



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel win U.S. Travel Association's top tourism marketing award

LEE COUNTY, FL – The Lee County Visitor & Convention Bureau (VCB) earned U.S. Travel Association's Destinations Council Destiny Award in the special project category for "*Awaken*," a technologically sophisticated video that showcases the Fort Myers/Sanibel Island area's natural beauty. The award was announced during the U.S. Travel Association's annual Educational Seminar for Tourism Organizations (ESTO) conference in Louisville, KY on Aug.27. It is the seventh time the VCB was recognized in the prestigious awards competition – with previous honors in 1994, 1996, 2002, 2007, 2009 and 2011.

Awaken is a first-of-its-kind film shot with the latest photo, video, slow motion and time-lapse techniques. It can be viewed on an enormous scale - IMAX-sized - and can also be viewed and shared on PCs and smartphones. It has delighted travelers and encouraged visits to view these remarkable eco-seasons. The five-minute film was shot by Fort Myers filmmaker, Cameron Michael, who spent thousands of hours on location capturing everything from spectacular sunsets to baby sea turtle releases. The film also includes a score by composer Charlie Wan and is sung by Brooklyn-based singer/songwriter Danielle Parente.

"We are excited to be recognized by U.S. Travel Association's Destinations Council," said Tamara Pigott, VCB executive director. "The honor showcases the VCB's strategic marketing achievements. The goal was to share the beauty and diversity of our destination, which has inspired both visitation and protection. *Awaken* offers a unique way to demonstrate the beauty of our unspoiled island paradise."

The Destinations Council Destiny Award program recognize U.S. Travel destination members for excellence and creative accomplishment in destination marketing and promotion at the local and regional level; and foster the development of imaginative and innovative destination marketing promotion programs and activities.

The awards were judged by JWT, an internationally-recognized marketing and communications firm. Judges offered a unique perspective because the agency was chosen to help develop Brand USA's national tourism promotion strategy.

To view *Awaken* visit: www.fortmyers-sanibel.com/awaken/

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Sanibel & Captiva Islands Fort Myers Beach Fort Myers Bonita Springs Estero Cape Coral Pine Island Boca Grande & Outer Islands North Fort Myers Lehigh Acres

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EDITOR'S NOTE: *The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel in southwest Florida includes: Sanibel Island, Captiva Island, Fort Myers Beach, Fort Myers, Bonita Springs, Estero, Cape Coral, Pine Island, Boca Grande & Outer islands, North Fort Myers, Lehigh Acres. A comprehensive media kit and images are available upon request.*