



Media Contact

Mackenzie Finklea
Public Relations Manager
Mobile: 409-919-3635
Email: mfinklea@visitgalveston.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Galveston Empowers Balanced Tourism Growth with New Short-Term Rental Registration and Collection Platform

Galveston, TX, [June 30, 2023] – The Galveston Park Board of Trustees has launched a new registration and collection platform for the city's 4,400+ short-term rentals (STRs) to increase efficiencies within an exponentially growing sector of the city's tourism landscape.

The innovative software, launched today, will allow Galveston to increase compliance among short-term rental properties, streamline tax payments, and uphold local ordinances, Park Board Chief Financial Officer Bryson Frazier said.

The new program, Rentalscape, identifies registered and unregistered STR properties by scrubbing thousands of websites daily and cross-referencing data with the Park Board's registration database. Rentalscape reviews the validity and accuracy of licenses and tax payments and enables the tracking of occupancy for analysis of visitation patterns.

"Galveston has been recognized by other cities nationwide as an innovative leader in short term rental regulation and compliance," Frazier said. "We anticipate that this new platform will help us achieve nearly 100% short-term rental registration and tax compliance from Galveston citizens."

Since 2020, the Park Board has increased STR registrations in Galveston by 60%. Park Board Interim CEO Kimberly Danesi said increasing STR compliance offers numerous benefits to Galveston, including fair competition for local businesses, economic growth, improved neighborhood quality of life, and strengthened visitor safety and security.

"STRs have expanded our capacity for overnight tourism in Galveston and played a big role in tourism generating over \$1.2B in economic impact for the city last year," Danesi said.

Since August 2021, Galveston has collected approximately \$13 million in tax revenue from platforms like Airbnb and VRBO, with short-term rentals contributing 53% of the overall hotel and occupancy collections in 2022. The city of Galveston ordinance mandates these platforms collect and pay hotel occupancy taxes for transactions occurring on their platforms.

To ensure compliance, short-term rental owners must maintain annual registration with a \$250 renewal fee, which supports administrative staff, enforcement personnel, a dedicated complaint call center, and the Rentalscape program. Residents and visitors can report complaints about STR properties through the call center beginning July 12.

The Galveston Park Board of Trustees selected Deckard Technologies through a national request for proposals in October 2022. Rentalscape, their software solution, also provides STR owners with external user profiles for managing property registrations, renewals, and hotel and occupancy tax payments. Electronic transfer payments with no limits are now supported, simplifying the payment process, and Rentalscape assists users in calculating taxes due.

For more information, visit <https://www.galvestonparkboard.org/rentals>.

About the Galveston Park Board of Trustees

The Galveston Park Board of Trustees is celebrating its 60th anniversary in 2023. The organization plays an important role in the Galveston community by overseeing tourism development, beach patrol, beach maintenance and the management of several beach parks. The Park Board was established in 1963 by a City of Galveston ordinance that tasked the organization with spearheading tourism and managing land for recreational purposes as part of a wider Texas environmental push that aimed to protect coastal waters and habitats.

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