

The Chamber Present Its Award Celebration



John Toppino, Danny Toppino and Edward Toppino accepted an award on behalf of Charley Toppino and Sons from Chamber President Mike Morawski for their continued financial support of the "Honor Roll of 100 Charley P. & Orsolina Toppino Memorial Award"

It's that time of year, when the Greater Key West Chamber of Commerce gives the gift of recognition to some of the individuals, ventures, and projects that have helped make this community what it is over the past year. The chamber presents several types of awards, starting with the Business for Beauty Award, which is given each year for major capital projects or extensive renovations that add to the beauty and contribute to the overall attractiveness of Key West. They may be awarded to businesses, as well as non-business, government, or civic, projects.

A 2019 Beauty for Business award was taken home by someone with a dream for expanding her rental management business. Realtor Brenda Donnelly, Owner and Operator of Historic Key West Vacation Rentals, purchased the Island Gym building at 1119 White Street on July 12th of 2018. Donnelly had a clear vision and goal for the space. Once the initial design phase was complete, with its clean color palette, modern take on classic fixtures, and new landscaping, the exterior of the building commanded curb appeal. At the foyer, visitors are greeted with the

warmth of natural solid oak wood floors, beautiful linen fabrics and artwork by local artist Susan Sugar. Guests are treated to an inviting coffee bar, complete with custom shelves and exquisite tile work. To complete the work space, Donnelly installed a cozy-yet stylish- kitchen/breakroom for her employees. The new building is not only aesthetically pleasing to the eye, but provides an inviting space



Brenda Donnelly accepts the Business for Beauty award on behalf of Historic Key West Vacation Rentals.

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Message from President Greg Sullivan

Seems like yesterday the years 1999 and 2000 had us all concerned about what will happen with Y2K. Will the lights still work? Will the phones and computers stop? We all watched as time ticked forward, took a deep breath, and here we are twenty years later.

We at the chamber have a new era upon us as the clock strikes 12 on Virginia's well-deserved retirement and Scott will be in the front office. As Scott has said no one can replace Virginia—he will be the best Scott Atwell he can. Virginia is leaving us a well-oiled machine that has been shaped over the past thirty years by many great directors, past presidents and committees. Virginia has worked for all of us over the past thirty years, helping shape our economy as we know it today. She is a well-respected leader when attending any commission or other agency meeting. She has been a voice to help keep budgets in line and has never been shy to ask the hard questions. While she will retire January 1st, Virginia will still be here to assist and be an active member of the community.

I want to invite you to Virginia's Roast February 1st, 6:00pm at the Key West Marriott Beachside Hotel. Please contact Kerry Baker for tickets \$50.00 per head, to include food stations, heavy hors d'oeuvres, and a cash bar. This will be a sell out so don't wait. A portion of the ticket price will go to the Key West Chamber's Education fund.

I look forward to serving as your President in 2020, along with a great board addressing important issues. As you are all aware, we have taken a position on no more regulations for the National Marine Sanctuary, which

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Spotlight Shines on ... Renee` Tompkins, Community Association Manager for Vacasa



Each month, the Key West Chamber of Commerce spotlights a business or professional person whose business card is drawn at the Business After Hours. This month's winner is Renee` Tompkins, Community Association Manager for Vacasa.

As another, "I quit my job and moved to Key West" freshwater Conch, Renee` Tompkins shares a common cliché: "Five hurricanes later, four of them contained within one year, I'm still here!" Tompkins works for Vacasa, which prides itself on being much more than an ordinary vacation rental company. Their mission is simple: to make vacation rentals easy.

Beginning with one rental home ten years ago and growing to over 23,000 homes in North America and nineteen foreign countries, Vacasa has become the largest vacation rental company in the United States. "We offer the unique combination of professional management in privately-owned homes." Vacasa launched its Key West office in March of 2017 and now manages over 220 properties, working in conjunction

with nearly every homeowner association in the lower Keys. "Our professionalism and responsiveness have been the key to our success in the Florida Keys," says Tompkins.

Vacasa may be new to Key West, but the local team and the heart of its operations has been around a long time. Key West Vacation Rentals was bought by Vacasa, and Tompkins - with her local knowledge and contacts - stayed on board. "We earn our keep. We have the technology to attract guests and help owners earn more money. We guarantee it." Vacasa's fee is all inclusive, without extra costs like changing light bulbs and credit card fees. And they are 24/7. Guests can make reservations at their convenience and an owner never gets a lost key call in the middle of the night. "We get that call."

With industry-leading technology, Vacasa's IT team runs proprietary algorithms four times a day to ensure they are optimizing rental rates to help owners benefit from what the market is bearing. "More than just setting on- and off-season rates, we adjust based on many variables,

like proximity to popular attractions and regional events drawing travelers."

In response to homeowners' concerns about problems in their communal spaces, Vacasa launched a real estate arm called Vacasa Community Association Management (VCAM), which provides management services through the respective community associations. Tompkins is the head of the division here, offering financial management, administration, and facilities management. Her team provides reliable services like a dedicated property manager, front desk guest support, housekeeping, and maintenance specialists tailored to the association's needs. In addition, logistical support with all administrative and financial matters - including budgeting, dues collection, reserve management, and covenant enforcement - are included.

Just another way the team at Vacasa demonstrates its top priority - to make the world of vacation rentals a simple, stress-free experience for both owners and guests. 🌿

REAL BANKERS | REAL PEOPLE | REAL RELATIONSHIPS

Key West Roosevelt:
305-676-3100
2514 N Roosevelt Blvd.

Key West Old Towne:
305-676-3140
1229 Simonton St.

Key West Whitehead:
305-676-3160
701 Whitehead St.

MY100BANK.COM | A Home BancShares Company | Member FDIC

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

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

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

Horan & Higgins, L.L.P.
608 Whitehead St
Key West, FL 33040
305-294-4585

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

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

“Award Celebration” cont. from page 1 ▶

for rental guests, employees and locals. Donnelly plans on featuring artwork from various local artists so the community can enjoy this beautiful space during the Walk on White.

The Bayfront Suites, which is part of Key West Vacation Homes located at 801 Eisenhower Drive, is a recipient of the Beauty for Business award for remodeling of the building “Bayfront Suites.” The original structure was the public defender’s office for Monroe County. They demolished the rear building to make room for a new rain water collection tank (cistern) under the new building, holding 34K gallons for irrigation for the property. The remainder of the frame building was elevated a foot and a half above flood. The ten new units were built under the Florida Green Building Coalition Guidelines, with green products and appliances installed throughout. With green-sensitive construction methodology, Bayfront Suites gained enough points to obtain a Florida Gold Certification environmental award. Included in accomplishing this were impact windows and doors, all LED lighting fixtures, water consumption limiting plumbing fixtures, recycled flooring materials, solar hot water heaters, and sixteen SEER air conditioning units. All existing trees on the property were relocated on used on site. Bayfront Suites is a beautiful addition to the lodging inventory in Key West.

Alonzo’s Oyster Bar, located at the A&B Marina Complex in downtown Key West, was established in 1947, and in October of 2018 it changed ownership. This launched a full front-of-the-house renovation at this landmark property, which involved moving the bar, dining, and reception and server areas with the purpose of maximizing their beautiful waterfront views of



Travis Doll, Operations Director for A&B Marina Complex accepts the Business For Beauty award presented by President Mike Morawski to Alonzo’s Oyster Bar.



General Manager Frank Herrada along with Javier Garido accept the Business for Beauty Award from Mike Morawski for Key West Vacation Homes and their Bayfront Suites project

the Historic Key West Seaport. The renovation provided a more open air surrounding with infinity doors in four locations, and infinity windows at the new bar. The renovation also included removing the stairs going from Alonzo’s to the A&B Lobster House, and the addition of six TV’s and an upgraded sound system, as well as a point of sale system. The final touches on the renovation included changing the plate ware, décor, color scheme and an updated menu.

The new Duval Street Pocket Park, located at the end of Duval Street at the Atlantic Ocean, was



Michael Halpern, attorney and owner of the Southernmost House, receives the Business for Beauty award from Mike Morawski for the Duval Street Pocket Park.

converted into an 11,000-square foot promenade that is open and accessible to the public. The park sits in between the Southernmost Mansion and the Southernmost Beach Café. This project was a long-time vision and concept of local property owner and attorney Michael Halpern, who invested more than one million dollars in both the park and sophisticated drainage system to keep water and seaweed out of the street. The outdoor area has been beautifully landscaped, and features eleven pieces of art, including five art benches and six sculptures. This space allows our residents

and visitors a place to take in the beauty of our downtown area within steps of The Southernmost Buoy. The pocket park is a wonderful addition to the downtown area and we thank the City of Key West and Michael Halpern for creating a beautiful space for all to enjoy.

Hampton Inn Key West, formerly the Best Western Key Ambassador located at 3755 South Roosevelt Blvd underwent a full renovation of the property which took 14 months to complete. The renovation included taking all 101 guest rooms down to the studs and rebuilding them. The renovation covered nearly every part of the property, including updating the swimming pool, renovating the lobby, resurfacing the parking lot, adding a new



Danielle Vaughn, General Manager Hampton Inn won a Beauty for Business award.

fitness center, and renovating and upgrading the popular Cheekie Hut bar and grill. With the transition to a Hampton Inn the property now features all the signature amenities of the brand, including free hot breakfast, On The Run breakfast bags, and complimentary WiFi in every room. The company also added a shuttle from the property to Key West International Airport, the beaches and downtown, providing guests easier access to many of the Key West attractions.



Thomas Rompella, Michael Halpern, Nick Wright, and Jim Gillen accept the Business for Beauty Award for Michelle’s Center for Learning from Mike Morawski

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Michelle’s Foundation was established in honor of Michelle Keevan Halpern to help the children of Key West reach their highest potential. In 2019, Michelle would have been proud to attend the opening of Michelle’s Center for learning located at 1908 Flagler Avenue. In 2011, Michael Halpern and Nick Wright founded Keys Learning Center in the back room of a construction company to offer tutoring and test preparation to students of Key West. Keys Learning Center has since evolved to become a pillar of the Key West academic community. Offering help of all kinds, Keys Learning Center has aided law enforcement officers, firemen, and city workers prepare for exams. In 2011, Tom Rompella was acting as a physical education teacher in Key West’s fledgling charter high school, and tutored part-time at Keys Learning Center. Despite lacking a gymnasium – or a classroom of his own – Mr. Rompella led students to graduation, with Associates Degrees,



Dom Ursitti accepts the Business for Beauty award for Irish Kevin’s from Chamber Board Member Bill Lay and President Mike Morawski.

and even the United States Coast Guard Academy. As principal – and only founding staff member – of Key West’s only Charter High School, Mr. Rompella designed his new Island Prep High School around Michelle’s Center for Learning. With a kitchenette for food preparation, outdoor patios and gardens ideal for events, and innovative classrooms reflecting today’s business world – Somerset Island Prep offers on-job training programs, courses in Business Ethics, Accounting, Marketing and Management and a path to an Associate’s Degree from Doral College in order to prepare students for jobs that exist on our island. Recently, the organization teamed with Florida International University to create a direct funnel to their award-winning School of Hospitality and Tourism Management.

Irish Kevin’s Bar is a landmark in the 200 block of Key West, but despite its success the



Jenny Lorenz, Director of Marketing accepting the Business for Beauty Award for The Perry Hotel and Stock Island Marine Village

bar lacked a key ingredient: a fully functioning kitchen. When the space next door became available, owners of Irish Kevin’s jumped on the opportunity to expand. In 2017 they embarked on a full renovation and took over the 1400-square foot building, splitting it into three separate revenue centers. They were able to build a full kitchen and now offer a full-service menu to their guests. Second, they were able to add more bar top and tables which added an additional 35 seats. Lastly, they were able to transfer the space most visible from the sidewalk and street into an attractive merchandise shop. Owner Shaun McConnell said “We are extremely happy with the finished product and hopefully added a little value to our little spot on the island for everyone.”

The last Business for Beauty award goes to the Perry Hotel Key West at Stock Island Marina Village. They have consistently been growing since inception in 2011. After the completion of the state-of-the-art 220-slip marina, 100-room boutique hotel, and two dock-to-dish restaurants, The Perry has now completed a third phase of development, a 10,000 square foot addition to include an event lawn with raised stage, second waterfront pool, VIP Terrace, distillery, waterfront retail & venue space, and 44 more marina slips (to be completed on Feb 1, 2020). The master plan of this 40+ acre property has always been to create a true one-of-a-kind destination offering world-class amenities for guests, tourists and, most importantly, our local community. The Perry, Matt’s, and Salty Oyster have always been local-friendly, but this new expansion will take that to an entirely new level

by offering programming for locals at the new waterfront pool, dine-in, take-out & delivery from The Barrel House restaurant, and a full calendar of events at the new event lawn & raised stage – always open to the public. Events already in motion include weekly backyard BBQ’s, monthly full moon parties, dive-in movies, pool parties, festivals, concerts, and more. Soon, The Perry and Stock Island Marina Village will embark on their fourth and final phase, to include another hotel, workforce housing,



John Toppino, Charley Toppino and Sons accepts the Venture Award for The Quarry project on behalf of Vestcor Companies.

and a marine service building with four units dedicated to supporting our working waterfront.

The chamber’s Venture Award is reserved for bold investment in a new business or enterprise that exemplifies entrepreneurial spirit and adds to the Key West atmosphere. In 2019 the award went to a company who has filled a very important need for workforce housing in Key West and the Lower Keys.

The Quarry, located on Big Coppitt Key, is a 208-unit community that includes nine buildings, a community center, swimming pool, dog park, outdoor pavilion and the option for one, two, or three-bedroom units. The two-story buildings provide residents with stunning views overlooking an old quarry site on the Gulf of Mexico. The Toppino Family owned this beautiful land and had the idea to build apartments with units set aside for workforce housing. The Toppino’s partnered with Vestcor, a Jacksonville-based company with extensive experience in developing affordable housing. Several years later, this partnership, with the help of local government support, is now a beautiful

“Award Ceremony” cont. from page 4 ▶



Key West Star Award given to Nadene Grossman by Mike Morawski.

community providing much needed housing to the citizens of Key West.

Every once in a while, the chamber adds a few special recognition awards for outstanding people in Key West. “Key West Stars” are presented to individuals who go above and beyond making Key West a better place to live.

Nadene Grossman-Orr is no stranger around Key West. She has been active in the Key West community as a volunteer member of various organizations, including the Florida Keys SPCA, A.H. of Monroe, the Board of Directors of the Lodging Association of the Florida Keys & Key West, and the Board of the Key West Attractions Association. The chamber recognized Nadene for her efforts since taking over as the director of the annual Fantasy Fest Festival. As a past Fantasy Fest Queen in 2003, Grossman-Orr knew firsthand how much money is raised during the annual event, which assists so many local residents in Key West and the Florida Keys. With that in mind, she had several goals including Creativity and Costuming, Modernize and Socialize, Greening of the Festival, and Community, Giving Back and Partnering with the Arts. The Betsy Fund, which was established in honor of the late Street Fair Coordinator, Betsy Dietz raised funds for the Bahama Village Music Program to establish a Junior Junkanoo Program. Grossman-Orr has rebuilt the relationship with the local community and brought back the creative spirit of Fantasy Fest.

The Piece of the Rock awards are presented to dedicated individuals who have gone above and beyond the scope of their normal responsibilities to help make Key West a better community.

One day after the Bahama Islands was shattered by Hurricane Dorian on September 1,

2019, Key West Cares was formed by a group of Key West Business Owners and concerned citizens. On September 6th, 2019 the first aid cargo flight departed Key West bringing emergency supplies to Green Turtle Cay (Cay is pronounced “Key”). To date, Key West Cares has organized 15 relief flights, relief sails and relief barges loaded with supplies and aid primarily directed to help Key West sister city, Green Turtle



The Piece Of The Rock Award was presented to board member Cara Higgins by Mike Morawski.

Cay, which is also home to many of Key West families. Their mission included delivery of a fire truck to Treasure Cay, and the restoration of potable water to the island of Green Turtle. Key West cares has a command and control location that provides both materials and repair persons to help in the rebuilding effort and they continue to accept donations of both money and supplies.

Another Piece of the Rock was presented to Cara Higgins, a managing partner with Horan & Higgins, LLP. Since 2007, Higgins has been active in the chamber, and has served on the Executive Committee with a majority of that time as president of the Board in 2011.



Jim Gilleran, Commissioner Craig Cates, Kurt Lewin, and Peter Batty, Sr. of Key West Cares accept the Piece of the Rock Award

Higgins is also an active Rotarian, and a proud member of the Key West Sunrise Rotary Club. She dedicates her time to the Key West Military Affairs Committee and serves on the board of several local schools, as a mentor for Take Stock in Children and on the Board of Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Monroe County. In 2018, Higgins was winner of the prestigious ATHENA Award which recognizes professional women for their business success, community service and encouragement of other women.

The final award went to a board member who has spent the last 26 years serving the chamber and the Key West community. Danny Toppino began his service on the chamber board in 1993 and has held many leadership roles including two terms as Treasurer, and also as second vice-president. Toppino has either chaired or been a member of numerous chamber committees, and initiated the Clean Sweep program. He is a recipient of the prestigious Hall of Fame Award and he and his family have been a major supporter and sponsor of the chamber’s Honor Roll of 100 scholarship program through the annual Charley P. & Orsolina Toppino Memorial Scholarship.



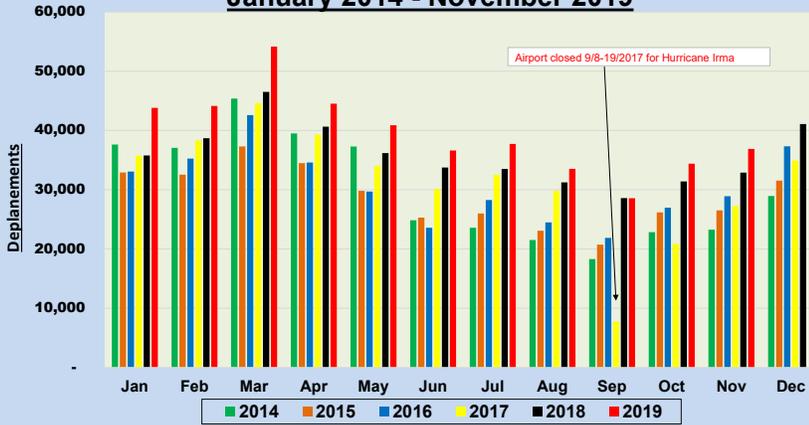
Winner of the Piece of the Rock Award, Danny Toppino.

Anything the chamber or business community has needed, Danny Toppino has been the first to volunteer to make that happen. He has served as a past board member for the Easter Seal Society’s Center of Hope and is presently a trustee and former chairman of the Historic Florida Keys Foundation.

Danny, we thank you for all of your dedication and support to the Key West Chamber of Commerce and the community.

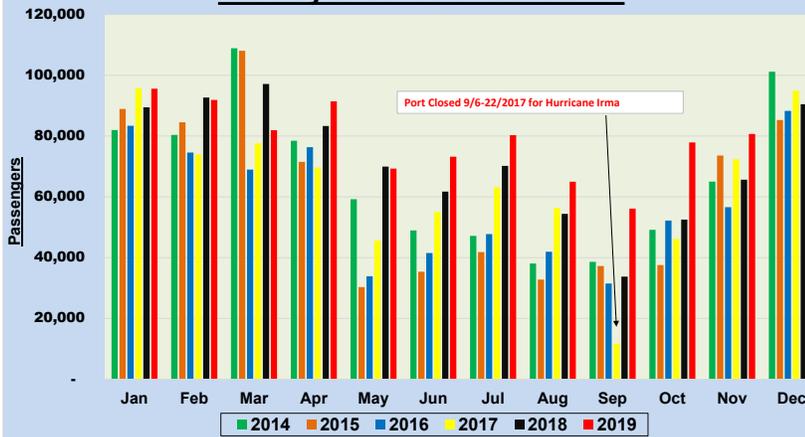


Key West International Airport Arrivals January 2014 - November 2019



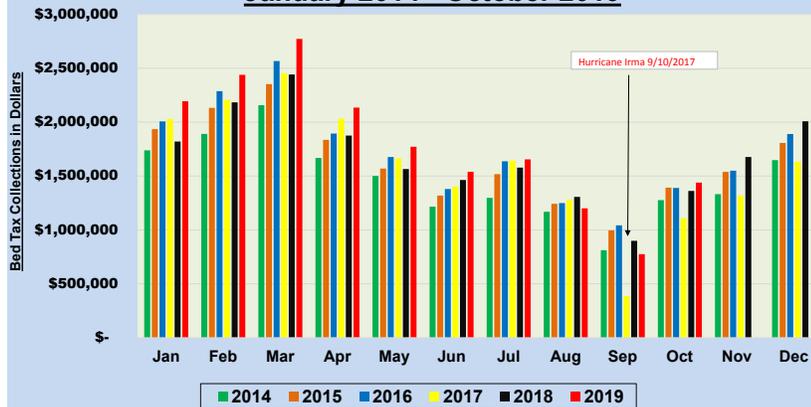
Source: Key West International Airport

Key West Cruise Ship Passengers January 2014 - November 2019



Source: City of Key West Port Operations

Key West Bed Tax Collections January 2014 - October 2019



Source: Monroe County Tax Collector

Passenger arrivals to the Key West International Airport in November, 2019 totaled 36,878, an increase of 12.2% when compared to the 32,880 from November of 2018.

Year to date, the 436,277 deplanements for 2019 are 11.8% more than the 389,187 passengers that arrived in Key West during the first eleven months of 2018.

Currently, American Airlines is providing year-round service to Miami, Dallas and Washington National, and seasonal direct non-stop service to Charlotte, Chicago, and Philadelphia. Delta is offering year round service to Atlanta and seasonal service to LaGuardia which started March 9th. United Airlines is offering direct non-stop service to Newark and seasonal service to Chicago O'Hare. Silver Airways provides direct non-stop service to Fort Lauderdale, Orlando, and Tampa.

November, 2019 saw 641 planes land at Key West International Airport, an 11.1% more than the same period in 2018. The year to date landings are 3.2% less than the 7,735 planes that arrived during the first eleven months of last year.

Key West is on track to welcome its largest number of cruise ship passengers since 2002 and 2003, when more than a million arrived in the Southernmost City. In November 2019 alone, at total of 37 cruise ships disembarked 80,674 passengers, representing a 22.9% increase over November 2018 when 65,623 passengers arrived. Through the first eleven months of 2019, the 863,279 arriving passengers represent a 12% increase over the same period in 2018.

In all, 370 ships have made port in Key West during 2019, a 10.1% increase from 2018 when 336 ships arrived. Both the number of passengers and the number of cruise ship arrivals are higher this year when compared to 2018. If the first three months are any indication (see below), the new year may prove to be even more bountiful.

Number of Ships

	2019	2020
January	42	55
February	40	52
March	35	52

The reported Bed Tax Collections for Key West in October, 2019 were \$1,438,762 which is 5.6% higher than the same period in 2018. The year to date Bed Tax Collections total stands at \$17,918,693 and represents a 8.6% increase over the same period last year.

The October, 2019 "occupancy rate" for Key West was 75.3% according to the Smith Travel Report. That is a 1.1% increase over the 74.5% reported in October, 2019.

The Average Daily Rate (ADR) was reported at \$260.44 for October of 2019, representing a 6.1% increase from the ADR of \$245.37 posted in October, 2018.

For the year 2019 thus far, Key West has seen an increase of 0.5% in occupancy rates, and a 3.4% increase in ADR year to date compared to the same period in 2018.

Since Hurricane Irma passed on September 10, 2017 and caused damage to some hotels, the number of rooms available had declined. Key West saw 145 more rooms open up in recent months, but witnessed another hotel close 48 rooms for long-term renovations.

Preparing for our 2020 Wage and Benefit Survey!

Please fill out your Wage and Benefit Survey when it arrives in your inbox! We look forward to your responses and sharing the consolidated Wage & Benefit Survey information with you.

As an Employer in Key West, and the Florida Keys, you face many challenges in hiring and retaining qualified employees. You have the responsibility to balance viable compensation packages to retain qualified employees along with the necessity of maintaining your budget. The Key West Chamber of Commerce developed our annual Wage and Benefit Survey to provide our members with a tool to view the Key West employment market in terms of average wage levels by industry, specific job class, benefit standards and general turnover rate.

FAQs

What information is collected? We collect information on standard work weeks, paid time off (holidays, sick, floating and vacation days), benefits (qualifications, covered persons, health, dental, vision, disability, life, AD&D, retirement plans, tuition assistance & development, memberships, and housing) and compensation (current, raises & bonuses). Base pay, commissions and tips are collected for each position. Information is gathered for all positions across an array of job categories, from controllers to waitresses to pilots. The Chamber wants to gather as much raw data as possible in order to aggregate the data into a useful tool for local businesses.

Is my shared information kept confidential? Absolutely! The only person in the Chamber that has access to your submitted information is the Director of Research. Your organization's specific data will never be shared with anyone, at any time, for any reason.

Why is my participation important? The Chamber strives to have meaningful final numbers that participants can use to manage their workforces effectively. More participants lead to more accurate and meaningful results. All participants receive a complimentary copy of the completed Wage & Benefit Survey report. Reports are available to non-participating members for a charge.

What does the final report include? The final report is a 40 page, bound document that summarizes the area's wages and benefits by business sector. It also includes a breakdown of hourly wages for every position reported; this breakdown includes the lowest, highest, mean, median, first quartile, third quartile and annualized mean amount for each position.

How will the final Wage and Benefit report benefit me? The final report will let you know how your organization measures up against other organizations, as a whole and by position. With this report you can compare where your organization's wages are relative to similar positions locally. This is a useful management tool for hiring and retaining employees. Additionally if your organization is a corporate subsidiary, branch or franchise, you may use the survey results to relay and justify higher local labor costs to your company's corporate office. If your corporate office will be responsible for filling out the survey, please let them know that it will be coming out shortly.

Key West Chamber of Commerce Firefighter of the Year 2019: Chris Saunders

Chris “Choochoo” Saunders has earned the title Firefighter of the Year. Saunders began his career with the Key West Fire Department in August of 1995, rising to the rank of commander and working out of Central Fire Station #1.

“Chris is a proven team leader and role model for our younger members,” said Division Chief Alan Averette, who presented Saunders with a plaque sponsored by the Ernest Hemingway Home & Museum. “Taking classes early on and obtaining the necessary certifications not only advanced his career but it also made the department better.

Saunders was one of the first to become a State Certified Fire Inspector, Fire Investigator, Pump Operator and USAR Team Member. He continues to pass along his knowledge to the department’s specialized team members. After Hurricane Dorian, Saunders travelled to the Bahamas to deliver a fire truck from the City of Key West, and trained local personnel on how to use it effectively.



The Key West Firefighter of the Year award was presented to Commander Chris Saunders by Division Chief Alan Averette, Chief Michael Davila and Chamber President Mike Morawski.

Averette says he appreciates how Saunders consistently provides leadership to newer men and women in the department, going above and beyond on his watch to provide a steady stream of positive direction. The choo choo, after all, is always pulling the other train cars along.

Getchel Gets Top Billing as City Employee of the Year

Whether you are visiting City Hall in person or phoning in, Erin Getchel is most likely the first person you will meet—and she has distinguished herself as a talented Director of First Impressions for the City of Key West. So much so, that Director of Human Resources Samantha Farist selected Getchel as recipient of the Chamber’s 2019 City Employee of The Year award, sponsored by Horan and Higgins, LLP.

Getchel is assigned to the human resources department but serves all city employees, citizens and visitors. She was hired by the City of Key West in November of 2018 as the mail courier and greeter at the Ferry Terminal. In June 2019, she was promoted to her current position as switchboard operator and front desk receptionist for City Hall.

“Taking the place of an employee who was retiring after over twenty years, I was a bit concerned assigning a position responsible for directing calls, walk-ins and information to someone who had only been with the city for such a short time,” said Farist. “It was a pleasant surprise that Erin was able to learn the communication system, locations and employees as quickly as she did.”

Getchel and her husband Tyler, who is a City of Key West Police Officer, relocated to Key West from Michigan in 2007. Her familiarity with the layout of Key West is a plus when communicating daily with



Erin Getchel accepts the City Employee of the Year award nominated by Assistant City Manager Patti McLaughlin and presented by Mike Morawski.

visitors, but an optimistic attitude is her greatest asset.

“Erin had to face some serious issues in her personal life this past year and not one day went by that she didn’t arrive at work without that beautiful smile on her face,” Farist said. “Erin is never without a smile, a positive statement or her occasional British accent! She has brought a new level of cheerfulness to City Hall’s entrance.”

In the words of City Manager Greg Veliz, “Her positive attitude, makes my day!”

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will require all of us to make sure we stay informed and make our voice heard. We are facing new flood maps that we will be watching in order to do what we can to keep insurance rates realistic. If you are not part of a committee, I urge you to get involved and see firsthand the commitment our chamber board has to the community—both in business and residential. I assure you whatever your preference, we have a committee spot for you. Wishing you all a Happy, Healthy and Prosperous New Year.



HOLIDAY | BUSINESS AFTER HOURS | THURSDAY, DECEMBER 5TH, 2019

Hosted by: **Rick's/Durty Harry's Entertainment Complex** - 202 Duval Street



Welcome New Members!



Membership Committee member Danielle Occhiuto and Chair Britt Myers welcome new members Christopher Occhiuto of All Island Inspections, LLC; Joseph Schroeder, Bourbon St. Pub, Inc; Michael Morawski of Hemingway Home Bookstore Too; and Drew Johnson from Lagerhead Cycleboats.

All Islands Inspections, LLC

21 Bamboo Terrace Key West, FL 33040
305-240-5641 | www.aiikw.com
Contact: Christopher Occhiuto
Home Inspector
Sponsored by: Danielle Occhiuto, VACASA

Bourbon St. Pub, Inc.

728 Duval Street Key West, FL 33040
305-293-9600 | www.BourbonStPub.com
Contact: Joseph Schroeder
Bar/Nightlife
Sponsored by: Jim Gilleran, Amiga Travel

Hemingway Home Bookstore Too

291 Front Street Key West, FL 33040
305-735-4385 | www.Hemingwayhome.com/store
Contact: Andrew Morawski
Retail
Sponsored by: Michael Morawski, Hemingway Home

Lagerhead Cycleboats

711 Eisenhower Drive Key West, FL 33040
239-312-3137 | www.lagerheadcycleboats.com
Contacts: Drew Johnson and Randy Abraham
Boat Sightseeing Tours

— JOIN US FOR THE ROAST OF —
VIRGINIA PANICO

SATURDAY  FEBRUARY
6:00PM 8:00PM

KEY WEST MARRIOTT BEACHSIDE HOTEL
CASUAL DRESS

\$50 PER PERSON INCLUDES
HEAVY HORS D'OEUVRES
CASH BAR

— RSVP —
BY JANUARY 24TH TO THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
305-294-2587 OR MEMBERSHIP@KEYWESTCHAMBER.ORG

Leahy is KWPD Officer of the Year

Key West Chief of Police Sean Brandenburg has honored officer Brian Leahy as the Key West Chamber of Commerce Police Officer of the Year for 2019. “Officer Leahy is recognized by his peers as a dedicated and proactive patrolman as well as an outstanding investigator,” Brandenburg says. “He is relied upon as a mentor and as a leader of his shift.”

Leahy joined the Key West Police Department in 2006, the most recent stop in his career as a first responder. Leahy has served KWPD as a Special Investigations Unit Detective, a field training officer, a member of the Special Response Team, and a patrol officer.

“Officer Leahy’s professional dedication has provided vital intelligence regarding motorcycle gangs as well as drug informants,” Brandenburg writes. “His efforts have led to important arrests that have protected and improved the community. This year, Officer Leahy’s cultivation of numerous drug informants led to one of the largest methamphetamine seizures in local history.”

Additionally, and on his own time, Leahy volunteers at law



Key West Police Officer Brian Leahy was presented the Officer of the Year award by Chamber President Mike Morawski and Key West Police Chief Sean Brandenburg.

enforcement functions and represents the department by networking with other agencies. “Officer Leahy conducts himself every day with enthusiasm, passion, pride and compassion.”

The Key West Chamber of Commerce Officer of the Year award is sponsored by New Moon Management.

Community Calendar

January 2020

- 1/1-8/31 Key West Fishing Tournament fishfinesse@aol.com, 305-294-8843
- 1/4 Island Roots Bahamas Relief at El Meson de Pepe 5:30-9pm Mallory Square 305-295-2620
- 4-5 Single Occupancies, Three Contemporary Opera Theatre Monologues at The Studios of Key West, 8pm show <https://tskw.org/single-occupancies-three-contemporary-opera-theatre-monologues/>
- 1/5 Historic Tours of America Locals Day, 305-293-7249
- 1/5 Locals Day at Key West Botanical Gardens, 305-296-1504
- 1/5 Tennessee Williams Museum to offer monthly first-Sunday curator tours with free entry for locals. 513 Truman Avenue 305-295-6616
- 1/9 Key West Art & Historical Society Distinguished Speaker Series guest and Florida East Coast Company Historian Seth H. Bramson to share insights on the legendary railway at the Key West Customs House – 281 Front Street. 6pm 305-295-6616
- 1/9-12 38th annual Key West Literary Seminar, "Reading Between the Lines: Sports and Literature" – www.keywestliteraryseminar.org 888-293-9291
- 1/11 Pole Vault in Paradise-Truman Waterfront Park 9:00 AM 512-470-8076 FOR KWHS Track Team sahanes@kwfsc.com, www.kwfsc.com
- 1/11 18th Annual Florida Keys Mayors Ball For Children - FL Keys Children's Shelter, 305-852-4246
- 1/12 Blake Pouliot – Impromptu Classical Concerts- St. Paul's Church – 4:00pm info@keywestimpromptu.org
- 1/12 Grace Potter Acclaimed Songwriter- 24 North Hotel. Purchase tickets online at 305-985-0433 www.keywestconcertseries.com or visit the Key West Theatre Box office
- 1/14-2/8 Life Sucks – The Red Barn Theatre 305-296-9911
- 1/14 Sinbad at the Key West Theater - 6:30 & 9:30 shows, 305-985-0433
- 1/15 60th Annual Key West Half Marathon&5K info@keywesthalfmarathon.com
- 1/15 South Florida Symphony presents Masterworks I- Beethoven, Mahler and Barber 305-296-1520, Tennessee Williams Theater
- 1/15 60th Anniversary Celebration Key West Art Center 5:30pm-8:30pm, 305-294-1241; www.keywestartcenter.com 301 Front St
- 1/16-2/1 Glass – Waterfront Playhouse – Tickets TBD, 305-294-5015
- 1/17 Tommy Castro – Key West Theater – 8:00pm, 305-984-0433
- 1/17-18 60th Annual Key West Home Tours – www.oirf.org- 3:00-6:00pm, 305-294-9501
- 1/16 Carrie Newcomer Old Town New Folk Series Thu Jan 16, 8pm show. \$60 Preferred, \$45 General (\$10 discount for members - advance only) <https://tskw.org/carrie-newcomer-in-concert-2/>
- 1/16-19 Key West Kingfish Mayhem Fishing Tournament – www.meatmayhemtournamentsfl.com, 954-605-8284
- 1/18 Mile Zero Fights 8- for more info visit www.milezerofights.com, mzfmilezerofights@gmail.com
- 1/18-19 15th Annual Florida Keys Seafood Festival, Sat 11:00am-8pm, Bayview Park, 813-362-9555, Sun 11:00 Noon - 5pm
- 1/18 Key West Mayor's Ball at the Southernmost House- 6:30pm, 850-221-2338. To benefit Wesley House, Michelle's Foundation and Kids Come First
- 1/19 22nd Annual Key West Half Marathon Run & 5K, 305-240-0727
- 1/19 Key West Rotary Club Golf Tournament kwrotarygolf@hotmail.com, 305-304-5181
- 1/19-25 2020 Sacred Arts Tour – St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 401 Duval Street Tibetan Monks to Arrive in Key West for Sacred Art Tour featuring week-long celebration of culture and Buddhist teachings For more information, visit keywesttaramandala.org or email kwataramandala@aol.com.
- 1/21 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day 12pm-4pm MLK Comm. Center, 300 Catherine 305-809-3700
- 1/21 Conch Revival Picnic 6:00pm-8:00pm – Key West Lighthouse - www.kwahs.com, 305-295-6616
- 1/21-27 29TH Annual Kelly McGillis Classic International Flag Football Championship 305-896-8678
- 1/25 Installation and Awards Dinner - Key West Chamber of Commerce, 305-294-2587
- 1/25 Cemetery Stroll-Key West Cemetery 9:30, 9:50 & 10:00. Contact Diane, 305-292-6718
- 1/25-26 35th Annual Key West Craft Show, 10am-5pm www.keywestartcenter.com, 305-294-1243
- 1/25 Manny Madrugá Domino Tournament Fundraiser-sponsored by the Rotary Club, 5pm-12am
- 1/26 Fifth Annual Crooks Second Line Set to Party and March Down Duval Street benefit for the Bahama Village Music Program. Begins at noon in the Hogs Breath parking lot.
- 1/26 Trio Gaspard – Impromptu Classical Concerts – St. Paul's Church – 4:00pm, info@keywestimpromptu.org
- 1/26-2/2 11th Annual Key West Food & Wine Festival 800-474-4319 info@keywestfoodandwinefestival.com – www.keywestfoodandwinefestival.com
- 1/26 26th Annual Key West Master Chefs Classic 305-294-9526 ext. 25
- 1/28-2/1 3rd Annual Mile 0 Fest Truman Waterfront www.mile0fest.com
- 1/28-2/1 Prime Time written by Blake Hunter, directed by Murphy Davis Tue-Sat Jan 28-Feb 1 & Feb 4-8, 8pm show. 100 Tier A, \$60 Tier B, \$45 General (\$10 discount for members - advance only) This new musical follows a female TV executive in the 1970s fighting to keep her variety show afloat, her star husband in check and temptation at bay. Under the direction of Murphy Davis, the script takes off, propelled by commanding performances and a whiff of classic TV nostalgia. Link: <https://tskw.org/prime-time-2/>
- 1/30-2/1 Cuda Bowl info@cudabowl.com www.cudabowl.com 305-305-6969

Cruise Ship Schedule

JANUARY 2020

1/1	Disney Magic	7:45am-4:30pm
1/2	Zuiderdam	8:00am-5:00pm
1/3	Seabourn Sojourn	8:00am-5:00pm
1/4	Costa Luminosa	7:00am-6:00pm
1/5	Crystal Serenity	8:00am-5:00pm
1/5	Seabourn Sojourn	8:00am-5:00pm
1/5	Rhapsody	11:00am-6:00pm
1/6	Celebrity Edge	7:00am-5:00pm
1/6	Riviera	7:30am-5:30pm
1/7	Sirena	7:30am-5:00pm
1/7	Carnival Glory	8:00am-5:00pm
1/7	Brilliance	11:00am-7:00pm
1/8	Equinox	7:00am-5:00pm
1/8	Celebrity Infinity	8:00am-6:00pm
1/9	Norwegian Pearl	7:30am-4:00pm
1/9	Insignia	8:00am-5:00pm
1/10	Sensation	7:30am-1:30pm
1/11	Disney Magic	7:45am-4:30pm
1/11	N. Statendam	8:00am-5:00pm
1/11	Viking Sky	8:00am-4:30pm
1/12	NO SHIPS	
1/13	Riviera	7:30am-5:00pm
1/13	Majesty	10:00am-5:00pm
1/14	Celebrity Infinity	7:00am-5:00pm
1/14	Veendam	8:00am-5:00pm
1/14	Carnival Freedom	11:00am-7:00pm
1/15	Disney Magic	7:45am-4:30pm
1/16	Norwegian Sky	7:00am-4:00pm
1/17	Silver Wind	8:00am-4:00pm
1/18	Norwegian Pearl	7:30am-4:00pm
1/18	Viking Sky	8:00am-4:30pm
1/19	Rhapsody	11:00am-6:00pm
1/20	Celebrity Edge	7:00am-5:00pm
1/20	Majesty	10:00am-4:30pm
1/21	Carnival Victory	7:30am-1:30pm
1/21	Empress	10:00am-5:30pm
1/21	Brilliance	11:00am-5:00pm
1/22	NO SHIPS	
1/23	Veendam	7:00am-5:30pm
1/23	Silver Shadow	7:30am-5:00pm
1/23	Infinity	8:00am-4:00pm
1/24	Sensation	7:30am-1:30pm
1/25	Norwegian Sky	7:00am-4:00pm
1/25	Riviera	7:00am-4:00pm
1/25	Viking Sky	8:00am-4:30pm
1/26	Celebrity Equinox	7:00am-5:00pm
1/26	Sirena	7:30am-5:30pm
1/27	Riviera	7:00am-5:30pm
1/27	SS Explorer	7:30am-5:00pm
1/27	Empress	8:00am-5:00pm
1/28	Carnival Victory	7:30am-1:30pm
1/29	Disney Magic	7:45am-4:30pm
1/30	Norwegian Sky	7:00am-3:00pm
1/30	Norwegian Pearl	7:30am-4:00pm
1/31	Zuiderdam	8:00am-5:00pm

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Greg Sullivan, President
Waste Management/305-434-9140

Melissa Kendrick, First Vice President
Mel Fisher Maritime Museum/305-294-2633

Cara Higgins, Second Vice President
Horan & Higgins, LLP/294-4585

Joe Caso, Treasurer
Caso & Company/305-453-6378

Diane Schmidt, Secretary
Margaritaville Key West Resort & Marina/305-292-4350

Michael Morawski, Past President
Hemingway Home/305-294-1136 5

David Clay, Appointee
Lower Keys Medical Center/305-294-9200

John Toppino, Appointee
Charley Toppino & Sons/305-296-5606

Mark Rossi, Appointee
Rick's/Durty Harry's Entertainment Complex/305-296-5513

Scott Atwell
Executive Vice President
Key West Chamber of Commerce 305-294-2587

CHAMBER STAFF

Scott Atwell
Executive Vice President

Edward Dawicki, III
Director of Research

Kerry Baker
Membership Director/Special Events Coordinator

Christina Birmingham
Executive Assistant/Bookkeeper

Dorothy Schmida
Administrative Assistant

Gladys Clarks
Tourist Information Receptionist

Scott Atwell
Newsletter Editor

Cindy Jefferson
Art Director

Jennifer Juniper
Newsletter Writer

Karrie Bond
Social Media Director

Key West Chamber Calendar of Events

January 2020

Business After Hours
Date: Tuesday, January 14, 2020
Time: 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
Sponsored by: Stock Island Yacht Club & Marina
Location: 6000 Peninsular Avenue
Members Networking Event!

General Membership Meeting
Date: Wednesday, January 22, 2020
Time: Noon
Location: Margaritaville Key West Resort & Marina
245 Front Street
Speaker: Scott P. Russell, CSA
Monroe County Property Appraiser

February 2020

Business After Hours
Date: Tuesday, February 11, 2020
Time: 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
Sponsored by: Bayfront Suites & Marina
Location: 801 Eisenhower Drive
Members Networking Event!

General Membership Meeting
Date: Wednesday, February 26, 2020
Time: Noon
Location: Key West Marriott Beachside Hotel
3841 No. Roosevelt Blvd
Speaker: The Honorable Mayor Heather Carruthers
Monroe County Board of County Commissioners
Topic: The State of the County

Click to connect with the Chamber on
Facebook, Twitter,
Pinterest, or Instagram



RSVP TODAY!

You are cordially invited to join us at the Installation of the Officers and Directors of the Board at the Annual Awards Dinner of the Greater Key West Chamber of Commerce

Saturday, January 25, 2020 at the Marriott Beachside Resort
Black Tie Invited

Complimentary Cocktail Hour 6:00 p.m. ~ Dinner 7:00 p.m.
Please RSVP by Friday, January 17, 2020

Following dinner, please join us for music and dancing.
For more information or to make reservations contact the chamber at 305-294-2587 or email: membership@keywestchamber.org

Special Appreciation to our Cocktail Hour Sponsors:

Appelrouth & Farr Family
Appelrouth, Farah & Co. P.A.