



Key West Chamber of Commerce Hosts Peary Court Discussion



Key West Chamber of Commerce President Nicki Will, center, thanks City Commissioner and Housing First PAC Chairman Jimmy Weekley, left, and Key West Housing Authority Executive Director Manuel Castillo. Weekley and Castillo discussed the potential purchase of Peary Court for workforce housing.

Representatives of Housing First, the new political action committee formed in support of the city’s purchase of Peary Court for workforce housing, spoke to members of the Key West Chamber of Commerce during the organization’s January luncheon at the Casa Marina Resort.

Manuel Castillo, executive director of the Key West Housing Authority, and City Commissioner Jimmy Weekley, speaking as chairman of the Housing First PAC, described the proposed \$55 million purchase of the 24-acre community that formerly housed Navy and military personnel.

Key West voters will be asked during the March 15th presidential primary election whether they support the city’s purchase of the 24-acre property that until recently has been used for military housing.

“The first ballot question, if approved, will give the city permission to buy the Peary Court property,” Weekley said. “The second question will authorize the city to borrow the money for the purchase.”

If approved in March, Weekley estimated that it would take about four months for the city to complete its due diligence and formally take over the property.

“The city would be using \$10 million of land authority funds and would be looking to finance \$46 million with a bond,” Castillo said, adding that proposals from banks interested in lending the city the money were due to the city offices Wednesday, Jan. 27th.

continued on page 3 ▶

Message from President Nicki L. Will



I am honored to serve as the President of the Key West Chamber of Commerce again in 2016. I hope to continue to build upon the successes and achievements of all the Chamber presidents before me and our work in 2015.

I would like to thank all 2016 Board members for the work we are about to undertake. I would like to thank all committee chairpersons and the Chamber officers including Kim Works, Greg Sullivan, and Cara Higgins as well as the other members of the Executive Committee including Robin Lockwood, Sam Holland, Melissa Kendrick and Randy Moore. I would also like to welcome a number of new members to the Board that bring diverse perspectives and visions to the Chamber.

The Chamber is a mission driven organization. “The mission of the Greater Key West Chamber of Commerce is to serve its members and maintain and promote a viable economy for the businesses and working people of Key West.”

continued on page 3 ▶

Table of Contents	
Business Spotlight	2
2016 Installation of Officers	4
Extraordinary Educators Honored	5
Business Trends	6-7
Hall of Fame Award; Athena Award	8
Business After Hours	9
New Members	10
Firefighter of the Year Award	10
Community Calendar	11
Cruise Ship Calendar	11
Chamber Calendar of Events	12

Spotlight Shines on ...Charlie Mench, First State Bank



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 Charlie Mench, First State Bank.

As a corporate services representative, Charlie Mench is one of those "behind-the-scenes bankers," making big things possible for local businesses from his upstairs office at First State Bank of the Florida Keys' North Roosevelt Boulevard branch.

"I do sales and servicing of our corporate accounts and products," said Mench, who joined First State Bank as soon as he moved to Key West in 2002. "We have a lot of commercial clients, such as large bars and restaurants, the City of Key West, the county

tax collector's office and public utilities, but we also pride ourselves on our handling of small retailers and local nonprofits."

Those clients all need different services and banking products, from ACH credit and debit transactions, to credit card processing, payroll services and anything else a merchant may need to succeed.

"Other banks offer similar corporate services, but we're the only ones that do it from here in Key West, personally and locally," Mench said, adding that his department includes six full-time and experience bankers and businesspeople. "If a credit card terminal goes down, we have the equipment here to take care of it in minutes. We're very hands-on."

And that's how Mench prefers it, after owning his own retail businesses for years in Vermont.

"We had a large video store in Vermont that we ended up selling to Blockbuster," Mench said, adding that First State Bank is the only job he's had since moving to the Keys.

"I had come down here on vacation and it was one of those typical 'sell everything and move to Key West' type of scenario," he said. "We sold everything but the kids and headed for warm weather and blue water."

When he's not helping businesses run smoothly at work, Mench himself is a dedicated runner and a member of the Southernmost Runners Club.

"We meet at 6 a.m. every Tuesday and Thursday at the White Street Pier and run four or five miles," said Mench, who recently finished the Key West Half Marathon, and will tackle the Seven-Mile Bridge Run for the third time this spring.

"I'm also the treasurer of the Key West Attractions Association and I am involved with the Lodging Association, the Key West Business Guild and the Key West Chamber of Commerce," he said.

To see how Mench can help your business, large or small, call him at 305-293-6814.



Visit Dan for **FINANCING** made easy!

Centennial Bank's local loan expert **DAN** understands the uniqueness of the islands, and he's dedicated to finding the perfect loan for you.

We offer FNMA, FHLMC, FHA, VA and non-traditional loans. Conventional, Jumbo, FNMA, FHLMC, FHA and VA Financing Available.

Dan Blagriff, LOAN ORIGINATOR • NMLS 675375

305-676-3146 • dblagriff@my100bank.com



Member
FDIC



MY100BANK.COM

A Home BancShares Company (Nasdaq:HOMB)

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

YP.com
9850 NW 41st St.
Doral, FL 33178
305-482-2601

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

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



“Peary Court” continued from page 1 ▶

Using a conservatively estimated interest rate of 3.5 percent, the city would have to pay back \$2.4 million a year for 30 years, Castillo said. Weekley added that negotiations had started with the current property owners wanting \$67 million for the property.

Rents for the two-bedroom units would range from \$1,571 to \$2,358 per month. All residents would have to qualify for a rental unit and meet the city’s income requirements for low-income, moderate and median income workers.

“The current owner owns the 157 existing units, plus the right to rebuild three additional units that were destroyed in a fire,” Castillo explained during his presentation of the project financials. “They also have the right to build another 48 affordable units on the site.”

All units, which are arranged as quadruplex townhomes, have two bedrooms, and one and a half baths. Eight of the units are ranch-style units configured to meet the Americans with Disabilities Act standards.

“Do we want Peary Court to end up, as Truman Annex did, a part-time community for winter residents?” Weekley asked the Chamber audience, reminding them of the difficulty many face when recruiting and retaining qualified employees who struggle to find housing in Key West.

Weekley directed audience members to the PAC’s new website at workerhousingkw.org before taking questions from the audience.

One Chamber member, during the question-and-answer session, pointed out that not all residents and workers are married or in relationships, but are instead sharing living quarters as roommates.

“Will the city be able to accommodate those types of tenants?” she asked.

Yes, Castillo said, explaining that the financial proposals take those situations into consideration, and could accommodate people living together as married couples or domestic partners, or as unmarried roommates.

Another concern was for the current residents of Peary Court and whether they would have to move when and if the city buys the property.

“According to our current calculations, it looks as if there are 10 or 12 current residents who would exceed the city’s income requirements,” Castillo said, adding that those residents would be given ample time, but that they would, in fact, have to vacate the premises, as it would be reserved exclusively for income-qualified workforce housing.

“This will show the city we are serious about finding a solution to our affordable housing problem,” Weekley said.

Castillo and Weekley ended their presentation by thanking the Key West Chamber of Commerce for their time, and reminding everyone to vote on March 15th. ▼

President’s Message continued from page 1 ▶

I am here to work for you as members of the Chamber. My plan this year is to continue to serve the membership, promote the Chamber, and attain goals established in our work plan for 2016.

We are America’s Caribbean, a unique economy and ecosystem. We have a thriving economy and over the past decade have been able to remain strong. We need to remember that our economic engine is tourism, we are a tourist driven economy.

There continue to be challenges ahead. One of the greatest issues we continue to face is workforce housing. Many members of our workforce are struggling to live in Key West. It is very promising to see the City of Key West and Monroe County begin to work together to address workforce housing. Despite the exceptional intentions and hard work by many individuals, organizations and local companies, the reality of workforce housing is not much different from when the goal of assuring adequate workforce housing was drafted in 1998 as part of the Chamber’s Vision 2020. Perhaps this will be the year. The voters of Key West will also face a ballot option in March regarding Peary Court.

In our Program of Work for 2016 we will also assess and monitor the potential changes relative to the relationship with Cuba through our Tourism Committee. Member promotion is a key function of the Chamber.

If you are interested in shaping the future of the Chamber please join a committee. The members of the committees bring the perspectives of the membership to light and ultimately to the Board.

As we enter 2016 the only given in our future is change. As a diverse chamber we need to focus on our commonalities and the community that we love and call home. Let us all work together to address those changes and work together to for the greater good of the members of the Key West Chamber of Commerce.

Thank you for your continued support of the Chamber. Please let me know how we may better serve you. ▼

Key West Chamber of Commerce Installs 2016 Officers



The 2016 board of directors of the Key West Chamber of Commerce was sworn in on January 23rd by State Rep. Holly Raschein. This year's board members (in alphabetical order) are: John Anderson, Ron Day, Jed Dodds, Scott Duszynski, Claude Gardner, Sam Holland, Melissa Kendrick, Robin Lockwood, Randy Moore, Suzanne Moore, Michael Morawski, Monica Munoz, Mark Rossi, Catherine Smiley, Billy Spottswood, Lynne Tejada, Danny Toppino, John Toppino, Esther Tupino, Joseph Walsh and Jim Wilson.

The Key West Chamber of Commerce seamlessly blended business with pleasure during its January 23rd Installation Dinner & Awards Banquet at the Marriott Beachside Hotel.

A complimentary cocktail hour, courtesy of the Appelrouth & Farr family and Appelrouth, Farah & Co., P.A., started the event. Florida Keys State Rep. Holly Raschein installed the officers and the directors of the board for the 2016 Key West Chamber of Commerce.

The 2016 Key West Chamber of Commerce officers are: President Nicki Will, Vice President Kim Works, Treasurer Greg Sullivan and Secretary Cara Higgins.

The board of directors include: John Anderson, Ron Day, Jed Dodds, Scott Duszynski, Claude Gardner, Sam Holland, Melissa Kendrick, Robin Lockwood, Randy Moore, Suzanne Moore, Michael Morawski, Monica Munoz, Mark Rossi, Catherine Smiley, Billy Spottswood, Lynne Tejada, Danny Toppino, John Toppino, Esther Tupino, Joseph Walsh and Jim Wilson.

The banquet also featured the presentation of three esteemed awards: Robert Spottswood received the Billy Appelrouth Award for service to the community and to the Chamber of Commerce; Piper Smith received the Athena Award for furthering the goals of business and professional women, and Greg Sullivan was inducted into the prestigious Key West Chamber of Commerce Hall of Fame.

But before the awards were announced, Florida Keys State Rep. Holly Raschein administered the oath of office to the incoming board of directors and officers.

Key West Chamber of Commerce President Nicki Will took the reins for her second consecutive term in office.

As winter finally blanketed the Northeast on that chilly January evening in Key West, Will told the audience, "Although it's not a Chamber of Commerce day down here in Key West, we're here saying, Thank God, winter finally came up north. So, yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus," she said to Executive Vice President Virginia Panico.

"In 2003, when I was asked by my company to come to Key West, I made the right decision," Will said emphatically. "I had the opportunity to be the CEO of a hospital. I thought I'd be here a couple of years and move on. It's now 2016 and I'm still here because I love it. I just love it."

Will told the crowd she hopes this year to continue building upon

the successes of her preceding presidents, and reminded the audience of the Chamber's various committees and their missions.

From recruiting new members, to evaluating government budgets; supporting the efforts of local teachers and assessing the value of various Chamber functions, the committees make things happen.

Will also complimented Claude Gardner for spearheading one of the Chamber's newest ventures during this year's fall festivities, which awarded cash prizes to the two best locally designed floats for the Fantasy Fest parade.

The move was intended to increase creativity and encourage local participation in the event, and it was a resounding success, Will said, thanking everyone for their support and involvement and expressing hope and confidence in continued success for the coming year.

And though the wind was brisk and the night air crisp in Key West at the January 23rd banquet, there was plenty of optimism for another record-breaking year of Key West commerce and tourism. The evening closed with dancing and well wishes for all the awardees.



State Representative Holly Raschein, far right, administered the oath of office to the Key West Chamber of Commerce officers for 2016 during the organization's January 23rd Installation and Awards Banquet at the Marriott Beachside Hotel. This year's officers include, left to right, Treasurer Greg Sullivan; Secretary Cara Higgins and Vice President Kim Works.

Key West Chamber of Commerce Honors Extraordinary Educators



The Key West Chamber of Commerce honored seven area teachers at its January luncheon. Pictured left to right: Superintendent Mark Porter; teachers Debbie Masters, Kathy Baker, Brandi Ortiz; Heather Barrios of the Monroe County School District; teacher Valerie Palay; Education Committee Co-chair Mike Morawski; teacher Darcie Parra, Education Committee Co-chair Billy Spottswood; teachers Tara Whitehead and Heidi Wadsley. Not pictured: Chamber President Nicki L. Will Ph. D.

As part of its ongoing commitment to education and the future of the community, the Key West of 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 has lunch sponsored by Royal Furniture & Design and receives a commemorative plaque sponsored by Local Awards & Engraving. In addition, a gift bag of appreciation from chamber members who show their support 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:

Debbie Masters, 5th grade, Sugarloaf School

▶ Debbie Masters has been teaching for nearly 30 years, and continues to find innovative ways to reach every student. She was nominated by her peers for her commitment to the school and her students' outstanding performance on statewide assessments, said Principal Harry Russell. Her students' science scores are consistently some of the highest in the district. "Debbie is an excellent teacher who is well-respected by her peers and the Sugarloaf community," Principal Russell said.

Kathy Greenan-Baker, 5th grade reading, Gerald Adams Elementary

▶ Kathy Baker's students aged four years in the summer, but the veteran teacher didn't miss a beat. When an unexpected vacancy last summer left Gerald Adams in need of a fifth-grade teacher, Kathy left the familiar comfort of her first-grade classroom to teach fifth-grade reading. She brought a wealth of knowledge and a caring sense of family that all fifth-grade students need as they approach middle school. "Kathy isn't just surviving in 5th grade, she's thriving," said Principal Fran Herrin. "We are fortunate that she has chosen to work at Gerald Adams and look forward to even more great things from her students."

Brandi Ortiz, kindergarten, Horace O'Bryant School

▶ The best teachers adapt readily to changing and unpredictable situations. Brandi Ortiz is no exception and she proved her wide-ranging skills this year when she moved her expertise from sixth-grade social studies to kindergarten at Horace O'Bryant School. "Brandi has

been a highly effective teacher and is the leader of our award-winning Relay For Life team," said Principal Mike Henriquez. "Her countless hours of service to our school and our students are immense."

Heidi Wadsley, 2nd grade, Horace O'Bryant School

▶ Heidi Wadsley helps set the standard of excellence among Horace O'Bryant teachers with her leadership and motivational style. "She believes every student is capable of learning at a high level and creates a fun and engaging classroom environment," said Principal Mike Henriquez, who added that Heidi's contributions to the school are "immeasurable." "It is always a delight to see Ms. Wadsley work her magic in her classroom," Principal Henriquez said.

Valerie Palay, French teacher, Key West High School

▶ Valerie Palay combines modern technology with real-world and hands-on experiences in the classroom. "Through her positive attitude, high expectations and a focus on building relationships that foster student achievement, the French program has expanded in numbers and students who are continuing their foreign language education through Advanced Placement," said Principal Amber Bosco, who added that Mrs. Palay has been instrumental in bringing life skills to students through seminars and special events.

Darcie Parra, teacher – VE, Poinciana Elementary School

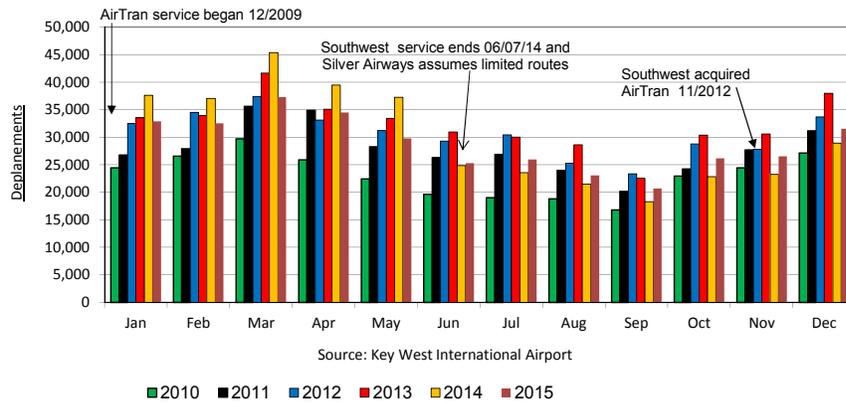
▶ Darcie Parra is new to Poinciana Elementary School, but not to effective teaching methods. She provides outstanding support to the students she works with and is a team player throughout the school community, said Principal Christina McPherson. "Mrs. Parra took over a class without hesitation and was willing to do what was needed for the students," McPherson added. "She has been such a shining light in her short time here at Poinciana and we appreciate her positive attitude and hard work."

Tara Whitehead, 9th grade science teacher, Key West High School

▶ Tara Whitehead is regularly among the top three nominees for teaching honors at Key West High School. She is an outstanding educator and leads the team of teachers who work with students who need additional support and strategies to be successful. "Her hands on approach to instruction, high level of student engagement and leadership among her peers are some of the ways she demonstrates excellence regularly," said Principal Amber Archer Bosco.



Key West International Airport Arrivals
January 2010 - December 2015

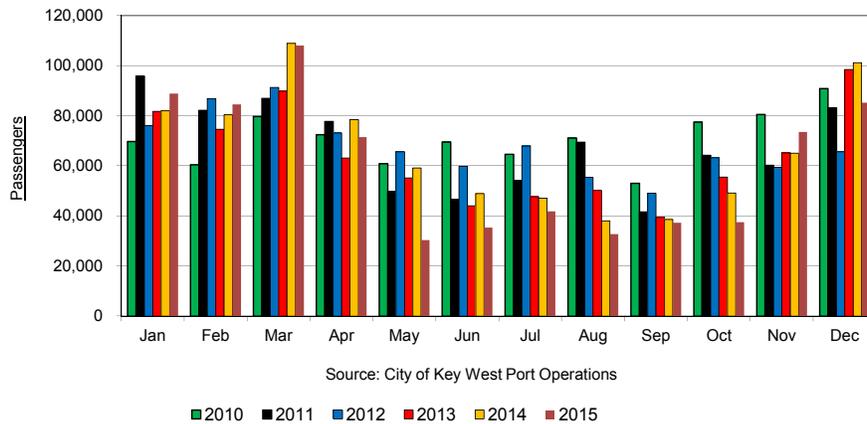


Passenger arrivals to Key West International Airport in December 2015 totaled 31,541. **This is an increase of 9% when compared to December 2014.**

Total passenger arrivals for the twelve months of 2015 were 346,402. That is a 3.8% decrease over the same period in 2014. However, this is similar to the arrivals seen before Southwest, as our monthly arrivals closely mirrored 2012 for January thru May and increases have been seen since June 2015. Southwest flew from November 2012 to June 2014.

Losses from Air Tran & Cape Air have largely been picked up by American & Silver, with Delta & US Air contributing.

Key West Cruise Ship Passengers
January 2010 - December 2015



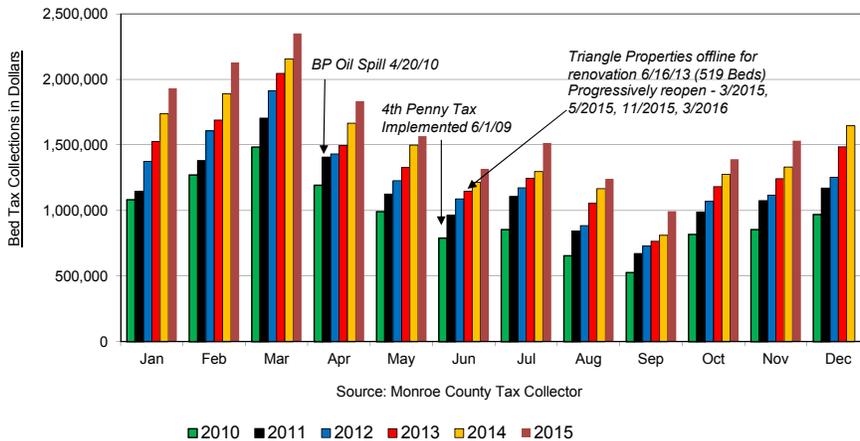
A total of 85,260 cruise ship passengers disembarked in Key West during December 2015. **This was 15.7% lower than December 2014**, which saw 101,161 passengers disembark.

For the twelve months of 2015, cruise ship arrivals saw 726,937 passengers disembark from 306 port calls. While port calls are down 8.9% so far for 2015, passenger counts are down 8.8% over the same period in 2014.

The cruise ship schedule for February to April 2016 compared to the same three months in 2015 is shown below:

	Number of Ships	
	2015	2016
February	39	36
March	48	41
April	31	40

Key West Bed Tax Collections
January 2010 - November 2015



Reported Bed Tax Collections for Key West were **\$1,533,686 for November 2015, an increase of 15.2% compared to November 2014.**

According to Smith Travel, **November 2015 occupancy was 81.0%, a 5 percentage point decrease from the November 2014 occupancy rate of 86.0%.**

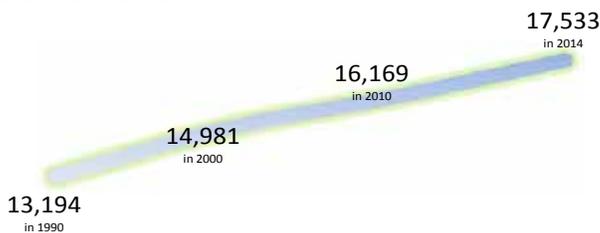
The Average Daily Rate (ADR) was reported at **\$271.01 for November 2015, an increase of 6.2% from the ADR of \$255.08 posted for November 2014.** This ADR of \$271.01 is the highest recorded for the month of November. This continues the record of 70 months where the ADR has been higher than the previous year. In fact, **the last 56 months are all-time records for each month.**



Key West Chamber of Commerce Wage & Benefit Survey

The Key West Chamber of Commerce annually surveys members on employment conditions including compensation, benefits, trends and expectations.

Key West Labor Force



What are communities' mooring fields?

A city, a community, is comprised of a place, people, and a way to make a living.

The *Soul of the Community* project identified three things ("mooring fields") that cause people to invest and stake their future in a place. And it is the size of the anchors that people set down in a place that separates cities, defining the endurance of economies and creating a community. The project found cities with (1) physical beauty, (2) entertainment venues and places to meet, and (3) an openness that built networks and quality of life options for all kinds of people were the most likely to have anchors dropped by those sailing through.

Making a city a desirable place to live, and not just visit, is important because the most successful cities are able to attract and retain the talent that strengthen communities and grow economies. Economic development is about longevity; it is about creating viable and sustainable economies where people can afford to stake their futures.

2016 Wage & Benefit Survey 2 Sections - 6 Clicks



What to expect when you accept your invitation -

The survey is comprised of two sections and as few as six clicks from start to finish. And while the survey takes less than 15 minutes, your answers are saved as you go along and you can return via your invitation link at any time to complete or review prior to submission.

Upon using your invitation link to access the survey, as you click a second, third, and fourth time you will provide information about your staff size, work hours, paid time-off, insurance & other benefits, and your types of pay as section one is completed in only four pages. Section two is where you will provide specific compensation information for each of your distinct job positions. We provide the most common job titles and descriptions for your ease in providing this information, while allowing you to provide any alternate job titles you use or adding unique positions not pre-coded. On the section two navigation page you will find the pre-coded jobs organized on category or industry sub-pages for ease in finding the jobs relevant to your organization. And now you only need to navigate to the pages you want and can click straight through to the end of the survey at any time. If you are a sole proprietor with no employees, with only one click you can finish and submit your survey.

Copies of the 2016 complete report will be sent to those members who participate in the survey. Copies of the Key West Chamber's 2015 Wage & Benefit Survey are also available at a cost of \$75 to non-participating members of the Chamber and \$150 for non-members. Call the Chamber at (305) 294-2587 to receive a copy.

Sources: Key West Chamber of Commerce 2014 Wage & Benefit Survey; US Dept of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics; Florida Dept of Economic Opportunity; SouloftheCommunity.org



Greg Sullivan joins esteemed ranks of Key West Chamber of Commerce Hall of Fame



Alton Weekley, right, proudly welcomed Greg Sullivan to the Key West Chamber of Commerce Hall of Fame during the Chamber's Annual Installation and Awards Banquet on January 23rd.

The Key West Chamber of Commerce celebrated the newest inductee into its esteemed Hall of Fame with the same combination of laughter and leadership that defines Greg Sullivan's role in the Chamber and the Key West community.

The business organization honored Sullivan at its Saturday, January 23rd Installation and Awards Banquet at the Marriott Beachside Hotel.

In announcing the honor, Alton Weekley reminded the packed ballroom that membership in the Chamber's Hall of Fame is reserved for leaders at least 55 years old with 15 to 20 years of service in the local business community and at least 10 years commitment to the Chamber's board of directors.

Hall of Famers are chosen by the Chamber's past presidents, and Greg Sullivan, a regional director of Waste Management, met and exceeded that criteria.

Kim Romano and Sullivan's wife, Michelle Maxwell, produced a video tribute to Sullivan that was a highlight of this year's Chamber banquet.

The video featured clips, interviews and anecdotes with dozens of Sullivan's friends and colleagues, and of course included the requisite Sopranos references in honor of

Sullivan's Long Island roots and his career with a waste disposal company.

Everyone Romano and Maxwell interviewed was eager to share their favorite Greg Sullivan stories, some of which had to be edited for mixed company.

Time and again, people from all walks of life commended Sullivan's dedication, drive and willingness to do what it takes to get things done for the community he loves.

"When someone needs something in this community, a lot of us send the resources we have, but Greg always does it himself," said Melissa Kendrick, executive director of the Mel Fisher Maritime Museum, who has served on the Chamber board with Sullivan for more than a decade.

Others were more casual in their commendations, summing up Sullivan with comments like, "Bad ass," "Man about town," and "The guy who gets things done."

And Ricky Arnold, in typical Ricky Arnold-style, minced no words when singing Sullivan's praises.

"He's no pencil pusher," Arnold says on the video. "With Greg there's no bullshit."

Sullivan's wife Michelle Maxwell commended her husband's unflagging involvement in the community he loves – even if it means unflagging involvement on her part, as well.

"As the wife of someone like Greg Sullivan, it's not an option to not get involved," she said. "He makes me be a better part of this community as well."

The audience erupted in laughter several times during the video, including Maxwell's declaration of, "I may not be Greg Sullivan's first wife, but I am most definitely his last."

The video also featured an assortment of local personalities as diverse as the island itself: Virginia Panico, Jim Scholl, Mark Rossi, Ron Demes, Ricky Arnold, Sullivan's employees – and his boss – from Waste Management.

"I always know that at 5:30 a.m., Greg's already up and at 'em and I can call him," said Virginia Panico, executive vice president of the Key West Chamber of Commerce. "I don't think he knows how to say 'no.'"

But amid the sarcasm and support, one sentiment seemed to sum up all the others: "Life's a little better because you know him."

Sullivan was humbled and overwhelmed by the video tribute and the community-wide endorsement it showed.

In accepting the honor, Sullivan laughed and again epitomized everything everyone had said about him.

"This group, and this town, isn't just a group of friends," Sullivan said. "You're family and I'm honored to be a part of it."

With that, on Saturday, January 23, 2016, Greg Sullivan became the 27th inductee in the Key West Chamber of Commerce Hall of Fame.

Please look for the William "Billy" Appelrouth Award recipient, Robert Spottswood, and the Athena Award recipient, Piper Smith, stories in the March and April Chamber Chowders.



Key West Chamber of Commerce Past President Robin Lockwood passed the gavel to President Nicki Will, who accepted it for her second consecutive term as president.



OUR HOLIDAY BUSINESS AFTER HOURS | TUESDAY, JANUARY 12TH, 2016

Sponsored by: **Doubletree Grand Key Resort** - 3990 S. Roosevelt Blvd



Key West Chamber of Commerce Honors Firefighter of the Year Benny Lowe

Benny Lowe doesn't just work for the Key West Fire Department. He worries about the community. Since his first day on the job in November 2004, Lowe has been eager to learn – and continue learning – every aspect of the job for the sake of the department and the people who depend on it.

“He is always going above and beyond, and taking every possible class to better his skills, which in turn makes Key West Fire Department a better department for the public,” Fire Capt. Michael Budde wrote in his nomination of Driver/Engineer Benny Lowe.

Budde commended Lowe's willing attitude in performing his own duties and more at the fire station.

“Benny will always try to repair the broken equipment and exhaust all options before letting the captain know that an outside source must come down and repair the equipment, thus saving taxpayers' money and time,” Capt. Budde wrote.

Lowe joined the department Nov. 23, 2004 and was promoted to driver/engineer in July 2014. Budde was his supervisor when Lowe first started, and again 10 years later.

“His work ethic has stayed the same since the first day he was hired,” Budde wrote in his nomination. “He is always looking out for the department and the public, first before himself.”

Lowe is now a mentor and exemplary role model for new firefighters, who are learning from him in each and every facet of the job. Even off-duty, Lowe is willing to “drop everything and come to the aid of someone in need,” Budde said.



City Manager Jim Scholl, left, and Fire Division Chief Mike Davila, right, presented Driver/Engineer Benny Lowe with the Firefighter of the Year Award at the chamber's December 16th Awards luncheon.

“Driver/Engineer Benny Lowe has exemplified a positive image for the fire department and is committed to strengthening the role and image of the department within the community,” Budde said, adding that his nomination included just a few of the many reasons Lowe should be honored as the Key West Firefighter of the Year award, and the Key West Chamber of Commerce is proud to recognize such a deserving professional.

Welcome New Members!



The Key West Chamber of Commerce welcomed three new members during the organization's January luncheon. Pictured left to right: Leslie and Mathias Maloff of Piraseas, Inc.; Kelly Belanger of Kai & Co. Salon; Membership Committee Co-chair Joyce Benavides; Heather Grayson of Kai & Co. Salon; Key West Chamber of Commerce President Nicki Will and Membership Committee Co-chair Kim Works. (Not pictured: Will Langley of Old Town Villas at Key West.)

Kai & Co. Salon

807 Peacock Plaza
Key West, FL 33040
305-998-4449

www.kaiandcosalon.com

Contact: Heather Grayson and Kelly Belanger
Full Service Salon

Old Town Villas at Key West

336 Duval Street
Key West, FL 33040
305-394-9020

www.oldtownvillasatkeywest.com

Contact: Will Langley
Real Estate Development

Piraseas, Inc.

291 Front Street, Suite 204
Key West, FL 33040
305-615-5454

www.piraseasinc.com

Contact: Leslie and Mathias Maloff
Entertainment/Family Attraction



Cruise Ship Schedule

February 2016

02/01	Nieuw Amsterdam	8:00am-4:00pm
02/01	Veendam	12:00am-6:00pm
02/02	Ecstasy	7:30am-1:30pm
02/02	Carnival Magic	10:00am-7:00pm
02/03	AIDAVita	7:30am-4:00pm
02/04	Majesty	9:30am-6:00pm
02/05	Constellation	9:00am-6:00pm
02/06	Eurodam	8:00am-5:00pm
02/07	Oriana	8:00am-6:00pm
02/08	SS Navigator	7:00am-4:00pm
02/08	Veendam	12:00pm-6:00pm
02/09	NO SHIPS	
02/10	NO SHIPS	
02/11	Riviera	7:30am-5:00pm
02/12	Carnival Victory	7:30am-2:00pm
02/13	NO SHIPS	
02/14	Brilliance	11:30am-5:30pm
02/15	Carnival Conquest	8:00am-4:00pm
02/16	Carnival Magic	10:00am-7:00pm
02/17	NO SHIPS	
02/18	Grandeur of the Seas	7:00am-5:00pm
02/18	Majesty	9:30am-6:00pm
02/19	NO SHIPS	
02/20	Eurodam	8:00am-5:00pm
02/20	Disney Wonder	11:00am-6:00pm
02/21	Carnival Victory	10:00am-9:00pm
02/21	Norwegian Spirit	11:00am-6:00pm
02/22	Veendam	12:00am-6:00pm
02/23	Fantasy	8:30am-2:30pm
02/23	Caribbean Princess	12:00am-7:00pm
02/24	AIDAVita	7:30am-4:00pm
02/25	Majesty	9:30am-6:00pm
02/26	Carnival Sensation	7:30am-2:00pm
02/26	Constellation	8:00am-5:00pm
02/27	Eurodam	8:00am-5:00pm
02/27	Norwegian Pearl	8:00am-6:00pm
02/28	SS Navigator	8:00am-5:00pm
02/28	Brilliance	11:30am-5:00pm
02/29	Carnival Conquest	8:00am-4:00pm
02/29	Oceana	9:00am-8:00pm
02/29	Veendam	12:00pm-6:00pm

Community Calendar

February 2016

2/2	Mel Fisher Museum Free Lecture Series at 6:30pm at MFMM 305-294-2633 ext 22
2/4-6	Cuda Bowl; info@cudabowl.com; 305-744-0903
2/5	Civil War Days Heritage Festival 8am-6pm at Ft. Zach 305-292-6850
2/6	Waterfront Playhouse presents: Double Trouble 8pm; 305-294-5015
2/8-3/12	Red Barn Theatre presents: Buyer & Cellar 8pm; 305-296-9911
2/9	Mel Fisher Museum Free Lecture Series at 6:30pm at MFMM; 305-294-2633 ext 22
2/11-13	Sloppy Joe's 12th Annual Put-In-Bay Music Festival; 305-294-5717
2/12-13	56th Annual House Tours (2 of 3), www.oirf.org, 10am-4pm; 305-294-9501
2/12-15	Red Barn Theatre presents: The Skivvies 8pm; 305-296-9911
2/14	Eroica Trio at St. Pauls Episcopal Church 4pm; 305-296-5142
2/14	33rd Annual Valentine's Day Gala-Wesley House
2/16	Mel Fisher Museum Free Lecture Series at 6:30pm at MFMM; 305-294-2633 ext 22
2/18-3/5	Fringe Theater presents: The Lion in Winter at St. Paul's Episcopal Church; 305-707-4053
2/20	Key West Black History Cemetery Stroll 9:30am, 9:50am, 10:00am; 305-340-1453
2/22-3/7	Red Barn Theatre presents: Conchs, Cowboys and Tales of Old Key West 8pm 305-296-9911
2/23	Mel Fisher Museum Free Lecture Series at 6:30pm at MFMM; 305-294-2633 ext 22
2/27	Noches De Habana Benefit for Red Barn Theatre at Little White House Museum 5pm-8pm, 305-296-9911
2/27	American Cancer Society's Diamond Gala of the Keys, A Night in Paris at the Marriott Beachside 6pm-11pm; 305-292-2333 ext. 4905
2/27-28	51st Old Island Days Art Festival, www.keywestartcenter.com; 305-294-1243



CHAMBER CHOWDER®

510 Greene Street ~ 1st Floor, Key West

www.keywestchamber.org

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Nicki Will, President

Lower Keys Medical Center/294-9200

Kim Works, Vice President

Pirate Radio/294-1017

Cara Higgins/Secretary

Horan, Wallace & Higgins, LLP/294-4585

Greg Sullivan, Treasurer

Waste Management/434-9140

Robin Lockwood MD, Past President

Robin Lockwood, MD/304-7777

Melissa Kendrick, Appointee

Mel Fisher Maritime Museum/294-2633x24

Randy Moore, Appointee

First State Bank/296-6231

Sam Holland, Appointee

The Conch House/293-0020

Virginia A. Panico, Executive Vice President

Key West Chamber of Commerce/294-2587

CHAMBER STAFF

Virginia A. Panico

Executive Vice President

Steven Weed

Director of Research

Claudia Wilson

Bookkeeper

Nancy Caruthers

Administrative Assistant

Kerry Baker

*Membership Director/Special
Events Coordinator*

Gladys Clarks

Tourist Information Receptionist

Emily Brogdon

Office Assistant/Tourist Information Operator

Virginia A. Panico

Newsletter Editor

Cindy Jefferson

Art Director

Key West Chamber Calendar of Events

February 2016

Business After Hours

Date: Wednesday, February 3rd

Time: 5:30p.m. – 7:30p.m.

Co-Sponsored by: Centennial Bank
and Ibis Bay Resort

Location: 3101 N Roosevelt Blvd
Members Only Networking Event

General Membership Meeting

Date: Wednesday, February 24th

Noon

Speaker: Jim Bouquet, Director of
Engineering for the City of Key West

Topic: Truman Waterfront

Location: Key West

Marriott Beachside

Please RSVP to the Chamber

at 305-294-2587 or

Email: info@keywestchamber.org

March 2016

General Membership Meeting

Date: Wednesday, March 23, 2016

Noon

Location: Key West
Marriott Beachside

Please RSVP to the Chamber
at 305-294-2587 or

Email: info@keywestchamber.org

Business After Hours

Date: Wednesday, March 23, 2016

Time: 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Sponsored By: Kai & Co. Salon

Location: 807 Peacock Plaza
Members Only Networking Event

COMPUTER SLOW?

Call today to setup
an appointment
with a Certified
IT Professional

520-302-4617

admin@firmaitss.com

WWW.FirmaITSS.com