has four new rides for the 2013 season. Leading the lineup is the Twist 'n Shout Wild Mouse-style Steel Roller Coaster. The Twist 'n Shout Steel Roller Coaster offers a completely different ride experience than Family Kingdom's renowned Swamp Fox Wooden Roller Coaster. Other rides debuting in 2013 include the Kite Flyer (lay-down 2 passenger gondola ride), Flying Tigers, and the Frog Hopper. The new additions join the more than 30 other rides at the Oceanside Park, which is one of Myrtle Beach's most popular family attractions. Family Kingdom's Water Park will also have a new name called Splashes. The water park has been an oceanfront landmark in Myrtle Beach since it opened in 1977 and the new name better represents the water park as a full-scale, independent attraction, while still acknowledging its relationship with the Family Kingdom Amusement Park. [www.familykingdomfun.com](http://www.familykingdomfun.com)

#### **Myrtle Beach Jetpack Adventures**

A new water attraction is coming to Myrtle Beach for summer 2013. Called the world's most advanced water-propelled jet pack, the jet packs work by using water pressure to propel riders into the sky. The jetpack rides will be over the ocean and costs will range from \$100-\$200 depending on the length of flight time.

[www.myrtlebeachjetpackadventures.com/](http://www.myrtlebeachjetpackadventures.com/)

#### **Ripley's Aquarium Expansion, Believe It or Not Museum Upgrades**

Ripley's Entertainment is putting the finishing touches on plans for a large expansion to Ripley's Aquarium in Myrtle Beach, as well as upgrades to its Ripley's Believe It or Not Museum. Construction is planned to start on the aquarium expansion after Labor Day 2013 with plans to open by summer 2014. Details are still being finalized.

### *~Dining~*

#### **Food Venues at Broadway at the Beach**

Two new food venues will make their debut at the popular entertainment complex Broadway at the Beach in 2013. Poco Amici's, offering authentic Italian cuisine, and Chuck & Duck's Sports Grill featuring great food, fun, spirits and plenty of sports on their 50+ flat screen TVs plan to open by summer.

#### **Mr. Fish Restaurant**

Father and daughter team Ted and Sheina Hammerman moved their long standing local restaurant to a new larger location in 2013. The new restaurant is located at 64<sup>th</sup> Ave North Kings Hwy in Myrtle Beach. Mr. Fish Restaurant is a seafood restaurant that serves fresh mouth-watering fish platters, sandwiches, and much more at an affordable price. Executive Chef David Porter's signature specialties include shrimp and grits finished with a low country sauce as well as blackened or sautéed fish tacos. The expansion includes a larger dining area, bigger sushi bar, raw bar, plenty of parking, lounge area, a private dining room and a fully stocked bar. Mr. Fish still features local artists work for sale throughout the restaurant as well as their funky fishy theme. [www.MrFish.com](http://www.MrFish.com)

#### **Sloan's Ice Cream**

With four locations already in Florida, this unique luxury ice cream shop will be opening a new location in Myrtle Beach in the next year. This nearly 14-year-old company opened with a goal of creating an ice cream utopia for the young and young at heart. Sloan's has several unique flavors made with the finest ingredients. They also have an entire wall of bulk candy, chocolates, chocolate apples and whimsical gifts. The décor is over the top with pink walls, twinkling chandeliers, moving trains and magical glass bathrooms. For more information visit [www.sloansicecream.com](http://www.sloansicecream.com).

### **~Entertainment~**

#### **Carolina Comedy Club**

A new comedy club opened in March 2013 inside Broadway at the Beach, a large entertainment and attraction complex in Myrtle Beach. The Club features performances by stand-up comedians and Carolina Improv Company. The 150-seat club, which will also include a Backstage Bar & Grill, is the first comedy venue at Broadway at the Beach. For the latest progress and updates, visit their Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/carolinacomedyclub>.

#### **Christian Teen Club in Historic Former Movie Theatre**

Ground Zero, a local youth ministry nonprofit has taken control of the historic Rivoli Theatre in downtown Myrtle Beach, and plans to convert the space into a Christian teen club. Ground Zero will renovate the 14,000 plus square-foot facility to new facility offering a theater, game room, coffee shop, and conference room and office space. The Rivoli Theater first opened in June 1958 frequently showing top Hollywood movies. In 1967 it held the world premier of "Don't Make Waves" starring Tony Curtis, David Draper and Sharon Tate. Click [here](#) for more information.

#### **Long Bay Symphony Anniversary**

The Long Bay Symphony, Myrtle Beach's only professional orchestra, is currently celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary season. Special events will include a Mad Hatter Mania celebration on February 2 featuring dance music and an outrageous hat contest. In addition, the symphony will be hosting *Disney in Concert: Magical Music from the Movies* on June 23, 2013. For the regular concert schedule and anniversary events, visit the website at <https://www.longbaysymphony.com>.

#### **Two New Shows at The Palace Theatre**

As part of its 2013 schedule, the Palace Theatre now offers two new live entertainment productions. Running March through August, *Masters of Illusion* is an exciting new show consistently rated the top touring illusion production in the world. Featuring illusionist Rob Lake, this full-scale production show incorporates dancers, special effects and elaborate scenery. The second production, "Jersey Nights," will run several times throughout 2013. *Jersey Nights* takes a nostalgic trip down memory lane to celebrate the hit songs of Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons. The show delivers first-class musical arrangements, perfect harmonies, authentic costumes, and all of the Four Seasons' greatest hits. For a complete schedule and more information, visit [www.palacetheatremyrtlebeach.com](http://www.palacetheatremyrtlebeach.com).

### **~Events~**

### **City of Myrtle Beach 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

March 12, 2013 marked the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the City of Myrtle Beach. To commemorate this occasion throughout the year and promote the area to visitors, events and activities are currently being planned and an anniversary branding process is underway throughout the city.

### **Myrtle Beach Pelicans 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

Minor League baseball's Myrtle Beach Pelicans, an Advanced Class-A affiliate of the Texas Rangers is celebrating its 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in Myrtle Beach. A number of events throughout the 2013 season are being planned for fans throughout the year at TicketReturn.com field. The field was recently featured on and used for filming the fourth season of HBO's Eastbound and Down.

### **U.S. Open Pro Mini Golf Tournament**

The Myrtle Beach area of South Carolina is not only known as the miniature golf capital of the world with over 50 courses, it will also play host to the 2013 U.S. Open Pro Mini Golf Tournament May 17-19 at Hawaiian Village Miniature Golf in North Myrtle Beach. This tournament is one of two major tournaments that the U.S. Pro Mini Golf Association holds each year, and brings out serious miniature golfers from all over the country to compete. For more information, visit [www.prominigolf.com](http://www.prominigolf.com).

*~Lodging~*

### **Hilton Renovations**

The Hilton Myrtle Beach Resort at Kingston Shores is currently under renovation. The 385 guest rooms are being painted to give it a fresh and modern look. The renovation will include new furnishings, fresh bedding, new lighting and bathroom upgrades. The rooms will have new refrigerators and the doors will be replaced with new safe-lock systems. The renovations will be complete by spring 2013. For more information about the Hilton [click here](#).

### **Homewood Suites Oceanfront Resort & Conference Center**

The first new hotel in Myrtle Beach in five years is currently in the planning phase to be constructed at the vacant oceanfront spot at 1805 S. Ocean Blvd. on the former site of the Ribbie Shyan Motel. The \$25 million Homewood hotel aims to open in June 2014. The Homewood will share pools and other amenities with the Hampton Inn Oceanfront next door. It will have 100 suites, a mix of two-bedroom, one-bedroom and studios, all with kitchens and private balconies. Homewood also will have a 300-seat conference center, three pools, a fire pit, fitness center, a Pilates-aerobics room for women only and a bistro serving sandwiches and snacks. It will be the only Homewood in the 399 chain that is on the oceanfront.

### **Springmaid Beach Resort**

Springmaid Beach Resort has recently completed a \$7 million dollar property-wide renovation and plans to spend another \$2 million on renovations in 2013. Renovations have been made to guest rooms, the oceanfront conference center, property outlets and landscapes. Renovations currently being completed are new bathrooms to include tubs and tile work in all 492 guest rooms, new exterior paint to the Palmetto Building, a new lobby and added amenities in the public areas to include a new courtyard area. For more information visit [www.springmaidbeach.com/springmaid-beach-resort-renovations](http://www.springmaidbeach.com/springmaid-beach-resort-renovations).

*~Myrtle Beach Boardwalk Downtown~*

### **Boardwalk Extension and area Revitalization**

In May 2010, the newest boardwalk in the United States opened in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. The oceanfront boardwalk and promenade located in the heart of Myrtle Beach spans 1.2 miles of oceanfront property and kicked off a revitalization of the classic downtown area. The revitalization efforts have sparked new business and attractions including the new iconic landmark the Myrtle Beach Skywheel, a 200-ft.-high observation wheel with 42 temperature controlled glass gondolas providing breathtaking views of the coastline. In the summer of 2012, a new 4,800 square foot oceanfront Mexican restaurant, [Banditos](#), opened just passed the northern section of the boardwalk, and property owners are paying to extend the boardwalk approximately 400 feet to adjoin the restaurant and include a small city park by summer 2013. The Mayor of Myrtle Beach went on the record in the fall

of 2012 that he wants to eventually make the Myrtle Beach boardwalk [the world's longest](#) by extending it to 4.6 miles with the use of public/private partnerships.

#### **Shark Attack Mini Golf and Dining on Boardwalk**

A new entertainment complex featuring a miniature golf course name Shark Attack and restaurant is being constructed on the former site of the historic Chesterfield Inn in downtown Myrtle Beach. The entertainment complex will include the only mini golf course located on the new boardwalk, and will feature blacklight golf that will run through the old cellar of the inn, which was originally built in the 1930s. The mini golf course is currently open and the restaurant will soon follow by summer.

#### **I Love Sugar Candy Shop**

As part of the new revitalization of the downtown Myrtle Beach boardwalk area, a 1940s building was recently demolished to make room for a new 6,000-square-foot building that will house a candy store and ice cream shop. The new store, which plans to have a colorful, candy-inspired façade plans to open by late spring 2013.

#### ***~Shopping~***

#### **Shopping Complex Next to Coastal Grand Mall**

Construction is in the works for a new 10,000-square-foot shopping center next to Coastal Grand Mall, the largest mall in South Carolina. Upon completion in the summer of 2013, it will be home to three new tenants; a Chipotle Mexican Grill, Aspen Dental and Mattress Firm.

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