

# 2017-2018 ANNUAL REPORT



GALVESTON  
★ ISLAND ★  
*Park Board of Trustees*

## Dear Neighbors, Colleagues and Friends,

Reflecting on 2018, the Park Board has many successes to celebrate and legacies to live by. As we mourn the loss of our advocate in former State Senator A.R. “Babe” Schwartz earlier this year, we also celebrate his life through the work we do in Galveston every day.

Long before Galveston became the tourist mecca it is today, Babe recognized Galveston’s potential and worked diligently to protect its greatest asset – the beach. His passion for conservation and his insistence that the beach belongs to all Texans still resonates. His visionary thinking also lives on in the Galveston Park Board. In 1962, Babe drafted legislation that formed the organization as an independent entity responsible for directing tourism. His foresight has contributed greatly to Galveston’s visitors and residents.

As we turn the page on another year, we’ll take this opportunity to share the many achievements the Park Board has realized.

The 2018 summer tourism season was another for the record books with year over year increases in hotel occupancy tax (HOT) collection for June, July and August. Galveston also led the Texas Gulf Coast in hotel occupancy and average daily rate.

Visitors to Galveston have many choices once they arrive here. Cruising, family attractions, historic sites, luxurious resorts and so many great restaurants are all on the island’s varied menu. Still, the beach remains the island’s number one attraction. Over the past five years, beach user fee collections have nearly doubled from \$1.3 million in 2013 to \$2.5 million in 2018. These restricted funds are dedicated to providing services to beach goers, and funding beach patrol and beach cleaning.

This summer may be remembered as the “Blue Water Summer.” With natural currents moving in our favor, the water off Galveston’s beaches were clear and blue on many days. The phenomenon went viral on social media and attracted area news stations leading to a surge in beach visitors, thanks in large part to aerial footage the Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) obtained.

Not all visitors to Galveston come simply for pleasure. Many come for business. And, Galveston’s meetings market continues to thrive. This year, the CVB sales team produced 76,760 room nights with an economic impact to the island of \$63,931,996. With a focus on destination services, meeting attendees can mix business with pleasure and, hopefully, will return to the island for a future visit.

With an eye on the future, this year the CVB laid the groundwork for a year-long research study to determine why our visitors choose Galveston – and why others don’t. Lessons and insights gleaned from the study will help the CVB fine-tune its marketing strategy to deliver the right messages to the right audiences.

As we move toward the 2018-2019 fiscal year, the Park Board plans to honor Babe’s legacy by remaining good stewards of the coastal environment we are entrusted with and sharing with others what makes Galveston so special.

Sincerely,



Spencer Priest  
**CHAIR**

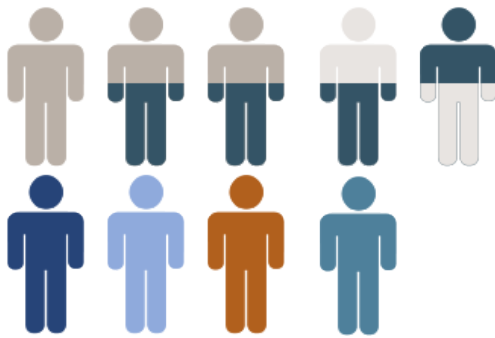


Kelly de Schaun  
**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

# MEET THE TRUSTEES

The Galveston Park Board of Trustees is comprised of a diverse group of **Galveston citizens and local business owners** appointed by City Council. They represent many areas of expertise allowing them to contribute to various projects the Park Board is tasked with – from beach nourishment to tourism development. Together, they make decisions on purchasing equipment, human resources policies, supporting special events, concessionaire agreements and much more.

The trustees rely on recommendations given to them from the Park Board's various advisory committees. These committees are made up of engaged citizens and are opportunities to be a part of the organization's forward momentum. To learn more about becoming a Trustee or joining an advisory committee, please visit [www.galvestonparkboard.org](http://www.galvestonparkboard.org).



## Businesses & Organizations Represented by Current Trustees:

- HOTEL
- ATTRACTION
- FOOD SERVICE
- NON-PROFIT/HISTORIC
- EDUCATION
- BUSINESS OWNER
- CITY COUNCIL

## 2018-2019 TRUSTEES

**Spencer Priest, Chair**  
Regional Director of Revenue  
Management  
Landry's Hotel Division

**John Zendt, Vice-Chair**  
CEO/President  
Moody Gardens

**Maureen Patton, Secretary**  
Executive Director  
The Grand 1984 Opera House

**Dr. Craig Brown**  
Ex-Officio  
Retired Business Owner

**Jan Collier**  
Manager  
Rudy & Paco Restaurants, Inc

**Steven Creitz**  
Project Manager  
Mitchell Historic Properties

**Will Wright**  
Chief Creative Officer  
Galveston Historical Foundation

**Jason Worthen**  
Business Owner/Concessionaire

**Dr. Victor Viser**  
Asst. Department Head and  
Instructional Associate Professor  
Texas A&M University Galveston

## 2017-2018 TRUSTEES

**Joyce Calver McLean, Chair**  
Business Owner

**Spencer Priest, Vice-Chair**  
Regional Director of Revenue  
Management  
Landry's Hotel Division

**Maureen Patton, Secretary**  
Executive Director  
The Grand 1984 Opera House

**Dr. Craig Brown**  
Ex-Officio  
Retired Business Owner

**Steven Creitz**  
Project Manager  
Mitchell Historic Properties

**Rocky Sullivan**  
Business Owner

**Will Wright**  
Chief Creative Officer  
Galveston Historical Foundation

**Dr. Victor Viser**  
Asst. Department Head and  
Instructional Associate Professor  
Texas A&M University Galveston

**John Zendt**  
CEO/President  
Moody Gardens

# COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT

The unsung heroes of the Park Board, the **Coastal Zone Management (CZM) team** is up before dawn working to keep Galveston's beaches clean and pristine. Stewards of the coastal environment, they are the front line responsible for litter, seaweed and debris removal along the shoreline.

THE CZM TEAM ADDED **TWO** ADDITIONAL BEACH CLEANING SHIFTS DURING PEAK SEASON THIS SUMMER. THESE CREWS SUPPLEMENTED THE EARLY-MORNING CREW AND WORKED DURING THE AFTERNOONS TO MAINTAIN CLEAN AND INVITING BEACHES.

THE CZM TEAM COLLECTED

**2.5 MILLION**  
POUNDS OF LITTER AND DEBRIS

It included **5,500** pounds of plastics, **900** pounds of aluminum and approximately **15,000** pounds of metal products collected from beaches (i.e., canopies, chairs, umbrellas, etc.).

The Park Board continued to work with Artist Boat on the Bucket Brigade, a hands-on coastal education effort aimed at informing beach visitors about the fragile nature of the beach environment and ways they can help protect it.





# TOURISM DEVELOPMENT



HOTEL OCCUPANCY TAX COLLECTIONS INCREASED **13%**

The Galveston Island Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) is the official destination marketing organization of Galveston Island. The bureau works to generate tourism within the leisure, group travel and meetings and conventions markets. The CVB, along with its business partners, work to further the success of the Galveston community as a premier tourist and meeting destination while enhancing the quality of life for island residents.



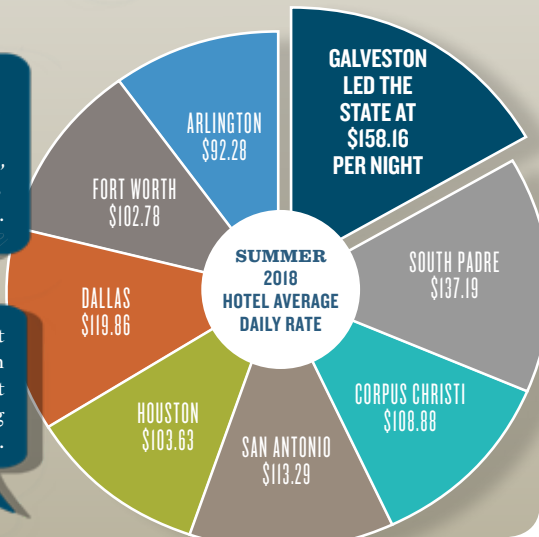
The CVB's public relations team increased coverage over last year by **17%** generating **\$142 million** in positive media coverage, including feature stories in Southern Bride, Coastal Living, AAA Texas, Meetings Focus, Texas Highways and more.

The CVB increased its social media audience by **30%** over last year (Facebook **29%**, Instagram **45%**, Twitter **12.5%**, Pinterest **7%** and LinkedIn **12%**) and produced more than **100 million** impressions online through paid media.

During the 2017-2018 fiscal year, the CVB booked **76,760** group room nights with an economic impact of **\$63,931,996**.

The Galveston Island Visitor Information Center welcomed **53,879** guests from around the United States and Canada, China, Australia, Poland, UK, Germany, France and Mexico.

In 2018, **432** attendees joined us at the 4th Annual Tourism Summit, an event that focuses on educating front liners and celebrating the exciting tourism industry in Galveston.



# BEACH NOURISHMENT

A priority for the Park Board this year was seeking solutions to the problem of erosion on the island. A particularly vulnerable area is west of the Seawall where Dellanera R.V. Park is situated. Located on an important hurricane evacuation route for west end residents, this area was a focus for staff and Beach Maintenance Advisory committee members. Together, they are working on innovative ways to sustain the beach on a continual basis. A pilot project for sand mining is currently being developed.

In 2018, the Park Board secured commitments from the **Texas General Land Office** and the **Galveston Industrial Development Corporation** for a beach nourishment project it will undertake in 2019 to fortify Babe's Beach. The contributions represent **75%** of the total cost of the project. The Park Board and the City of Galveston will contribute **25%** of the project's cost.



At its national conference held in Galveston, the **American Shore and Beach Preservation Association** awarded the Galveston Park Board its prestigious **Robert L. Wiegel Coastal Project Award** for a beach nourishment project completed in 1995 that was recognized for standing the test of time.

# BEACH PATROL

During peak tourism season, more than 125 lifeguards patrolled 32 miles of Galveston's beaches. The Galveston Island Beach Patrol (GIBP) is a state-certified, first-responder agency with an advanced lifeguard certification from the United States Lifeguard Association (USLA). Ever present along the coast in their iconic yellow vehicles, the men and women of this organization play an important role in rescue and preventative actions for the more than 7 million annual visitors to the beach. Beach Patrol had an exceptionally challenging year, as a result of additional areas of coverage, warmer weather, consistently rough water conditions, and increased beach usage. Despite these difficulties several significant accomplishments were realized.

**Chief Davis** continues his second term as president of United States Lifesaving Association and as Secretary General for the Americas Region of the International Lifesaving Federation

**Captain Pryor** continued to serve as President of the Gulf Coast Region of the United States Lifesaving Association and as Vice-Chair of the Certification Committee

**Lieutenant Harrison** served as Vice-Chair of the Heroic Acts Committee of the United States Lifesaving Association.

2,497



MEDICAL CALLS

5,219



ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS

396,424



PREVENTATIVE ACTIONS

21,000



CHILDREN EDUCATED  
IN BEACH SAFETY

-  BEACH PATROL ASSISTED WITH RESCUES ON THE ISLAND WITH ITS URBAN FLOODING/MULTI-PURPOSE VEHICLE DURING **MULTIPLE** FLOODING EVENTS
-  THE DEDICATED WAVE WATCHER VOLUNTEERS COMPLETED OVER **600** HOURS OF SERVICE
-  THE GUARDS PARTICIPATED IN THE USLA NATIONAL COMPETITION IN VIRGINIA BEACH, VIRGINIA
  -  GIBP LIFEGUARD TEAM **EARNED 11 TOP-10 FINISHES** AND WON **2** MEDALS
  -  THE JUNIOR GUARD TEAM **EARNED 8 TOP-10 FINISHES** AT THE EVENT
-  GIBP INCREASED ITS FACEBOOK FOLLOWING BY **26%**



# BEACH PARKS

The Park Board added special event programming to Stewart and East Beach to attract families. A Family Challenge obstacle course, sandcastle-building lessons, concerts and beach sports tournaments helped increase visitation to the parks.

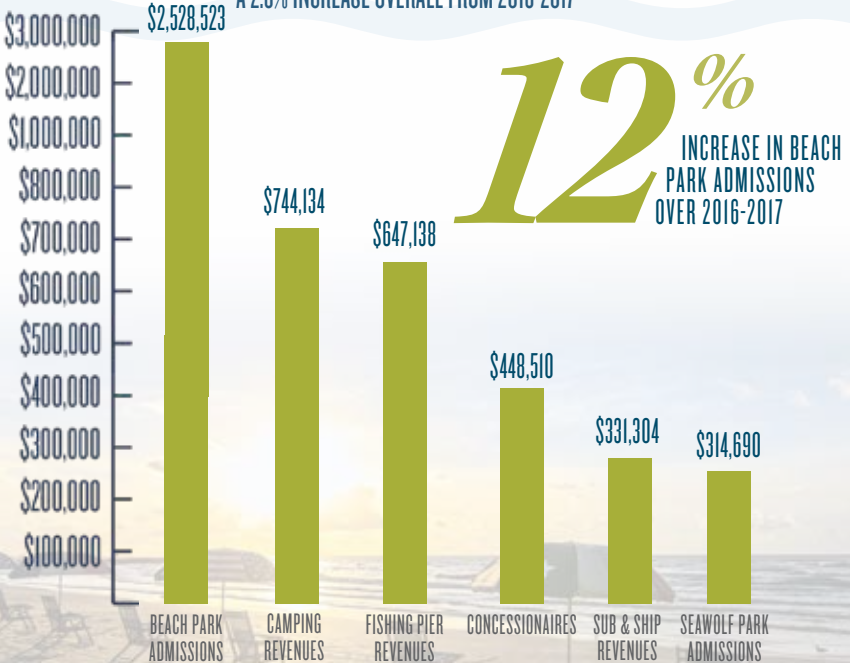
The Park Board manages four beach parks that offer a variety of amenities and activities: Seawolf Park, Stewart Beach, East Beach and Dellanera RV Park. Parking revenues generated here go toward beach nourishment projects and making improvements to the parks.

MOTHER NATURE DID HER SHARE WHEN IT CAME TO BRINGING VISITORS TO THE BEACH PARKS. BLUE WATER BEACH DAYS DREW THE ATTENTION OF LOCAL TV STATIONS, STIRRING CURIOSITY OF AREA RESIDENTS. THANKS IN PART TO CVB-PRODUCED AERIAL FOOTAGE AND VIRAL MEDIA COVERAGE, THE ISLAND SAW A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN BEACH VISITATION WHEN THE CLEARER WATER WAS PRESENT.

## PARK REVENUE SOURCES 2017-2018

# 2018 TOTAL \$5,014,299

A 2.6% INCREASE OVERALL FROM 2016-2017





# SEAWALL PARKING

Perched atop three-wheeled Segways, helpful and friendly **Beach Parking Ambassadors** interacted with visitors to navigate through the payment process along Galveston's seawall. The Park Board has placed an emphasis on customer service over enforcement. The Parking Ambassadors are also Certified Tourism Ambassadors, allowing them to answer visitors' questions and make recommendations about what to see and do in Galveston. Proceeds from the program go toward beautification and additional amenities on the seawall. These amenities made their debut during the summer and included plumbed restrooms, landscaping, bus stops and the addition of two kiosk stations that allow guests to pay cash to park.

SEAWALL PARKING REVENUE WAS

UP 6% TO \$823,283

IN 2017-2018

COMPARED TO \$774,426

IN 2016-2017

THE SEAWALL PARKING  
CALL CENTER  
ANSWERED MORE THAN  
1,969 CALLS PER WEEK  
DURING PEAK SEASON

ADDED **TWO** ADDITIONAL PHONE LINES AND STAFF TO  
HANDLE CALLS DURING PEAK SEASONS AND EVENTS



# EAST END LAGOON

A Galveston Island treasure, the 684-acre East End Lagoon Nature Preserve is one of the few remaining sizable tracts of undeveloped coastal prairie and salt marsh on the island. For the last three years, Park Board staff has directed a community-based East End Lagoon Advisory Committee charged with seeking funding sources for improvements to the area while protecting its natural beauty. During this time, the committee has made great strides for the preserve, including developing plans for an open-air education center and receiving the green light for federal funding.

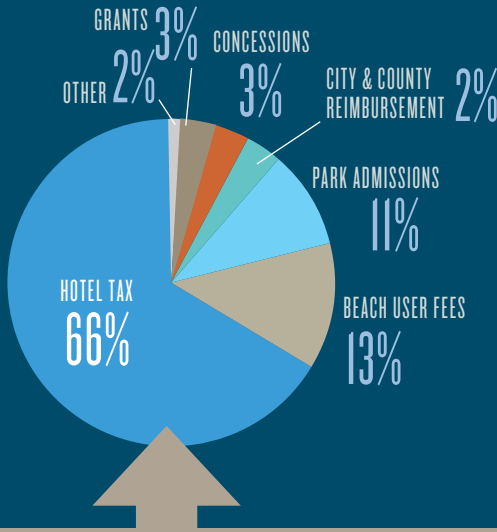
WITH FUNDING FROM THE TEXAS GENERAL  
LAND OFFICE, THE PARK BOARD COMPLETED  
AN ADA ACCESSIBLE TRAIL LOOP WITH  
INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE AT THE SITE.

The Park Board will oversee a clean-up effort at the boat launch area of the East End Lagoon that will improve human powered watercraft accessibility to the site. With funding from the GLO, a 1,200 square foot parking lot, bollards, a designated pathway and interpretive signage will be added to the site.

# PARK BOARD OVERVIEW

The Galveston Park Board is a local governmental entity created by a special act of the Texas Legislature in 1962 for the purpose of directing all tourism efforts for Galveston. The State of Texas requires that a nine-member board be appointed by the City Council, with four members appointed on alternate years for two-year terms and a City Council representative appointed annually. Community-based committees meet regularly to review and make recommendations to Park Board policies. They are the Beach Maintenance Advisory Committee, Tourism Development Advisory Committee, Parks and Amenities Committee, East End Lagoon Advisory Committee and Downtown Oversight Committee.

## 2017-2018 PARK BOARD FUNDING SOURCES



## MISSION

The Park Board of Trustees of the City of Galveston's mission is to promote Galveston Island, its beaches and natural resources, attractions, and heritage; to attract visitors to Galveston Island; and to assure that Galveston's assets, for which the Board of Trustees is responsible, provide visitors and residents with exemplary experiences in an environment that is safe, clean, accessible, fun and environmentally sensitive.

The Park Board is primarily funded by Hotel Occupancy Taxes and Beach User Fees, restricted funds regulated by the State of Texas. The organization receives no property or sales tax from the City of Galveston.

## HIGHLIGHTS

TOURISM SAVES GALVESTONIANS AN AVERAGE OF **\$4,035** PER YEAR ON PROPERTY TAXES  
PUBLIC RELATIONS TEAM SECURED A **22-PAGE** FEATURE IN SOUTHERN BRIDE MAGAZINE  
OVER THE LAST 4 YEARS, SEAWALL PARKING REVENUES HAVE INCREASED **58%**  
VACATION RENTALS CONTRIBUTED **27%** OF ALL HOTEL TAXES COLLECTED  
THE CVB SALES TEAM BOOKED MORE THAN **76,000** GROUP ROOM NIGHTS  
THE GALVESTON CTA PROGRAM HAS TRAINED **961** CERTIFIED TOURISM AMBASSADORS



GALVESTON  
\* ISLAND \*  
Park Board of Trustees

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