



## CHAMBER CHOWDER

510 Greene Street ~ 1st Floor, Key West

www.keywestchamber.org

### State Talks Boulevard Reconstruction Speed, Cost and Traffic with Chamber



Chamber President Jim Wilson greets Florida Department of Transportation Project Manager Ali Toghiani at the April 25th luncheon. Toghiani spoke to members about the \$41.5 million North Roosevelt Boulevard Reconstruction Project currently underway.

Speed will be the name of the game for workers on the North Roosevelt Boulevard Reconstruction Project already underway, said the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) project manager who took questions from more than 200 people at last week's Key West Chamber of Commerce meeting.

If Miami-based contractor de Moya Group completes the project by their July 2014 deadline, they will be rewarded their bid price of \$41.5 million.

But for every day the contractor beats the 820-day deadline, they will receive a \$10,000 bonus, said Ali Toghiani, FDOT project manager.

"If they get done in 700 days, they get \$1.2 million," Toghiani told the packed Casa Marina Resort conference room. "So, the work schedule is going to be very aggressive."

Conversely, if de Moya takes longer than the agreed upon 820 days, there is a disincentive rate of \$10,000 a day for every workday they're over-schedule, beginning on day 821, as well as a standard liquidated damages rate of \$6,762.05 per day. The two fines are independent and may not start at the same time, Toghiani said.

Toghiani was peppered with questions by a curious audience now that the long-planned overhaul of the main artery into Key West has begun. There will be four major elements to the project: Reconstruction of the seawall and the installation of new drainage, water main and sewer main systems.

"The seawall will be the biggest part of the construction," Toghiani said.

The first signs of work will occur this month on South Roosevelt Boulevard where workers will resurface portions of that road and work on the Truman Avenue sewer main, which will require temporary detours and lane closings.

The heavy work begins on May 7th when crews begin tearing into North Roosevelt Boulevard from Eisenhower Drive to First Street. The phases will then overlap as crews begin working on First Street to Kennedy Drive in June and Kennedy Drive to U.S. 1 in August.

That overlap prompted questions from the audience that wondered why the phases were not being done independently as was previously discussed.

"We used to have a three-year construction time," Toghiani said. "That called for 1100 days and that would have impacted three of your high [tourist] seasons. So, the city asked us to do all we could to reduce construction time. It has been changed because of the aggressiveness of the schedule."

The other hot topic at the luncheon was the plan for a 10,000-foot-long aluminum railing to line the length of the North Roosevelt seawall. The 33-inch-high railing would be installed on top of the 9-inch cement seawall, bringing the total height of the railing to 42 inches.

"What are you going to do to eliminate that awful fence?" one audience member asked.

*continued on page 3*

### Message from the President



A few big events marked in the end of April. First of all, the pre-construction phase of the North Roosevelt Boulevard Reconstruction Project begun with the official ceremonial groundbreaking taking place at Bayview Park on the morning of the 25th. Later that day, Mr. Ali Toghiani, North Roosevelt

project manager from the FDOT gave a presentation regarding the scope and estimated time lines of the project at the Chamber General Membership lunch meeting. The meeting was one of our largest with over 200 members attending. Thankfully, our new security detail, who just ended a stint in Cartagena, Columbia was not needed to protect our guest speaker!

The deadline for the project is 820 days with a \$10,000 per day incentive for early completion with a maximum bonus of \$1.2 million if completed in 700 days. Conversely, the late penalty is quite steep at \$10,000 minimum per day. If this early deadline is met, then the project will effect two "seasons," not three, which is a major concern. Pre-construction is underway as South Roosevelt will be repaved, and a new sewer line will be installed on Truman Avenue, between Georgia and Eisenhower Drive. Phase 1-A (Bayside) will begin with the traffic lanes becoming one lane in each direction on North Roosevelt Boulevard from Eisenhower Drive to Bertha Street. No decision has been made by FDOT regarding the infamous railing at this point, but they are still researching alternatives. A new fact sheet encompassing a summary of the scope of work, construction map, and time line estimates is available at <http://fdotmonroe.com/keywest/>. In addition, the new local Construction Public Information specialist, Dean

*continued on page 3*

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## Spotlight Shines on ... Karen Rezendes, Key West Harbour Yacht Club



*Each month, the Chamber of Commerce spotlights a business or professional person whose business card is drawn at the Business After Hours. This month's winner is Karen Rezendes, Key West Harbour Yacht Club*

**M**embership does indeed have its privileges.

At Key West Harbour Yacht Club, those privileges include access to a pool, beach, restaurant, fitness center, sauna and full-service marina, all for a price most Keys residents can actually afford, said Karen Rezendes, membership and special events manager for the marina and yacht club.

Situated at the end of Peninsular Road on Stock Island, the property is the former home of Peninsular Marine, although anyone familiar with the gravel-covered boatyard wouldn't recognize it now.

The marina offers wet slips as well as dry storage along with a ship's store and several charter operators. The yacht club features a gourmet restaurant serving lunch and dinner, a tiki bar, inviting swimming pool and sandy beach with complimentary kayaks available for members, Rezendes said.

"But there still seems to be some confusion in the community about whether we are private or public," she said recently, hoping to help clarify the matter. "We are a private club."

But members need not keep their boat at Key West Harbour to avail themselves of the club's land-based offerings, Rezendes said.

"We offer social memberships to non-marina members," she explained.

Such memberships cost \$62.50 per month and there are no monthly minimum spending requirements as there are in the dining rooms and bars of many other such clubs around the country.

Members also have access to the club's three vacation rental condominiums furnished with Tommy Bahamas décor and full kitchens.

"They're perfect for when members have relatives or friends coming to visit and need a place for them to stay," she said.

The condominium visitors can keep their boats right in front of their accommodations in a protected marina with quick and easy access to the ocean.

"Plus, we're one of the only places that people can pull up to via boat and have lunch."

In addition to booking weddings and other events, Rezendes is working to spread the word about the private club and its social memberships. Keys residents can get upscale amenities for down-to-earth prices in a tucked-away corner of Stock Island.

For membership information and special event bookings, email [krezendes@marinaclubsfl.com](mailto:krezendes@marinaclubsfl.com) or call 305-434-0148.



57 Front Street  
Key West, FL 33040  
800.815.2707  
305.294.7277  
[weatherstationinn.com](http://weatherstationinn.com)

## Save The Date!

Wednesday, August 29, 2012

## 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Key West Chamber of Commerce "Showcase of Key West Businesses"

Community and Business Exposition

Location: The Waldorf Astoria Casa Marina Resort

Presented by: AT&T Real Yellow Pages and

The Key West Chamber of Commerce,

Co-sponsored by: Waste Management, Inc.

2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m., Open to the Public

Business After Hours sponsored by the

Waldorf Astoria Casa Marina Resort

5:30p.m. – 7:30p.m., Members only

For more information on exhibiting in the show call 294-2587, or email [kbaker@keywestchamber.org](mailto:kbaker@keywestchamber.org)

## The Chamber Chowder Heartily Thanks These Businesses for Their Generous Support of this Issue of the Newsletter

Ernest Hemingway  
House Museum  
907 Whitehead Street  
Key West, FL 33040  
305-294-1136

La Concha  
Crowne Plaza  
430 Duval Street  
Key West, FL 33040  
305-296-2991

Porter Allen  
Insurance Company  
513 Southard Street  
Key West, FL 33040  
305-294-2542

Capital Bank  
330 Whitehead Street  
Key West, FL 33040  
305-294-6330

AT&T Advertising Solutions  
9850 NW 41st St.  
Doral, FL 33178  
305-482-2601

Old Town Key West Development  
201 Front Street, Suite 301  
Key West, FL 33040  
305-294-3225



## *"Boulevard Reconstruction" continued from page 1* ▶

Toghiani said he is still discussing options with the city of Key West and Virginia Panico, Executive Vice President of the Key West Chamber of Commerce. An unprotected seawall is a liability issue for the state and any discussion of eliminating the railing if the city assumed that liability appears moot.

"We cannot pass our negligence [liability] on to a third party," Toghiani said. "That will not work. The state will be liable."

He added that they are still working on an amicable solution, but it was not presented at the luncheon.

Still more questions dealt with issues on the other side of the island and South Roosevelt Boulevard. Toghiani said no traffic lights will be installed on South Roosevelt Boulevard save one possible signal at Seaside Drive, but that will require planning and discussions with the city over cost and its permanency.

"How much that will cost I don't want to tell you right now, because I don't know, but it will be north of \$100,000," Toghiani said.

There will also be no traffic lights installed on Flagler Avenue either, Toghiani said.

Once crews get going on the North Roosevelt Reconstruction Project they may

work on weekends, but that will be up to de Moya supervisors.

"We do have blackout days," Toghiani said. "Any holidays Key West should have, those are blackout days. If the contractor wants to work weekends, he can work on weekends. There is nothing to prevent him from doing that. We want them to work as many days as possible, as aggressively as possible."

Others wondered about pedestrians crossing South Roosevelt Boulevard at Smathers Beach and if such a crossing was needed from the north side parking area. There are no current plans for a pedestrian crossing, but there are as part of a separate project for that street in 2015, Toghiani said.

At the finish, the new North Roosevelt Boulevard will sport new palm trees, a new sidewalk on the land side of the street, a new traffic light at Searstown and other improvements.

"I want to reiterate again, thank you, thank you, thank you, especially property owners along North Roosevelt Boulevard," Toghiani said. "It's been a long, arduous journey. Fourteen years. It took us four years just to get permits. It's been very difficult, but congratulations to all of you." 🍷

## *"President Message" continued from page 1* ▶

Walters from Sandra Walters Consulting, Inc. can be contacted at (305) 849-1474 or dean@swcinc.net to answer any questions. For updated information you can also go to the Chamber's website, [www.keywestchamber.org](http://www.keywestchamber.org), for a link to the FDOT site.

Now for the fun event. Although it was a little wet in the beginning, the weather cleared and the 7th Annual Tiger in the Woods, Key West Chamber of Commerce Golf Tournament was a huge success. The tournament was a sellout and it set an all time mark for sponsorship and prize donations. The grand prize was an original Peter Lik Gallery Piece, valued at close to five grand! I want to thank tournament Co-Chairs, Greg Sullivan and Johnny Andersen; the golf committee: Joyce Benavides, Michael Browning, Sam Holland, Jennifer Hulse, Pat Labrada, Andy Smith, Mark Todaro, Joyce Unke plus Kerry Baker and Virginia Panico. Also, thank you to all the sponsors, golfers, and volunteers. Congratulations to all the winners! Although far from placing, my foursome had a lot of laughs, usually at the expense of each other (you can't be sensitive around this crew). This tournament has become one of the best and thank you again for your support 🍷

## **The Key West Chamber of Commerce is looking for previous students who were involved in the Tom Sawyer Five Star Internship Program.**

Many of the past participants have gone through the internship program and continued with their careers with the Key West business community.

If you were involved with the Chamber's internship program we would like to hear from you. At our May General Membership Meeting our Education Committee will be highlighting our Tom Sawyer Five Star Program. If you could attend our May meeting we would be honored to introduce you.

Please contact the Chamber of Commerce at 305-294-2587 or write to [committees@keywestchamber.org](mailto:committees@keywestchamber.org)

## **FIRM Still Battling Unfair Windstorm Hikes**



**U**nreasonable hikes in Monroe County's windstorm insurance rates affect everyone, and the group that formed to combat

those increases needs support from everyone.

A group of concerned residents formed FIRM (Fair Insurance Rates in Monroe) in February 2006 to fight "excessive, discriminatory and unaffordable residential, condominium and commercial property insurance rates," according to the group's website.

They were successful in 2006, and helped repeal a proposed 25 percent increase in residential windstorm premiums. They also brought about a 30 percent reduction in Citizens Property Insurance rates, and have capped further potential increases at 10 percent per year.

But the battle continues today, and the new Florida Legislature is presenting significant – and potentially devastating – challenges.

"We're facing a legislature that doesn't understand the dynamics of a coastal area," FIRM President and County Commissioner Heather Carruthers said during the Chamber's March Economic Development Committee meeting. "The fundamental risk models are inaccurate in terms of our building strength and damage caused by wind versus storm surge."

The organization currently boasts 3,000 members, but it needs more.

"It doesn't cost a dime to sign your name and become a member, but it does show Tallahassee our numbers," said Virginia Panico, executive vice president of the Key West Chamber of Commerce. "This is important to everybody; not just business and property owners. This is for all of you who rent. If rates go up by 20 percent, do you think your rent won't go up?"

In addition to membership numbers, FIRM also needs volunteers as well as financial support to pay for frequent trips to Tallahassee and for new risk models for the Keys. The organization is donation driven, and every dollar helps FIRM help us.

"Nobody's going to stick up for the Keys except the Keys," Carruthers said.

For more information, or to make a donation of time or money, visit the FIRM website at [www.firmkeys.org](http://www.firmkeys.org), and help keep insurance rates in Monroe County fair and affordable. You may also visit the [www.keywestchamber.org](http://www.keywestchamber.org) website for information. 🍷



## Cruise Ship Schedule

### May 2012

01	Imagination	7:30am-2:00pm
02	Jewel of the Seas	10:00am-5:00pm
03	Majesty	9:30am-6:00pm
05	Disney Magic	10:45am-7:45pm
07	C. Valor	8:00am-5:00pm
08	Imagination	7:30am-2:00pm
08	Conquest	10:00am-6:00pm
09	Fascination	7:00am-3:00pm
10	Majesty	9:30am-6:00pm
10	Disney Magic	10:45am-7:45pm
14	C. Freedom	8:00am-5:00pm
15	Imagination	7:30am-2:00pm
15	C. Magic	10:00am-6:00pm
17	Majesty	9:30am-6:00pm
19	Disney Magic	10:45am-7:45pm
21	C. Valor	8:00am-5:00pm
22	Imagination	7:30am-2:00pm
23	Fascination	7:00am-3:00pm
24	Majesty	9:30am-6:00pm
25	Destiny	7:30am-2:00pm
28	C. Freedom	8:00am-5:00pm
29	Imagination	7:30am-2:00pm
31	Majesty	9:30am-6:00pm

### June 2012

04	C. Valor	8:00am-5:00pm
05	Imagination	7:30am-2:00pm
05	Conquest	10:00am-6:00pm
06	Fascination	7:00am-3:00pm
07	Majesty	9:30am-6:00pm
10	Destiny	7:00am-5:00pm
10	Regatta	8:00am-6:00pm
11	C. Freedom	8:00am-5:00pm
12	Imagination	7:30am-2:00pm
12	C. Magic	10:00am-6:00pm
14	Majesty	9:30am-6:00pm
18	C. Valor	8:00am-5:00pm
19	Imagination	7:30am-2:00pm
20	Fascination	7:00am-3:00pm
21	Majesty	9:30am-6:00pm
21	Ecstasy	12:00pm-8:00pm
22	Destiny	7:30am-2:00pm
24	Ecstasy	12:00pm-8:00pm
25	C. Freedom	8:00am-5:00pm
26	Imagination	7:30am-2:00pm
28	Majesty	9:30am-6:00pm

## The Chamber's 2011 Wage & Benefit Survey is now available!

Every year the Key West Chamber of Commerce publishes our Wage & Benefit Survey to provide local businesses with a tool to view the Key West employment market in terms of average wage levels by job type, benefit standards, and general turnover rate. We analyze local wage and benefit package information collected from the survey for over 140 positions in demand in our local economy.

For those selected members who took the time to participate in this annual survey, your free copy will be sent.

But have no worries, even if you were unable to take part, a copy of this year's survey is available for purchase:

- Chamber Members \$50.00 + tax\* = \$ 53.75
- Non-Chamber Members \$100.00 + tax\* = \$107.50

\*Tax exempt organizations must provide a "Tax Exemption" form

Order your copy today! Please contact the Chamber at 305-294-2587 or [committees@keywestchamber.org](mailto:committees@keywestchamber.org).

## Catherine Smiley Takes the Reins of the Image Committee

While the Key West Chamber of Commerce supports and promotes the local business community, its Image Committee supports and promotes the Chamber.

Board member Catherine Smiley recently took over as chairwoman of the Image Committee, which exists to "build awareness of the actions of the Key West Chamber of Commerce in the eyes of members, potential members and the business community as a whole," according to the committee's mission statement.

Smiley, who works as director of sales and marketing, took the reins from Sharon Moore, who continues to lead the Education Committee.

"We aim to make sure the community is aware of how the Chamber benefits the business community," Smiley said, adding that the Image Committee helps determine what speakers will bring the most value to the Chamber's monthly membership luncheons. In 2009, Smiley arranged for a presentation by Hinkle & Nasuti, the Bethesda, Md. marketing firm used by the Pier House.

"Our goal is to ask what the members need and find a way to provide that, she said.

The committee is currently in the process of analyzing the Chamber's make-up and composition with regard to its membership "so we can be sure we're meeting their needs," she said.

The Image Committee also works closely with Chamber staff to ensure the organization's website is kept current and reflects the ongoing initiatives, including discount programs and online coupons for the slow summer months.

Smiley said she looks forward to chairing the Image Committee and will continue to sit on the Economic Development Committee, which analyzes local government budgets and evaluates community programs to help determine whether to bring the project before the board and decide whether it's something the Chamber should support.

The Image Committee meets the third Thursday of each month and welcomes input from Chamber members about how the committee can best serve the Chamber and community as a whole.



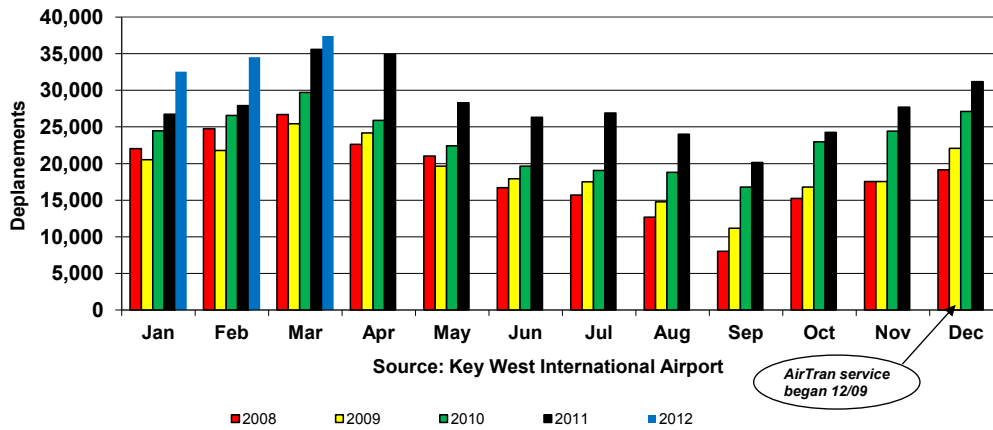
**BUSINESS AFTER HOURS ... MARCH 21<sup>ST</sup>, 2012**

**Sponsored by: Waste Management & Key West Golf Club**





## Key West International Airport Arrivals January 2008 - March 2012



Passenger arrivals in March 2012 totaled 37,422 which is an increase of 5.1% from March 2011. The March 2012 volume is another new record for the month eclipsing the old record set in 2005 when 37,193 passengers deplaned in the month of March.

March marked the 34th straight month where passenger traffic increased over the same month in the prior year.

A total of 91,352 cruise ship passengers disembarked into Key West in March 2012. This was 5.1% higher than March 2011 which saw 86,921 passengers disembark. This marks two straight months wherein the current year's month was higher than the previous year's month.

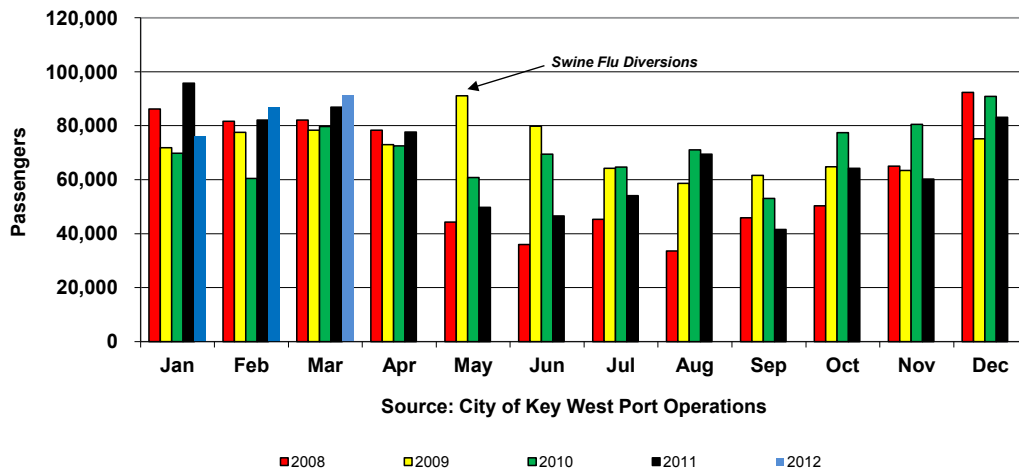
For the year to date, cruise ship arrivals saw 254,337 passengers disembark. Disembarkments decreased 4.0% when compared to the first three months of 2011.

The cruise ship schedule for May thru July 2012 compared with the same three months in 2011 as shown below:

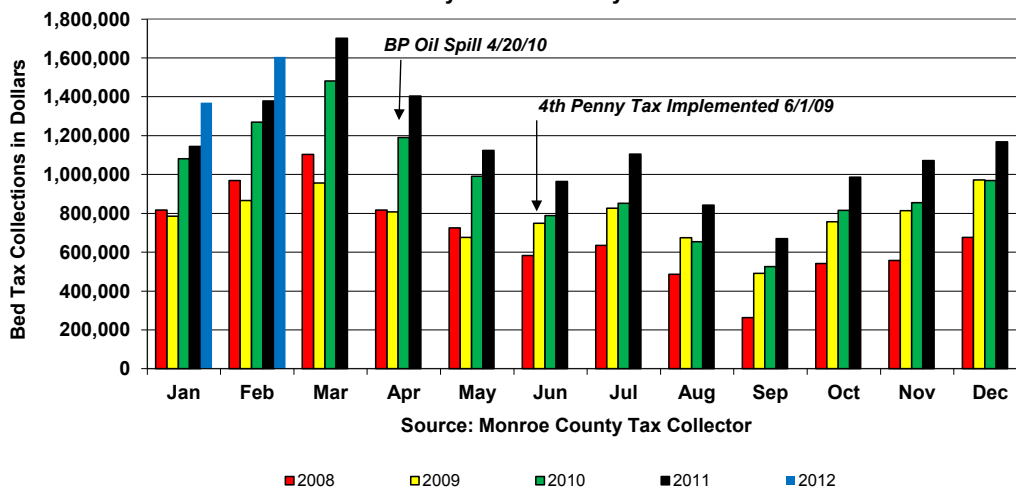
	Number of Ships	
	2012	2011

May	23	18
June	22	16
July	22	14

## Key West Cruise Ship Passengers January 2008 - March 2012



## Key West Bed Tax Collections January 2008 - February 2012



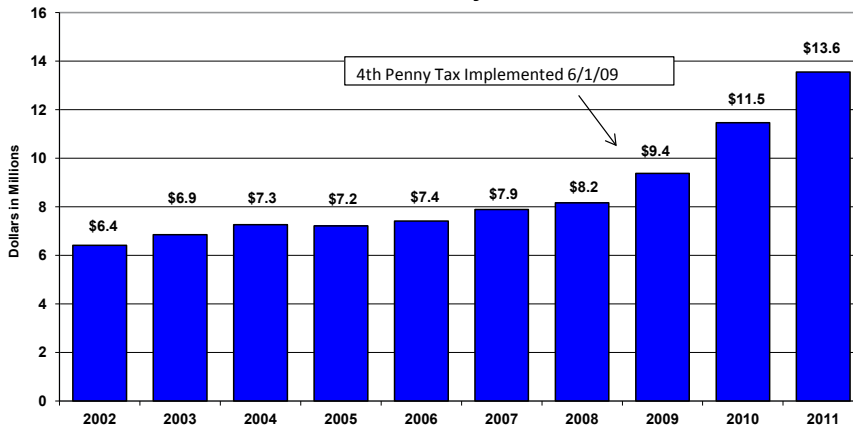
Reported bed tax collections for Key West were \$1,605,268 for February 2012, an increase of 16.5% over February 2011.

According to Smith Travel, February 2012 occupancy was 93.4%, an increase of 0.3% points from the February 2011 occupancy rate of 93.1%.

The Average Daily Rate was reported at \$266.84 for February 2012, an increase of 12.3% from the ADR of \$237.56 posted for February 2011. This continues the succession of months wherein the ADR has been higher than the same month in the previous year (now 26 months). Moreover, the last 12 months are all-time records for each month.



**Key West Bed Tax  
January-December Volume  
Ten Year Summary, 2002-2011**

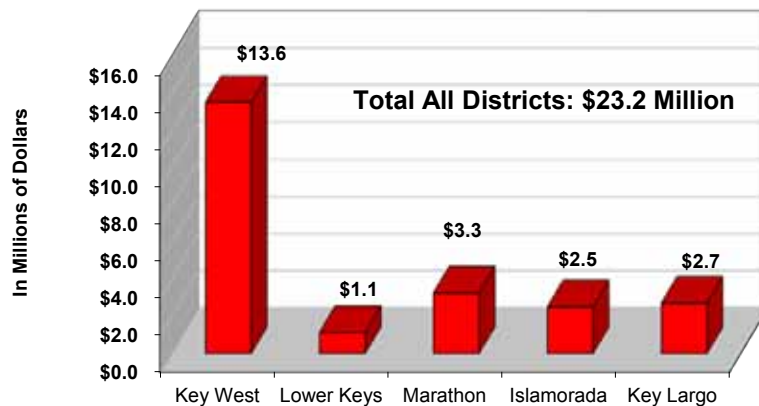


This chart shows the amount of bed tax collected in District 1, the district defined by the Tourist Development Council as comprising Key West.

Bed Tax collections were \$13.6 million for 2011, an increase of 18.2% from 2010. In fact collections were at an all time high as can be seen from this chart which displays the last ten years of bed tax collections for Key West.

For 2011, the increase in bed tax collections was due to a combination of increased room occupancy rentals and increased room rates. Both of these increased over 2010 levels, with rentals increasing 5.8% percentage points and room rates increasing 8.0%.

**All DACs - Fourth Penny Bed Tax  
Collections January-December, 2011  
Total by District**

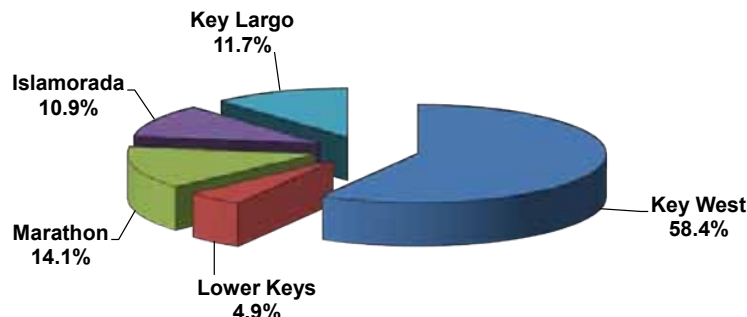


As can be seen from the chart to the left, the \$13.6 million of bed tax collected in Key West during 2011 shows it to be by far the largest district of all the District Advisory Council's (DAC's) comprising the Monroe County TDC.

The Marathon, Key Largo and Islamorada Districts each collected approximately \$3 million whereas the Lower Keys District collected roughly \$1 million during 2011.

The collections of all the DAC's combined total \$23.2 million so that the Key West District at \$13.6 million makes up more than half of the total collections.

**All DACs - Fourth Penny Bed Tax  
Collections January-December, 2011  
Percentage by District**



This pie chart shows the percentage of bed tax collections by district.

Key West accounts for 58.4% of the county's bed tax collections whereas Marathon, Key Largo and Islamorada cluster at about 11-14% each. The Lower Keys came in at 4.9% of total county collections.

The relative position of each district had remained remarkably constant through 2007. Since then however, Key West's collections have grown at a quicker pace than those of the other districts. Since 2007, occupancy and room rates in Key West have grown at a faster pace than other location in the Keys.

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

The Key West Chamber of Commerce is pleased to offer the following seminars for our members and community.

### Stress and Time Management

- Presented by Elisa Levy
- Wednesday, May 16th, 8:30am – 11:30am
- At the DoubleTree Grand Key Resort
- \$64.00 for Members and \$84 for Non-Members

Elisa Levy is an internationally known speaker and author who specializes in conflict resolution, team building, leadership and customer service. For the last 15 years, she has been working with organizations and individuals to improve their businesses and working relationships. Her clients run the gamut, from the United Nations, to Fortune 500 companies, hotel chains, restaurants and non-profit organizations. Elisa travels the world teaching, and has authored two books and countless articles on conflict resolution.

In this course, you will learn:

- easy-to-use methods of prioritizing and staying organized
- tips on managing your in box and e-mail
- how to manage and prevent stress
- Say “no” effectively

Watch your email for more information!

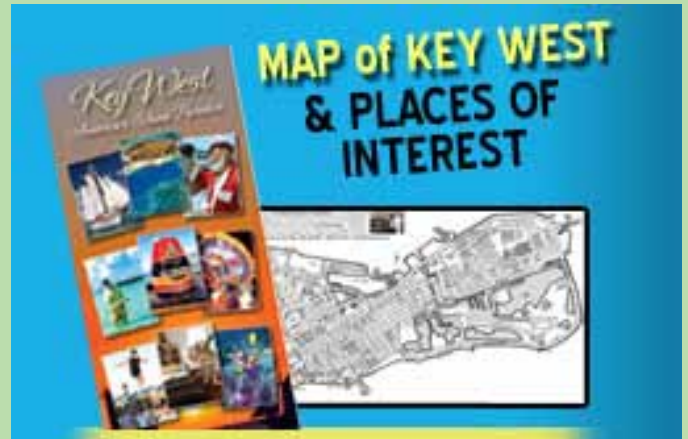
## GET STUCK ON THE CHAMBER'S MAILING LABEL PROGRAM

The Key West Chamber of Commerce encourages its members to take advantage of its Mailing Label Program, which enables participants to reach more potential customers with their brochures and business information.

Callers' names and addresses are fed into the Chambers computers, along with the type or types of information requested, including information relating to accommodations, weddings, fishing, diving and relocation. Because the callers have already exhibited a strong interest in visiting Key West simply by making their phone calls, the labels represent a targeted market for businesses to distribute brochures, coupons or other literature.

Instead of or in addition to the labels themselves, members can choose to receive reports on caller information. These reports, which include names and addresses of callers, are a very useful source of database demographic material for businesses wanting to create a visitor profile or seasonal forecast of visitors. They also allow more effective direct mail contact with a targeted audience. Participants can sign up for the Labeling Program on an annual basis, and will be billed yearly, but will receive labels or reports on a weekly basis. For more information on the Label Program please contact Kerry Baker at 305-294-2587 or via email at kbaker@keywestchamber.org.

## Don't Miss this Exciting Opportunity to reach the Key West Visitor!



The 2012-2013 Key West Chamber of Commerce Visitor Guide and Map will be the exclusive fulfillment piece for the Key West Chamber of Commerce promoting Key West as a premier destination to prospective visitors. The brochure and map is full color and showcases the character and activities that make Key West unique.

The brochure has been highly successful in its distribution along the plazas for the Florida Turnpike. In fact we had to double the original quantity supplied for the winter season.

It is also the fulfillment piece for all visitor and newcomer inquires received for Key West by telephone, live chat and email requests from the Monroe County TDC. In addition to being handed out in the lobby of our official visitors center located at 510 Greene Street, they are also distributed at the Lower Keys Big Pine, Marathon, Islamorada, and Key Largo Chamber of Commerce Visitor Centers, as well as handed out at travel and trade shows promoting Key West.

The brochure will allow Key West businesses the opportunity to feature information on your accommodations, attractions, restaurants, museums, shopping, entertainment and professional services to visitors and will be a valuable resource referred to over and over by visitors before and during their stay.

The brochure is extremely targeted with a print of 150,000 copies – with a guaranteed distribution for July, 2012

### Publication Specs

The map/brochure is 24" wide x 18" tall, full color both sides, folding to 4" x 9" to fit in envelopes and rack holders. 150,000 copies annually! Standard ads will appear around the map; in addition you have the opportunity to purchase larger billboard panels on the back cover, and inside panels as well as above the category listings.

For more information or to advertise please contact Nancy D'Amato • 305-304-1026 • quepasakeywest@hotmail.com

## Chamber Recognizes Teachers' Commitment to the Future



Nine Key West teachers were honored with the Teacher of the Year Recognition Award at the April 25th Key West Chamber of Commerce luncheon. In the back from left, Marsha Rhodes, Poinciana Elementary School; Christine Shanle, Gerald Adams Elementary School; Chamber Education Committee member Sandeep Singh; Gary Hernandez, Key West High School; Education Committee member Dr. Teri Beers-Rossi; Matthew Frankel, Key West Collegiate School; Sue Heidle, Grace Lutheran Church School; Holli Roberts, Glynn Archer Elementary School; Erica Baugh, Sigsbee Elementary School; Erin Luciani, St. Mary's Star of the Sea School; Chamber Education Committee Chair Sharon Moore and Chamber President Jim Wilson

As part of its ongoing commitment to education and the future of the community, the Key West Chamber of Commerce regularly honors the area's best and brightest teachers.

These individuals, nominated by their peers and school principals, leave a legacy in each of the students they teach and contribute to a brighter outlook for everyone.

Each honoree receives a plaque donated by Local Enterprises, along with a gift bag of appreciation from Chamber members who show their support of teachers through gift certificates, merchandise or cash donations.

The Key West Chamber of Commerce, as always, is proud to honor the following Key West teachers for their tireless dedication to the island's youngest residents:

▶ **Sue Heidle, kindergarten teacher, Grace Lutheran Elementary School**

Sue Heidle is both a kindergarten teacher and the director of Grace Lutheran School, where she utilizes creative teaching methods and constantly helps both students and families. She has been a part of the Grace Lutheran family for nine years and has been a teacher for 26 years. She has a master's degree in education and was named the Wal-Mart Teacher of the Year when living in Ohio. Sue routinely goes above and beyond the call of duty as director of the school and is active in all school activities, many of which she has implemented.

▶ **Mendy Hyatt, upper elementary teacher, Key West Montessori Charter School**

Mendy Hyatt is passionate about the Montessori method of education, and her experience has contributed to the improvement of Key West's free public Montessori school, said Principal Lynn Marie Barras. She has designed programs

to ease students' transition from the lower to upper elementary programs and helped plan the upper elementary curriculum. As the author of two children's books, Mendy was a natural fit to create a school blog, which she helps her students maintain. She also believes that mutual respect among staff and students is one of the most important criteria for a healthy learning environment, Principal Barras said. She has a master's degree in Montessori education as well as a bachelor's degree in fashion.

▶ **Erin Luciani, science/math/algebra teacher, Mary Immaculate Star of the Sea**

Erin Luciani's dedication to and involvement in school activities inspires her students to give back to their school and community, Principal Beth Harris said. Erin teaches science, math and algebra to sixth, seventh and eighth graders, is a homeroom teacher and the Student Council sponsor. She is married to a Navy pilot and grew up in California, where she received her teaching degree in multiple middle school subjects. She is loved and respected by her students and colleagues, and is a dedicated, professional teacher who gives students the extra attention needed to allow them to succeed, Principal Harris said.

▶ **Marsha Rhodes, fourth grade teacher, Poinciana Elementary**

Marsha Rhodes is a tireless educator with an endlessly positive outlook, Principal Steve Vinson said of the fourth-grade teacher who has been chosen as her school's teacher of the year three times since she began teaching in Monroe County 14 years ago. "She is always very positive in every circumstance and always has a huge smile on her face," Principal Vinson said, adding that "It is an absolute pleasure to work with her."

▶ **Holli Roberts, fourth/fifth-grade combo, Glynn Archer Elementary**

Holli Roberts' ability to connect with people makes students, parents and colleagues feel comfortable and at ease around her and in her classroom. That relaxing reassurance is also present in her teaching style so that hesitant learners don't realize they're learning, said Principal Henry Boza. "Her manner of being is always relaxing, caring and loving no matter how intricate the subject matter may be," he said, adding that Holli is an asset to the school as well as the community. She has been recognized as Monroe County's District Employee of the Year, Beginning Teacher of the Year and District Inclusion Teacher of the Year.

▶ **Christine Shanle, exceptional student education, Gerald Adams Elementary**

Christine Shanle teaches exceptional students in a multi-grade classroom, where she is able to meet their needs despite varying ages and learning abilities, said Principal Frannie Herrin. She has a teaching degree in emotional disorders for all grades and is certified to teach students with learning disabilities as well as those who speak English as a second language. Christine also works in Gerald Adams' after-school program and has earned the respect of her peers through her commitment to teaching, Principal Herrin said.

▶ **Erica Baugh, science teacher, Sigsbee Charter School**

Eric Baugh utilizes Key West's marine surroundings in hands-on environmental activities and field trips. Her students embark on wading expeditions, snorkeling trips, Everglades camping and wildlife surveys. Students of all ages dissect squid, fish and algae, said Principal Elisa Jannes, calling Erica "an inspiration to her colleagues and an active, positive role model who is creating stewards of the environment."

▶ **Gary Hernandez, director of bands, Key West High School**

With degrees in psychology and music education, Gary Hernandez is perfectly suited for his position as director of bands at Key West High School, where he makes an outstanding contribution to the whole community. The school's bands offer consistently superb performances, and students in the program receive top-notch, comprehensive music education, said Principal Amber Archer Bosco.

▶ **Matthew Frankel, math teacher, Key West Collegiate High School**

Matt Frankel was instrumental in the opening of Key West Collegiate High School last August, helping with everything from textbook selection to implementation of the Advanced Placement program, said Principal Jennifer Cleaver. He teaches math and chemistry and is the school's National Honor Society faculty advisor. "Matt is a team player, always willing to help a colleague or stay late to help a student," Principal Cleaver said, commending his ability to keep students motivated and focused on the task at hand. 🍀



## Community Calendar

### May 2012

- |         |   |    |  |
|---------|---|----|--|
| 1-11/30 | Key West Fishing Tournament<br>Doris Harris, 295-6601,<br>kwft@comcast.net                                  | 26 | 294-9911 www.keystix.com<br>11th Annual Yamaha<br>Dolphin Masters Invitational<br>\$750 per boat, John<br>Stuempfig 304-7674, wave.<br>whacker@hotmail.com |
| 1-12    | Red Barn Theatre presents:<br>Short Attention Span<br>Theatre 296-9911, info@<br>redbarntheatre.com         | 27 | 21st Annual Schooner Wharf<br>Minimal Regatta 1pm at<br>Key West Bight, 292-3302   |
| 2-6     | Key West Songwriters'<br>Festival, Contact Charlie<br>Bauer, 304-0814                                       |    |  |
| 4-13    | WATERFRONT<br>PLAYHOUSE-Key West<br>Mystery Fest, 294-5015  |    |  |
| 5       | Cinco de Mayo Fundraiser<br>Amigos Tortilla Bar Greene<br>St 5pm-midnight, 292-2009                         |    |  |
| 6       | Waterfront Playhouse<br>presents: Clue, The Dinner<br>7pm, 294-5015, box_office@<br>waterfrontplayhouse.com |    |  |
| 10-13   | Key West Paddleboard<br>Classic Begin and end at<br>Smathers Beach, 797-1174                                |    |  |
| 17      | Open House/The Studios<br>of Key West "Walk on<br>White" 6-9pm www.<br>tskw.org 296-0458                    |    |  |
| 18-19   | Truman Legacy Symposium<br>Missouri Senator Roy Blunt<br>will be the keynote speaker                        |    |  |

### June 2012


- |         |   |
|---------|---|
| 1-11/30 | Key West Fishing Tournament<br>Doris Harris, 295-6601,<br>kwft@comcast.net                                      |
| 6-10    | Key West Pride Fest<br>admin@kwbgonline.org,<br>800-535-7797; 294-4603,<br>www.keywestpride.org                 |
| 7-10    | Third Annual Key West<br>Bacchanalia, Contact Aga<br>and James Hilferty, 766-3356,<br>kw-pocketguides@yahoo.com |
| 16      | The Original FKCC Swim<br>Around Key West and Swim<br>Meet Contact Lori Bosco,<br>809-3562, aqualb@aol.com      |
| 22-24   | Key West Gator Club<br>Dolphin Derby Contact John<br>Stuempfig, 304-7674, wave.<br>whacker@hotmail.com          |

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## Are you taking advantage of your membership privileges?

Membership does have its privileges, and they're not only for American Express card holders. As part of its ongoing effort to support local businesses, the Key West Chamber of Commerce offers services that are available exclusively to its members.

Officials at the organization want to remind people this spring about the "Members Only" section of its website at [www.keywestchamber.org](http://www.keywestchamber.org).

By clicking the Members Only link from the Key West Chamber's home page, members will log in with a username and password that is assigned when their membership begins.

From that page, members can review the Chamber's financial reports; its revenues, assets and expenses as well as the number of referrals and requests for information that the Chamber staff has fielded specifically for an individual business. Members also may update their contact information to ensure that the names and phone numbers are current for the tourism operators fielding phone calls and emails seeking information.

The page also is home to the myriad surveys the Chamber conducts periodically to gauge the business environment. The results of each survey also are posted on that page when the responses are tallied.

In addition, the Members Only page allows members to submit details about an upcoming special event, fundraiser, play, performance or lecture. Pending approval by Executive Vice President Virginia Panico, the event will be included in the online Calendar of Events, which is available to everyone who visits the Chamber's website, regardless of their membership status. Some events also will appear in the monthly Chamber Chowder newsletter that is distributed electronically to all members on the first of each month.



Members will see on the financial sheets how much money the Chamber raises at special events such as the annual golf tournament, the monthly Business After Hours and from yearly membership dues, which last year represented \$214,000 of the Key West Chamber's overall budget.

The Members Only web page can be a valuable tool for the organization's members. Anyone who needs to know their business's username and password to access the page should contact the Key West Chamber of Commerce at 305-294-2587 or stop by the office at 510 Greene St. to be sure you're taking advantages of all the privileges of membership.

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## CHAMBER CHOWDER

510 Greene Street ~ 1st Floor, Key West

www.keywestchamber.org

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Jim Wilson, President  
*Appraisal Company of Key West/296-4568*

Esther Tupino, President Elect  
*Centennial Bank/676-3158*

Greg Sullivan, Vice President  
*Waste Management/296-2825*

Robin Lockwood, Treasurer  
*Dr. Robin Lockwood/294-5103*

Nicki Will, Secretary  
*Lower Keys Medical Center/294-5535*

Cara Higgins, Past President  
*Horan, Wallace & Higgins/294-4585*

Bascom Grooms, Appointee  
*Bascom Grooms Real Estate/295-7511*

Melissa Kendrick, Appointee  
*Mel Fisher Maritime Museum/294-2633*

Robert Spottswood, Appointee  
*Spottswood Companies/294-6100*

Virginia A. Panico, Executive Vice President  
*Key West Chamber of Commerce/294-2587*

### CHAMBER STAFF

Virginia A. Panico  
*Executive Vice President*

Bruce Holden  
*Director of Research*

Tina Garcia  
*Executive Assistant*

Kerry Baker  
*Membership Director/Special Events Coordinator*

Gladys Clarks  
*Tourist Information Receptionist*

Mary Beth Hurd, Emily Sipe  
*Tourist Information Operators*

Virginia A. Panico  
*Newsletter Editor*

Cindy Jefferson  
*Art Director*

### Key West Chamber Calendar of Events

#### May 2012

**Business After Hours**  
Tuesday, May 8th  
5:30pm-7:30pm  
Location: Pegasus International Hotel  
501 Southard Street  
Members Only Business  
Networking Event

**Stress & Time Management Seminar**  
**Reservations Required**  
Wednesday, May 16th  
8:30am – 11:30am  
Location: DoubleTree  
Grand Key Resort  
Contact the Chamber at 294-2587  
or email: [committees@keywestchamber.org](mailto:committees@keywestchamber.org)

**General Membership Meeting**  
Wednesday, May 23rd  
Noon  
Speakers: Sharon Moore, Chair and  
the Chamber Education Committee  
Topic: Education Committee  
Projects Update  
Location: Key West Marriott  
Beachside Resort  
Please RSVP to Mary Beth at 294-2587  
or email: [committees@keywestchamber.org](mailto:committees@keywestchamber.org)

#### June 2012

**Business After Hours**  
Date: TBD  
5:30pm-7:30pm  
Sponsored by: TBD  
Location: TBD  
Members Only Business  
Networking Event



**General Membership Meeting**  
Wednesday, June 27th  
Noon  
Candidates Forum  
Topic: Candidates TBD  
Location: DoubleTree  
Grand Key Resort  
Please RSVP to Mary Beth at 294-2587  
or email: [committees@keywestchamber.org](mailto:committees@keywestchamber.org)

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