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## **Amelia Island Tourist Development Council Celebrates Record-Breaking 2015** ***Travel and Tourism Statistics Show Record Increase in Island Visitation, Revenue, Jobs***

AMELIA ISLAND, Fla. (February 25, 2016) – Amelia Island hosted a record 618,200 overnight visitors in 2015, a 7.6 percent increase over 2014, and who collectively spent \$433 million while visiting, a 10.7 percent increase from the previous year. The figures were presented during the Feb. 24 board meeting of the Amelia Island Tourist Development Council (TDC). The organization shared its final 2015 performance metrics and results related to visitation, tourism and the economy. The board also reviewed a five-year history of performance, and comparisons to other northeast Florida destinations.

In addition to record visitation and spending, the Amelia Island TDC reported that it exceeded its goals in taxable room sales, occupancy, average daily rate (ADR) and revenue per available room (RevPar). The ADR on island increased 5.3 percent to \$214.53 (a 26.34 percent increase since 2011), putting Amelia Island third in the state behind Naples and the Florida Keys last year. Occupancy was 71.2 percent, which is a 3.9 percent increase over 2014 and 26.24 percent increase since 2011. Amelia's RevPar increased 9 percent to \$152.80, only exceeded by Miami and the Florida Keys, and which is a remarkable 59.6 percent increase since 2011. The total economic impact of tourism for the destination in 2015 was almost \$570 million, which means every \$1 the TDC spent on marketing returned \$128 in economic impact for Nassau County.

The island's hospitality industry collected more than \$22 million in state and local sales taxes – almost 39 percent of the total collected in Nassau County. That \$22 million figure includes only sales at lodging providers, restaurants and tourism related businesses. It does not include visitor spending at retail shops, grocery stores or gas stations. The average county in Florida receives roughly 19% of its sales tax revenue from tourism related businesses.

"These 2015 numbers speak volumes about the quality of product and experience Amelia Island offers," said Gil Langley, President and CEO of the Amelia Island CVB. "It is always rewarding to see visitors enjoying our beaches, exploring downtown and sharing their experiences about Amelia Island, but it's equally gratifying to witness the tremendous impact our efforts have on our local economy, which last year included the creation of 130 new hospitality jobs."

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During the board meeting, the TDC's marketing team reported an extraordinary 97.9 percent visitor satisfaction rate in 2015 and presented data showing growth in visitation from all key markets, including Florida; the Southeast, Northeast and Midwest regions; and international. "The increase in visitation speaks well of the effectiveness of the marketing programs we're using to attract visitors," Langley added. "Our goals now are to maintain a healthy number of visitors during the peak season, increase visitation during the winter, and help local businesses by establishing Amelia Island as a year round destination."

Adding to the destination's record-breaking year, Amelia Island and the TDC received several awards and recognitions in 2015. Amelia was named a top island by Conde Nast Traveler, the island's historic downtown was recognized by the American Planning Association and the destination's New Year's Eve celebration was selected by Coastal Living magazine readers as the best in the south. The Hospitality Sales & Marketing Association International (HSMAI) recognized the Amelia Island Convention & Visitors Bureau (AICVB) with three Adrian Awards in New York at the 59th Annual Adrian Awards Gala, the world's largest and most prestigious travel marketing competition. The AICVB won Gold Awards for Best Web Ad Series (UK and Canada Southern Elegance Campaign) and Best Signage (Chicago Train Takeover) and a Silver Award for Best Website (AmeliaIsland.com).

*\*According to the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity*

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### **About Amelia Island**

Northeast Florida's coastal treasure, Amelia Island is a barrier island rich in colorful history and breathtaking natural beauty. Amelia Island offers long, beautiful beaches, abundant wildlife, and pristine waters. Upscale resorts with world-class spas, championship golf and exclusive dining blend effortlessly with a captivating collection of bed and breakfast inns and historic districts. The island is home to Fernandina Beach, once a vibrant Victorian seaport village, and now a charming downtown district of eclectic shops, attractions and eateries. Forget the everyday getaway; Come make memories on Amelia Island. For visitor information and online planning, visit [www.ameliaisland.com](http://www.ameliaisland.com).