



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 16, 2016

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Governor Rick Scott: Florida Tourism Breaks Another Record

CLEARWATER, Fla. – Today, Governor Rick Scott announced that Florida welcomed the highest number of visitors during the first quarter of the year with 29.8 million tourists who came to Florida. This is an increase of 4.8 percent over the same period last year and exceeds the previous high of 28.5 million in the first quarter of 2015. The average number of direct travel-related jobs in the first quarter of 2016 was also a record high, with 1,231,100 Floridians employed in the tourism industry – up 3.8 percent from the same period in 2015. The Florida First budget Governor Scott signed in March invested \$76 million for VISIT FLORIDA to attract even more tourists to the Sunshine State.

Governor Rick Scott said, “I’m thrilled that Florida continues to break records in the amount of tourists visiting our state. Nearly 30 million visitors have enjoyed our beautiful beaches and attractions so far this year, and a record high of more than 1.2 million Floridians are employed in the tourism industry – which is great news. Last year, we exceeded our goal of an historic 105 million visitors because of Florida’s unique national treasures, and I look forward to smashing our record again this year by welcoming 115 million visitors to the Sunshine State.”

Will Seccombe, President and CEO of VISIT FLORIDA, said, “Given the challenges our industry is facing – the strong dollar’s impact on Canada and issues in Brazil – this record quarter for Florida tourism is even more exciting. It’s further proof that tourism marketing works. Our strategy of showcasing both the familiar and off-the-beaten-path travel opportunities remind potential visitors that, while Florida is filled with destinations they know and can trust, there is always more to discover.”

Senate President Andy Gardiner said, “Florida’s growing tourism industry creates important jobs and introduces visitors to our incredible state. I am excited that Florida is kicking off 2016 with yet another tourism record and I look forward to seeing another historic year.”

House Speaker Steve Crisafulli said, “With so many tourist attractions in Florida, it’s easy to see why the Sunshine State is a top choice for families and visitors from across the globe. We will keep working to support VISIT FLORIDA so we can welcome even more people to our great state.”

Senator Jack Latvala said, “It is great news that nearly 30 million visitors have already come to Florida this year. We want Florida to be the number one travel destination worldwide, and we will continue to support our tourism industry in order to meet that goal.”

Representative Clay Ingram said, “Florida is a travel destination for visitors across the world because of our beautiful waters and other attractions. Tourism is an important economic driver for our state and has added more than 1 million jobs for Florida families. I am proud to join Governor Scott in celebrating this accomplishment.”

VISIT FLORIDA estimates that a record 25.6 million domestic visitors traveled to Florida in the first quarter of 2016, which is a 6.6 percent increase over the same period last year. Total enplanements at Florida’s 18 major airports in Q1 2016 equaled 22.3 million, an increase of 1.5 million or 7.0 percent from over the same period last year.

John Tomlin, Chair of the VISIT FLORIDA Board of Directors, said, “Experiencing the largest quarter for tourism in our state’s history – not just visitation, but jobs as well – shows the vital role our industry plays in Florida’s economic growth. These records would not be possible without the strong industry alignment between VISIT FLORIDA and our tourism Partners, and their continued investment in strengthening Florida’s incredible tourism product.”

To view additional Florida visitor data, go to the [Research page](#) on VISIT FLORIDA’s media website.

**Preliminary estimates are issued 45 days after the end of each calendar quarter. Final estimates are released when final data are received for all estimates in the report.*

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