

# VISIT *Sarasota* COUNTY

## QUARTERLY REPORT

FY25 Q1 • Oct. 1 - Dec. 31, 2024



# THE WORK OF A DESTINATION MARKETING ORGANIZATION (DMO)

## 1. VISIT

If you built a place where people want to visit, then you have built a place where people want to live.

## 2. LIVE

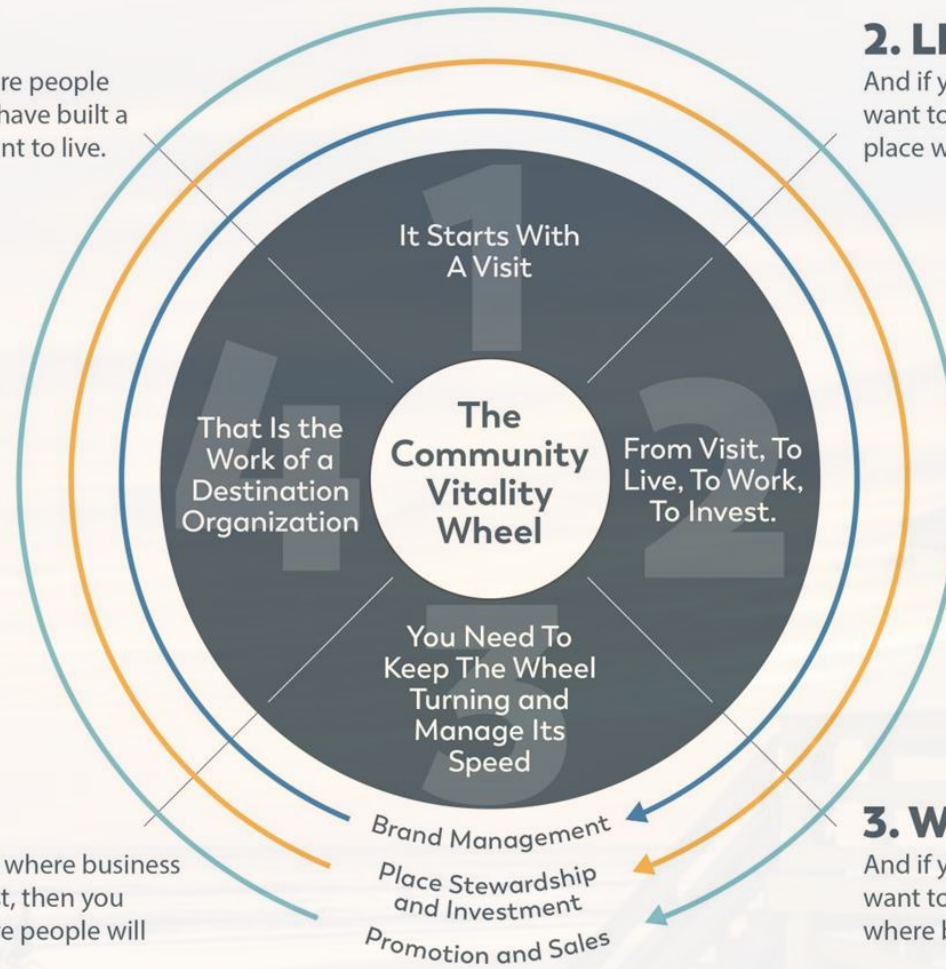
And if you built a place where people want to live, then you have built a place where people want to work.

## 4. INVEST

And if you built a place where business and residents will invest, then you have built a place where people will want to visit.

## 3. WORK

And if you built a place where people want to work, then you have built a place where business and residents will invest.





# WHY THE WORK OF VSC MATTERS

- To Attract Visitors: Tourism drives economic benefits and introduces people to the community.
- To Encourage Residency: A Great place to visit becomes a desirable place to live.
- To Stimulate Employment: When people move here, businesses follow, creating job opportunities.
- To Drive Investment: A Strong workforce and vibrant community attract business and infrastructure investments.

By managing branding, promotion, and stewardship, a DMO keeps the wheel turning, ensuring long-term success and vitality for its residents.

## How Does VSC Help Meet These Goals:

- **World Class Quality of Life Amenities**

- Help Boost Tourist Development Tax to Pay for Amenities used by both residents and tourists.
- Focused Efforts on Audiences Including “Outdoor/Nature” and “Arts/Culture”.

- **Robust, Growing Business Opportunities**

- Attract defined/targeted Businesses and Workforce in “Relocation” Audience Promotions in partnership with EDC.
- Expand Sports Tourism by promoting to event right holders and coaches for training opportunities.
- Promote Spring Training in “Leisure” Audience by collaborating with the Baltimore O’s and Atlanta Braves.
- Produce a Agritourism Guide Each Fall.

# OVERALL DESTINATION CONDITIONS

## REPORT FOR Q1 FY 2025

VSC uses third party research to monitor overall destination conditions such as visitation, spending, rooms sold, average daily rate, occupancy.

### Economic Impact

Q1 FY 24	Q1 FY 25	% Variance
\$639,926,600	\$534,116,300	19% ▼

### Average Daily Rate

Q1 FY 24	Q1 FY 25	% Variance
\$246.88	\$229.59	7.5% ▼

### Occupancy

Q1 FY 24	Q1 FY 25	% Variance
59.2%	58%	2% ▼

### Room Nights Sold

Q1 FY 24	Q1 FY 25	% Variance
738,400	696,800	5.9% ▼

### Visitation

Q1 FY 24	Q1 FY 25	% Variance
309,880	269,400	15% ▼

### Visitor Spending

Q1 FY 24	Q1 FY 25	% Variance
\$390,199,200	\$340,201,500	14.7% ▼



# FY25 VS. FY24 PERFORMANCE

## Sarasota County Indicators of Destination Tourism Health

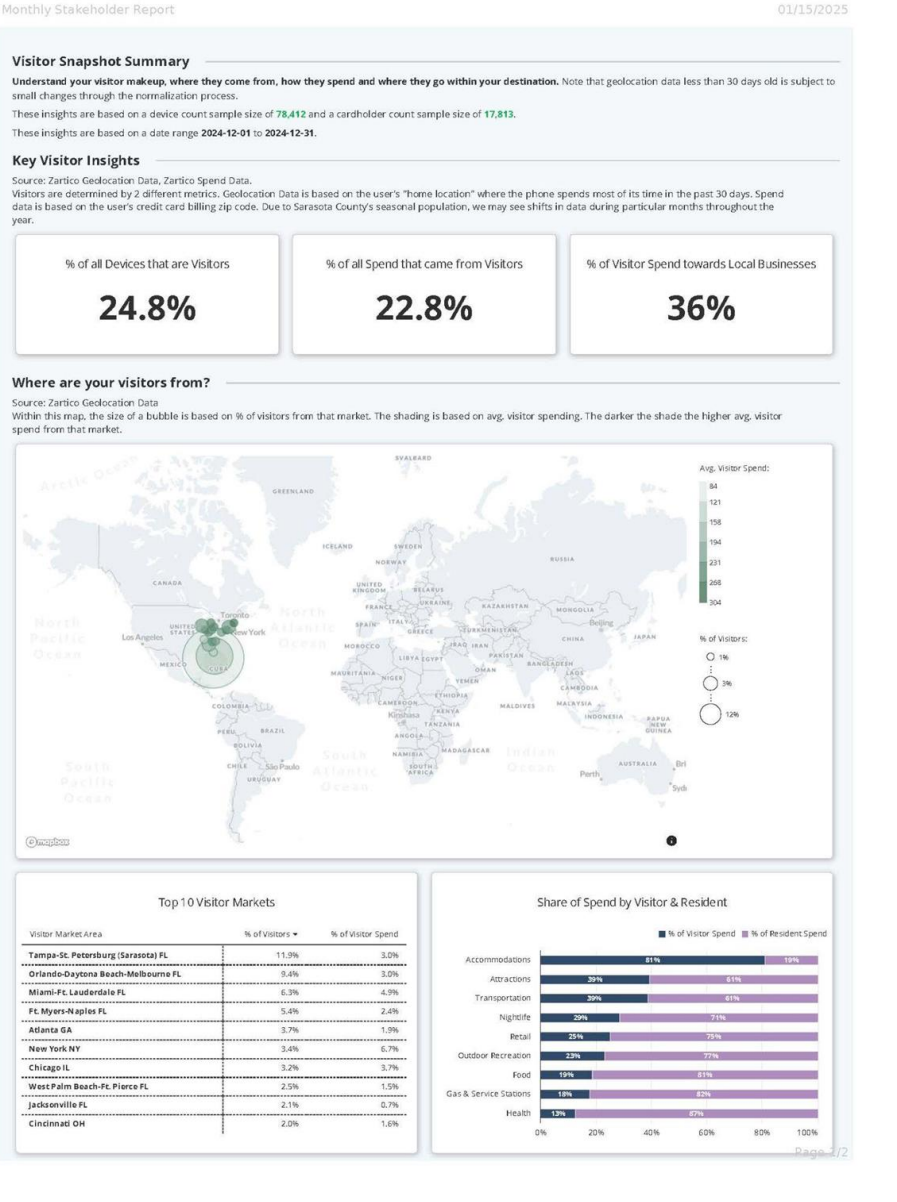
	FY24 Oct-23	FY25 Oct-24	% Variance	FY24 Nov-23	FY25 Nov-24	% Variance	FY24 Dec-23	FY25 Dec-24	% Variance	Q1 Total FY24	Q1 Total FY25	% Variance
Economic Impact	\$217,356,700	\$128,289,700	69% ▼	\$213,143,900	\$201,449,500	5.8% ▼	\$209,426,000	\$204,377,100	2.4% ▼	\$639,926,600	\$534,116,300	19% ▼
Average Daily Rate (ADR)	\$227.15	\$182.65	24.3% ▼	\$255.74	\$240.40	6.3% ▼	\$257.75	\$265.71	3% ▲	\$246.88	\$229.59	7.5% ▼
Occupancy	59.4%	49.2%	20.7% ▼	59.7%	64.8%	7.8% ▲	58.6%	61.3%	4.4% ▲	59.2%	58%	2% ▼
Room Nights Sold	249,800	197,100	26.7% ▼	242,800	251,800	3.5% ▲	245,800	247,900	.85% ▲	738,400	696,800	5.9% ▼
Visitation	122,100	86,600	40.9% ▼	101,140	94,800	6.6% ▼	86,640	88,000	1.5% ▲	309,880	269,400	15% ▼
Visitor Spending	\$132,534,600	\$81,713,200	62% ▼	\$129,965,800	\$128,311,800	1.2% ▼	\$127,698,800	\$130,176,500	1.9% ▲	\$390,199,200	\$340,201,500	14.7% ▼

# FY25 PROMISED DELIVERABLES

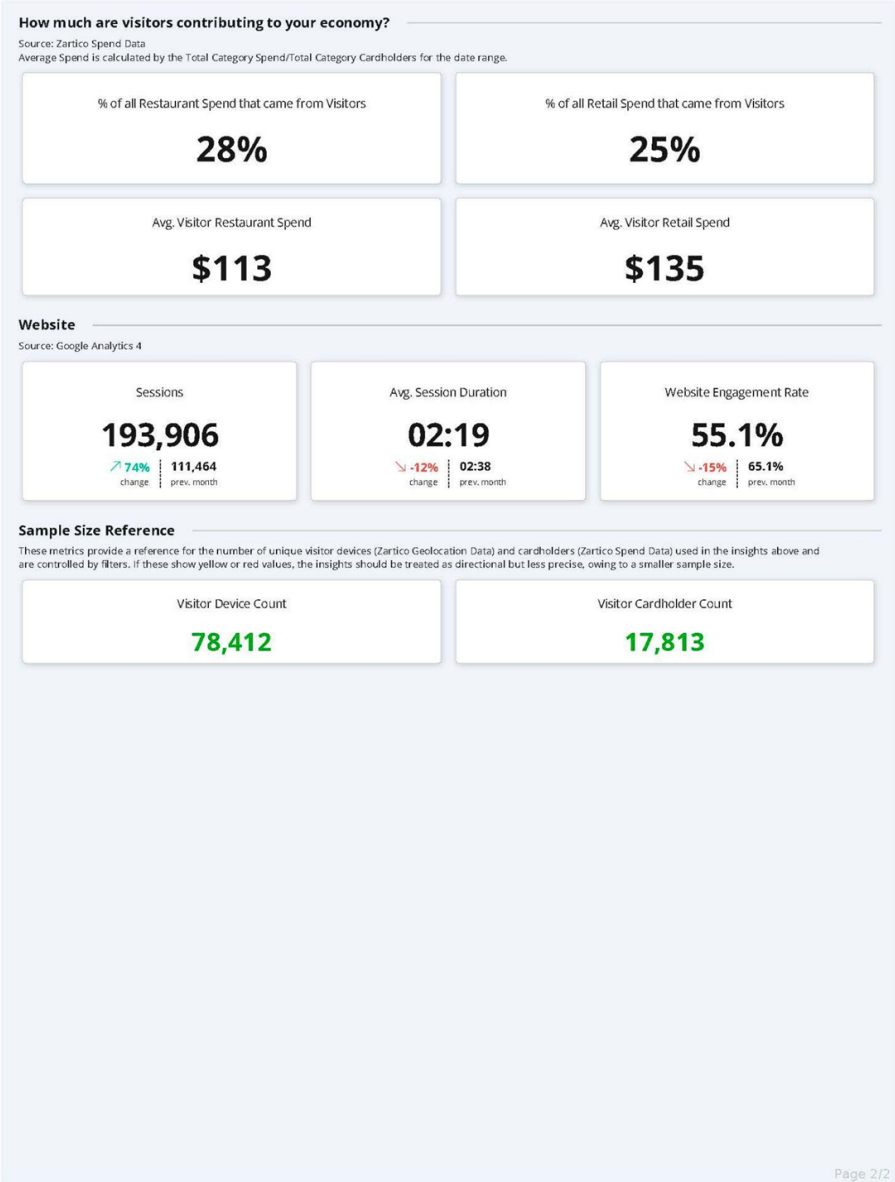
**\*Note:** The lower-than-expected metrics for Q1 (October–December) are largely attributable to the significant impact of **Hurricane Helene (September 2024)** and **Hurricane Milton (October 2024)**. These storms caused widespread disruptions, infrastructure damage, and economic slowdowns, affecting the ability to meet certain promised deliverables. Recovery efforts and resource reallocation during this period further contributed to the shortfall.

VSC Performance	Q1 Total FY24	Q1 Total FY25	% Variance
Use of Brand Toolkit (SarasotaCountyBrandToolkit.com)	159	126	26% ▼
Signals of Intent to Travel (Virtual Views and Visitor Guide Orders)	4567	1262	261.8% ▼
Signals of Intent to Travel (Enewsletter Subscriptions)	3056	2211	38.2% ▼
Signals of Intent to Travel (Relocation Packets Sent)	118	51	131.3% ▼
Leisure Lodging Leads Sent	304	121	60.2% ▼
Meetings (Groups) Booked	10	17	70% ▲
Meetings (Groups) Leads Sent	82	88	7.3% ▲
Sports (Groups) Booked – New Metric for FY2025	N/A	11	
Sports (Groups) Leads – New Metric for FY2025	N/A	16	
Future Sports Event Bids Submitted	19	12	58.3% ▼

# Expanded Data-Driven Insights for FY25 with Zartico



- Expand research to include destination intelligence tool
- Onboarded with Zartico in November
- Hosted partner webinar in December
- Began producing Monthly Stakeholder Reports







## Goals & Metrics for FY 25

1. Emergency Preparedness
2. Engagement, Responsiveness & Collaboration
3. Working Towards Positive Resident Sentiment Towards Tourism
4. Using all Marketing Tactics to Promote to 9 Key Audiences



# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS FY25 Q1 Activities

**Activated crisis communications plan** in response to Hurricanes Helene and Milton.

- Collected and kept updated accommodation inventory for EOC efforts.
- Assisted response and recovery efforts through Support the 941 and Florida's West Coast campaigns.

**Hosted 2 virtual Town Halls on storm recovery efforts completed,** planned, and requested input from local business attendees. In total, the sessions saw nearly 100 participants.

**Added Storm Related Questions to Visitor Intercept Survey,** and engaged with Lee County and Charlotte County on a Visitor Sentiment Study in light of Storm Recovery to determine how it would impact industry and how marketing messages needed to be adjusted. Shared with Area Businesses and Stakeholders.



# RESIDENT SENTIMENT FY25 Q1 Activities

**Secured 37 stories in local publications**, garnering more than 38,000,000 media impressions for initiatives pertinent to local businesses and residents, like tourism/business recovery post-storms and regional partnerships.

**VSC took an active role in inspiring the next generation by speaking at Booker Middle, Venice High and SCF career days on the role of a Destination Marketing Organization (DMO).** We helped students understand the diverse career opportunities within the tourism and hospitality industry.

**October:** Article in Sarasota Herald Tribune on crisis readiness and response, paired on-camera interviews with the VSC leadership team, helped catalyze interest from businesses/residents for our Support the 941 campaign.

**November:** The launch of Florida's West Coast campaign afforded VSC an opportunity to speak about regional collaborations addressing hurricane recovery; the return of local sporting events and convening of VSC's Indicators & Insights Summit diversified coverage.

**December:** VSC's sponsorship of the Riverview High School and Venice High School bands' trip to London for the New Year's Day Parade shined an important light on Florida's Cultural Coast brand. AVA - VSC's new mobile visitor center - also earned coverage, showcasing our community involvement.



# INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT FY25 Q1 Activities

*This area of our organization is where we focus on generating private funds, a key component of our contractual requirement with Sarasota County. Through strategic partnerships, sponsorships, and cooperative marketing efforts, we work to supplement public funding and enhance overall program effectiveness.*

**New Engagement Model** was approved at the October Board Meeting. Professional development centered as key component of new model.

**Hosted three (3) B2B networking events**, that connected more than 50 partners with VSC staff and stakeholders.

- Sarasota Contemporary Dance
- Dockside Waterfront Grill
- The Bazaar on Apricot & Lime

**Held inaugural Indicators & Insights Summit**, which brought together 120+ industry and community stakeholders. Generated \$3,000 in sponsorships and \$4,500+ in ticket sales (70% increase compared to 2023's Marketing Outlook). In post-event survey, 92% of participants indicated they were "very satisfied" – the other 8% were "satisfied."

**Onboarded 7 new partners.** Prospected more than 30 and produced FY25 Visitor Guide and printed 80,000 for Annual Distribution.



# EFFORTS TO TARGET AUDIENCES

To maximize our reach and impact, we strategically target 9 key audiences with carefully curated messaging and imagery delivered across multiple tactics and channels proven most effective for each audience.



# DOMESTIC LEISURE

FY25 Q1

## Paid Media

- Launched Winter campaign
- Ran Florida's West Coast campaign using VF matching funds as part of ongoing hurricane recovery efforts

## Visitor Services

Delivery of new Visitor Information Vehicle AVA (Area Visitor Assistance)

## Website

Co-Launched Florida's West Coast Regional website with BACVB

## Earned Media & Public Relations

- Interviews with Travel+ Leisure and Conde Nast Magazines.
- Emma Weyant social posts promoting Sarasota County as a leisure destination.
- Hosted Luxury FAM with the St. Regis LBK Resort

## Sports

Set-up AVA at ICF SUP World Championship event with over 550 athletes and over 400 spectators.

## Content & Social Media

New Articles for fall and holiday events

## One-Time Funding

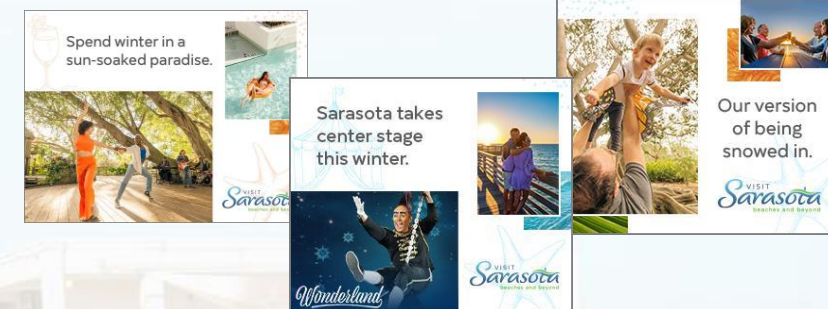
### **Allegiant plane wrap**

Creative finalized in November, plane wrapped in December



### **Creative production**

Finalized Winter campaign creative in November





# INTERNATIONAL LEISURE

FY25 Q1

## Earned Media & Public Relations

- VIE Magazine Article on Arts & Culture Published
- Visit USA Germany Blogspot Feature and Newsletter

## International Sales

- Participated in Brand USA Travel Week in London
- Virgin Holidays Training Day (40 Travel Agents)
- Discover Airlines Training

## One-Time Funding

**Increased UK & German Retainer & Marketing Campaigns:** Contracts executed in December.

## Sports

- Submitted two proposals for UCI BMX World Cup events in 2026 & 2027. Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI) is the worldwide governing body for cycling. Looking to bring in international BMX events,

# NATURE & OUTDOORS

## FY25 Q1

### Paid Media

- Florida's West Coast 8 week Advertising Campaign
- Ran Winter/Holiday Campaign featured sunny skies and beautiful outdoor imagery.

### Earned Media & Public Relations

- Hosted Media on a FAM and behind the scenes tour of Ringling Art Museum and Marie Selby Botanical Gardens

### Content & Social Media

- Development of Artificial Reef Brochure in Partnership with Sarasota County Parks & Rec.
- Developed Discover Natural Sarasota Guide & Farm Guide.
- Content - RV Parks and Campgrounds in Sarasota, Guide to Free Activities and Events in Outdoor Spaces.

### Meeting & Group Sales

- Assisted Liberty Mutual Group organize a yoga with animals event at The Bay in October.

### Visitor Services

- "AVA" delivered and was presented at November Board Meeting as well as November TDC meeting.

### Sports

- Showcasing through 1-on-1 meetings the facilities and assets we have in our destination, most if not all, that take place outdoors and in nature.



# ARTS & CULTURE

## FY25 Q1

### Paid Media

Engaged in Awareness campaigns through Hulu Connected TV and Encore Print Campaigns in 15 markets

### Earned Media & Public Relations

Hosted Media on a FAM and behind the scenes tour of Ringling Art Museum and Marie Selby Botanical Gardens

### Content & Social Media

Podcast Launch - Wonderland with Nik Wallenda, Guide to Living Arts Festival

### Website

Podcast Landing Page and Listening Widget

### Meeting & Group Sales

Created VIP bags for Sarasota Opera's Florida Executive Directors Meeting October 2024

### Visitor Services

Provided VSC material and local information to the Sarasota Rising Festival in November

### Sports

Through bids and 1-on-1 presentations, we constantly market that we're Florida's Cultural Coast, with various arts, theatre and museum offerings; showcasing a well-rounded community.



# RELOCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

FY25 Q1

## Earned Media & Public Relations

Participated in Walk & Talks with EDC & Local organizations in St. Armands and Wellen Park following Hurricanes Milton & Helene; Interview with Homes.com

## Visitor Services

Attended North Port Newcomers Day on 11/02 and interacted with almost 100 new residents and locals in 2 hours

## Sports

Attended S.P.O.R.T.S. The Relationship Conference in Wichita, KS, and U.S. Sports Congress in Punta Gorda, FL, having 1-on-1 meetings showcasing our sports portfolio and assets, trying to give clients reasons to bring their events to Sarasota.

# LOCAL COMMUNITY

FY25 Q1

## Paid Media

Ran Florida's West Coast 8 week Advertising Campaign

## Earned Media & Public Relations

Launched SupportThe941 efforts in response to Hurricane Recovery; WFLA Filming to promote Supportthe941

## Content & Social Media

- Development of Pinecraft Area Brochure; Implementation of Media Hub; Launched Neighborhood Navigator Pass

## Website

SupportThe941 and Recovery Landing Pages



# MEETINGS & GROUPS

## FY25 Q1

### Paid Media

Ran LinkedIn & Site-Direct Buys for Meetings & Groups

### Website

Kicked off the Meeting & Group Site Page Revamp

### Content & Social Media

- Podcast Launch
- Content: Wonderland with Nik Wallenda, Guide to Living Arts Festival

### Meeting & Group Sales

- Sponsored NCBMP Conference; Attended IMEX with 4 Hotel Partners; Sponsored and attended SMART Meetings Incentive,

### Visitor Services

- Met with Sales/Concierge teams at 9 local conference hotels to educate them on VSC's concierge service for meetings and groups.
- Communicated with 4 groups coming to various hotels in January and coordinated VIP bags, welcome signs and VSC services.

### Sports

Working with The College Swimming and Diving Coaches Association of America (CSCAA) on bringing in their annual coaches meeting and signature event to Nathan Benderson Park.

### One-Time Funding

**New Meetings shows and economic development trade events:** Attended Brand USA Travel Week & CEO Forum, SmartMeetings Incentive; Northstar Leadership

**Meeting Sales Representation:** Drafted & Distributed RFP and formed Selection Committee.

**Increased UK & German Retainer & Marketing Campaigns:** Contracts executed in December.



# SPORTS

## FY25 Q1

### Paid Media

- Ran LinkedIn & Site-Direct buys for Sports

### Earned Media & Public Relations

- Emma Weyant social posts support Sarasota County as a great place to train.

### Visitor Services

- Attended the WC SUP at NBP with AVA and interacted with attendees and participants

### Sports

Attended S.P.O.R.T.S. The Relationship Conference and U.S. Sports Congress tradeshows that included 1-on-1 meetings with rights holders to bring new and refreshing sporting events to Sarasota County. We also participate in a sports FAM that takes place in Sarasota County, that allows VSC to invite rights holders to attend and talk business at a spring training baseball game at CoolToday Park.

### One-Time Funding

International canoe kayak (ICF) event: Event was successfully executed.

# NEW AIR SERVICE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

FY25 Q1

## Paid Media

- Worked closely with Sarasota County to obtain additional funding to support 7 new Allegiant and 5 new Breeze flights through marketing that are servicing the area out of SRQ Airport.
- Arranged Indy Media Event to promote Southwest service into SRQ







For additional Community Resources, please explore the following:

[Destination Strategic Plan 2030](#)

[FY25 Scope of Services and Budget](#)

[Sarasota County Brand Toolkit & Image Gallery](#)

[Recaps & Research](#)

# Thank you!

Printing paid for by Sarasota County Tourist Development Tax Revenue

VISIT  
*Sarasota*  
beaches and beyond