



GALVESTON
PARK BOARD OF TRUSTEES

FY2023
ANNUAL
REPORT



LETTER FROM THE CHAIR & CEO

In 2023, the Galveston Park Board celebrated 60 years of dedicated service to the Galveston community, and this past year would surely make our founding board members proud. During 2022, the economic impact of tourism surpassed \$1.2 billion. This milestone underscores the dedication of our team in promoting year-round visitation and fostering a thriving business landscape. With the close of FY2023 in October, we witnessed another record year. Hotel Occupancy Tax collections were bigger than ever in FY2023, and the year also gave rise to many new attractions and amenities to elevate our position as a premier coastal destination.

COLLABORATION FOR THE COMMUNITY

At the core of our success is a community-centric approach, ensuring that tourism not only enriches the experiences of our visitors but also elevates the lives of our residents while supporting local businesses. We prioritize residents in all our objectives, from promoting our destination to keeping the beachfront clean and safe for all to enjoy.

Recognizing that a vibrant community is key to an exceptional visitor experience, we continue to prioritize and preserve the unique character of Galveston. Preservation remains paramount in our strategy, with a focus on protecting natural resources, promoting responsible tourism, and inspiring visitors to treat our home with the same kindness and respect in which they would their own. Through this shared responsibility, we aim to create a positive impact on both residents and the environment.

In the last year, our team has made great strides in engagement with local stakeholders at the city, county, state, and national level. Our partnerships with local businesses, government agencies, and community groups have allowed us to pool resources, share expertise, and implement innovative solutions to enhance the safety and quality of life for all residents and visitors. By prioritizing civic pride, we anchor Galveston's identity in its rich culture and heritage. Looking forward, collaboration remains a key priority as we work to sustain the vibrancy of our community for both residents and visitors.

DIVERSIFYING OUR PERSPECTIVE

We strive to make Galveston accessible to all, fostering a welcoming environment for people of all ages, abilities, and cultural identities. From installing accessibility decking at the beach parks to creating self-guided heritage tours, this year, we have taken leaps in the right direction to achieve this vision, quickly becoming the most accessible beach destination in Texas.

We dream big when seeking to accommodate visitors. We've expanded our reach beyond Texas and embraced international travelers, celebrating Galveston's status as one of the largest historic ports of immigration in the U.S. and an extension of one of the most diverse cities in the nation. We aim to showcase Galveston's treasures and multifaceted identity to a global audience.

USHERING IN A NEW ERA

Tourism trends are stabilizing after the impact of a multi-year global pandemic. As the tides turn over, so has our leadership. In 2023, the Park Board experienced a significant change in leadership with the appointment of CEO Kimberly Danesi, Tourism Executive Director Tony Lyle, Chair Jason Hardcastle, and five new trustees to the board.

Despite facing challenges, the Park Board trustees and staff have exhibited resilience and remained steadfast in their commitment to providing high-quality service. The change in leadership has infused our organization with fresh perspectives and dynamic strategies.

Looking ahead, we remain committed to these goals. In pursuit of them, we want to express our gratitude for your continued support and our deepest appreciation for all staff members, trustees, and volunteers at the Park Board. Our team, from Coastal Zone Management, Beach Patrol, Parks, Tourism and Administration, remains dedicated to serving and enhancing our community. We look forward to the journey ahead as we collaborate to foster a vibrant, inclusive, and thriving Galveston.



Jason Hardcastle, Chair

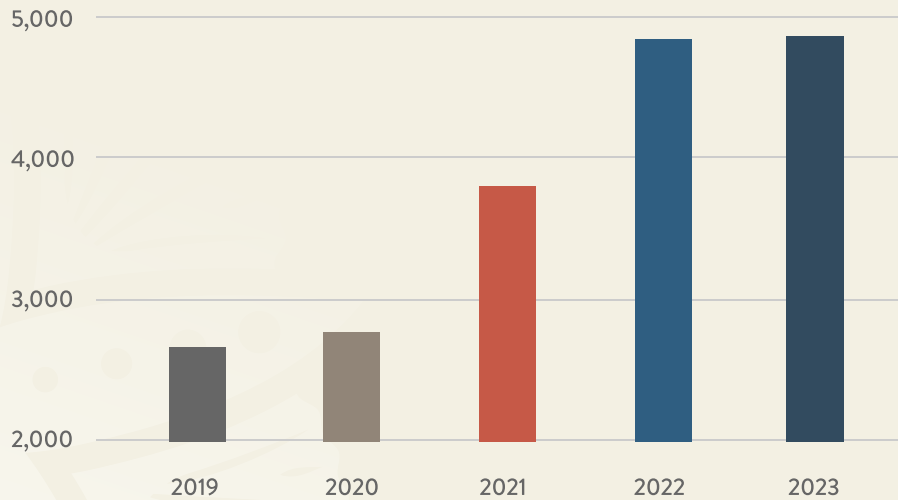


Kimberly Danesi, CEO

HOT COLLECTIONS

The Park Board of Trustees collects Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) from hotels, B&B's and short-term (STR) or vacation rentals for the City of Galveston. In FY2023, Galveston's lodging sector produced a record **\$30.2 million in Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT)** collections, surpassing FY2022's \$29.5 million. Notably, **\$16 million (53%)** of this came from nearly 4,900 vacation rentals—a **29% increase** from FY2019.

REGISTERED SHORT-TERM RENTALS



QUALITY OF LIFE IS BETTER BECAUSE OF TOURISM

- 🔄 **Supports** world-class attractions, restaurants and boutiques
- 🔄 **Generates** a variety of special events every weekend
- 🔄 **Bolsters** the city's operating budget and saves residents thousands of dollars in taxes
- 🔄 **Creates** 1 in 3 jobs
- 🔄 **Fosters** an environment for small businesses to thrive

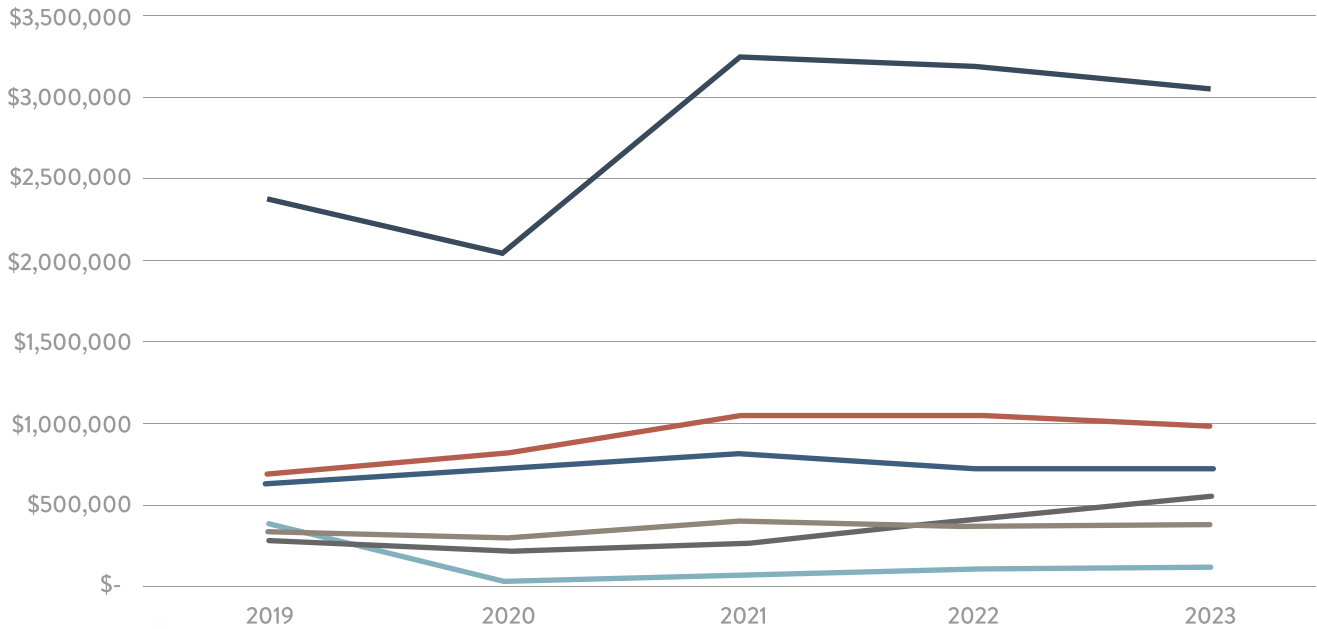
94%
compliance

The Park Board is responsible for maintaining the vacation rental registration process for the City of Galveston. In FY2023, the Park Board achieved a STR registration compliance rate of 94% of all active rentals holding valid registration.

PARKS

The Park Board manages R.A. Apfel Beach Park (East Beach), Stewart Beach, Dellanera RV Park, Seawolf Park, East End Lagoon Nature Preserve and the Seawall Urban Park. The citizen-led Parks and Amenities Committee works with staff to develop and enhance these assets. The parks receive no property or sales tax and are funded through user-generated fees. This year, in accordance with the interlocal agreement, the Park Board contributed \$447,046.30 of revenues to the City of Galveston’s general fund.

YTD REVENUE



BEACH PARK
ADMISSIONS



CAMPING
REVENUES



FISHING PIER
REVENUES



CONCESSIONAIRES
& OTHER REVENUE

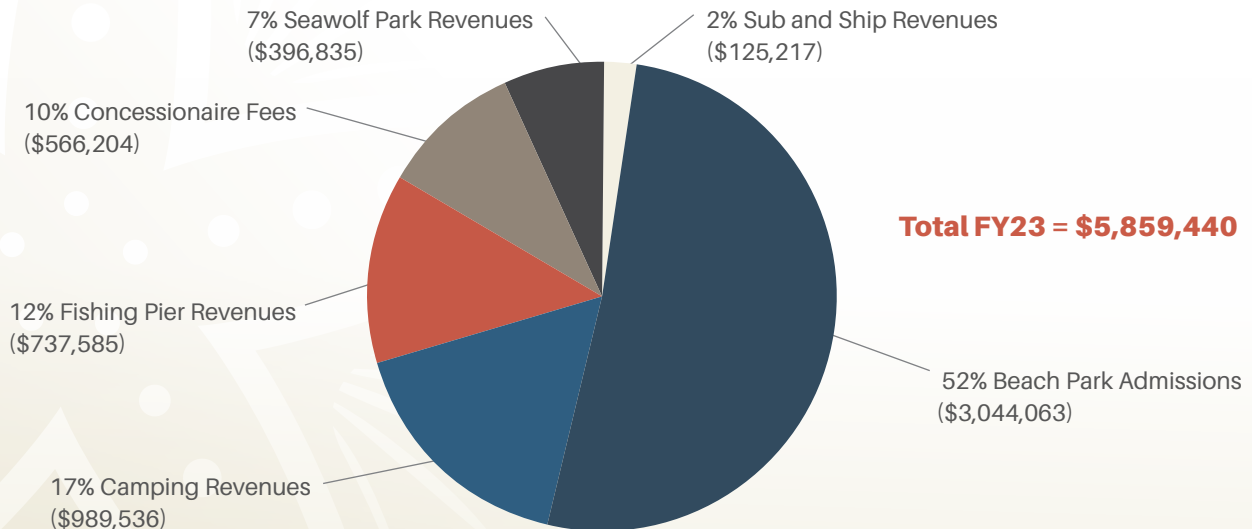


SEAWOLF PARK
ADMISSIONS



SUB & SHIP
REVENUES

FY2023 PARK REVENUE





PROGRAMMING & EVENTS

- East Beach** generated over 32,500 parking transactions by hosting major events like World Ocean Day, AIA Sandcastle Competition, Artist Boat Bucket Brigade Tours, free sandcastle building lessons, volleyball and soccer tournaments.
- Hosted monthly nature walks at **East End Lagoon Nature Preserve**.
- Generated over \$1.1M in revenue at **Seawolf Park** by hosting events like the Red Drum Fishing Tournament, a handicap accessible fishing event.

FACILITY UPDATES

- Received a National Environment Education Foundation (NEEF) grant for 3 beach wheelchairs and 300 feet of accessibility mats on the sand at East Beach and 3 new beach wheelchairs from the Texas General Land Office (GLO).
- Installed mobile amenities (restroom trailers and gift shop) at **Stewart Beach**.
- Beautified the **Seawall** with upgraded irrigation systems for freshly landscaped planter boxes, repaired all lighting systems, and refreshed the bus stops.
- Upgraded laundry and restroom facilities at **Dellanera RV Park** and expanded offerings at the convenience store.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS & BEACH NOURISHMENT

The Galveston Park Board is tasked with the care and maintenance of Galveston’s coastline, which spans nearly 32 miles. This work includes the nourishment of the beachfront through erosion prevention efforts like sand placement and vegetation plantings.

MAJOR PROJECTS IN FY2023

DELLANERA NOURISHMENT

A \$6.8M project completed in February 2023 involved the placement of 118,668 cubic yards of sediment over 2,100 linear feet on the Texas coast, addressing damage caused by Hurricane Harvey in 2017 through a FEMA claim and the Texas General Land Office’s Coastal Erosion Planning & Response Act.

BABE’S BEACH PLANTING PROJECT

This project involved planting 38,000 plants across more than a 1/2 mile of beachfront to provide protective measures for the Seawall at Babe’s Beach.

COASTAL EROSION PLANNING & RESPONSE ACT (CEPRA)

The Park Board has submitted a grant application for \$30 million to fund the construction of a nourishment project extending from Dellanera RV Park to 13 Mile Road, in accordance with the Texas General Land Office’s Coastal Resiliency Master Plan; a previous application is in process for the engineering and design costs, with the potential for Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act (GOMESA) funds to support the current construction funds request, without a matching requirement.

BEACH PATROL

The Galveston Island Beach Patrol (GIBP) team safeguards millions of beachgoers each year. All year, the team monitors over 32 miles of beachfront, up to 3 miles offshore, and works closely with the Coast Guard and Galveston Police Department to keep water recreation fun and safe. Through Hotel Occupancy Tax funding, guards patrol the beaches by truck or foot and even by tower during the summer months.

BEACH PATROL'S GONE GLOBAL

- ♻️ GIBP partnered with peers in Norway to develop environmentally sustainable rescue boards.
- ♻️ For the last 24 years, GIBP has helped to train lifeguarding teams in Veracruz, Mexico.
- ♻️ J-1 Exchange Visitor Visa program has attracted new team members, leading to meeting 100% of staffing goals at GIBP in 2023.



5,305

ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS



559,216

PREVENTATIVE ACTIONS



3,158

MEDICAL CALLS



92,342

BEACHSIDE WATER SAFETY TALKS

COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT

Stewards of Galveston's coastal environment, the Coastal Zone Management (CZM) team works on the beachfront around the clock, 365 days a year, to keep the island's shores clean, green, and pristine. From handpicking litter to using heavy equipment to move marine debris, to decorating the city for major holidays and assisting wildlife, the CZM team's work is boundless. This work is made possible through funding from Hotel Occupancy Tax and contributions from the Texas General Land Office and the City of Galveston.

3.6M lbs

OF LITTER AND DEBRIS COLLECTED. THAT'S MORE THAN THE WEIGHT OF 115 GARBAGE TRUCKS.



PLACED AND REMOVED 33 LIFEGUARD TOWERS

20

WASHED ASHORE ART SCULPTURES PLACED AND REMOVED



21 CONTACTS WITH MARINE WILDLIFE



SERVICED 12 CITY FESTIVALS



ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES

54 BEACH CLEAN-UPS

3 BEACH TOY BORROW BOXES

21 BEACH AMBASSADOR SIGN-UPS

UP2U PROGRAM PILOTTED

6 PARTNERS HOSTED FOR WOMEN IN COASTAL SCIENCE SPEAKER SERIES

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT



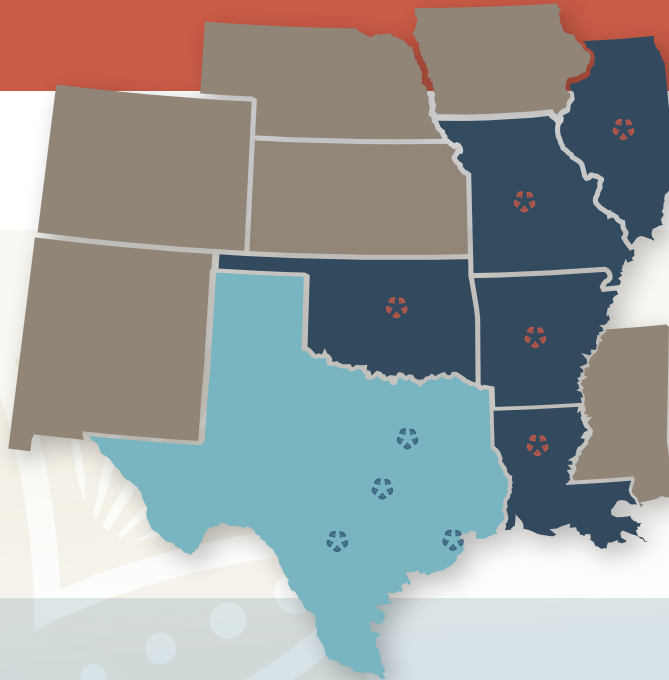
Visit Galveston Welcomes Executive Director, Tony Lyle

As the official destination marketing organization for Galveston Island, our team diligently promotes tourism across leisure, group travel, meetings, and conventions, funded by visitor-generated Hotel Occupancy Tax. The tourism development team collaborates closely with the citizen-led Tourism Development Advisory Committee, ensuring strategic guidance from professionals in tourism, outdoor recreation, arts, and culture. Comprised of Marketing, Sales, Destination Services, and Public Relations, our team is committed to fostering a sustainable marketplace within our growing tourism economy, with the aim of establishing Galveston as a premier destination for year-round travel.

TOP ORIGIN MARKETS:

TEXAS: Houston, Dallas/Fort Worth, Austin, San Antonio

OUTSIDE OF TEXAS: Arkansas, Illinois, Oklahoma, Missouri, Louisiana



SALES



SALES TEAM SECURED **71,942 DEFINITE ROOM NIGHTS**, A **9% INCREASE OVER FY2022**



FUTURE GROUP BUSINESS BOOKED IN FY2023 IS EXPECTED TO GENERATE OVER **\$56M IN DIRECT SPENDING** FOR GALVESTON ISLAND, **UP 14% FROM FY2022 BOOKINGS**



CONDUCTED **2,413 MEETING PLANNER ENGAGEMENTS**, **UP 27% FROM FY2022**

DESTINATION SERVICES



VISITOR INFORMATION CENTER WELCOMED **17,852 VISITORS**



CERTIFIED **116 NEW TOURISM AMBASSADORS**



HOSTED 4 CERTIFIED TOURISM AMBASSADOR (CTA) LOCAL EVENTS



HOSTED A RECORD 621 ISLAND ADVOCATES AT TOURISM SUMMIT IN MAY



MARKETING

OWNED MEDIA

- ❋ FY2023 - **50% increase** in website sessions and page views by visitors to VisitGalveston.com, and the **average time spent by a user on the site was 1:52 minutes**, (industry average is 1 minute.)
- ❋ With a total audience of over 720,000, the marketing team **increased social media engagement rates by 23%** over FY2022.

PAID MEDIA

- ❋ Utilizing a layered approach to integrated marketing, the team generated over **125M impressions** from various digital media placements, like streaming advertisements on services like Hulu, digital banners, social media ad buys and paid search on Google.



120,000 copies of Island Soul distributed to visitors through website requests, at the Visitor Information Center, delivered to all Texas Department of Transportation entry stations and at various visitor touchpoints around the island.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

EARNED MEDIA

- ❋ The public relations team **increased article features by 257%**, compared to FY2022, and generated **over \$8M in positive media coverage**.



30

PRESS RELEASES
DISTRIBUTED



54

WRITERS
HOSTED



4

MEDIA
EVENTS

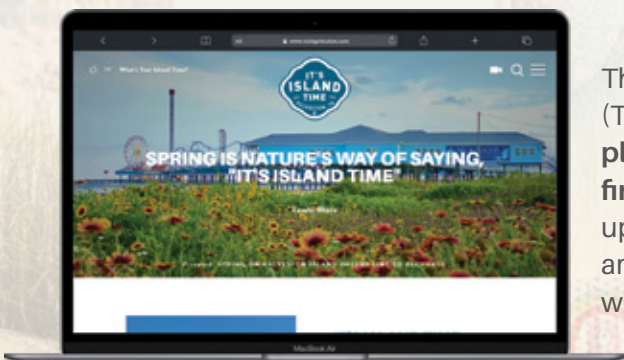


6

MEDIA
MISSIONS

AWARD-WINNING TEAM

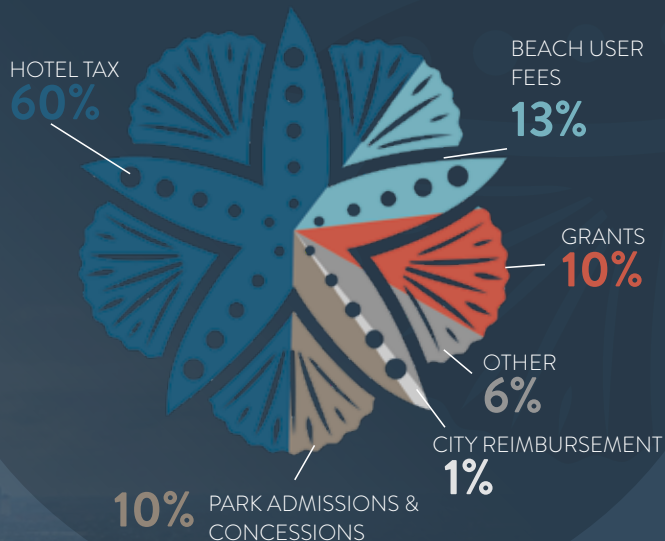
The Texas Association of Convention & Visitor Bureaus (TACVB) awarded Visit Galveston with three honors: **first place in Website Design and Effectiveness overall** and **first place within its budget category** as well as the runner-up in **Video, Storytelling, and Podcast Series Excellence** among other Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) with comparable budgets.



PARK BOARD

In 1963, the citizens of Galveston voted to create a specialized unit of government called the Park Board of Trustees of the City of Galveston. The organization is responsible for overseeing Galveston's tourism efforts, Galveston Island Beach Patrol (GIBP) and Coastal Zone Management (CZM). The Park Board is funded primarily through Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) and beach user fees for the six parks that it manages. Tourism pays for tourism as no sales or property tax is collected by the Park Board.

2022-2023 FUNDING SOURCES



Current Trustees

Jason Hardcastle, Chair

Financial Advisor, 6 Degrees Wealth

Kimberly Gaido, Vice Chair

Real Estate Agent, Sand 'N Sea Properties

Jason Worthen, Secretary

Business Owner/Concessionaire

Michael Bouvier, Ex-Officio

City of Galveston Councilmember

Bob Bullwinkel

Attorney, Selman Munson & Lerner P.C.

Bill Clement

Retired, Citizen at Large

Sara Godwin

Director of Retail and Spa Operations, The San Luis Resort

Barry Willey

Retired, Citizen at Large

Gerald Wilson

Behavioral Specialist, Clear Creek ISD

October 2022 - July 2023 Trustees

Marty Fluke, Chair

Retired, Citizen at Large

Jason Hardcastle, Vice Chair

Financial Advisor, 6 Degrees Wealth

David Jacoby, Secretary

President and Founder, SOAR Investment Properties

Michael Bouvier, Ex-Officio

City of Galveston Councilmember

Kimberly Gaido

Real Estate Agent, Sand 'N Sea Properties

Jeff Ossenkop

General Manager, Tremont House Hotel

Spencer Priest

General Manager, DoubleTree Galveston

Jason Worthen

Business Owner/Concessionaire

Will Wright

Chief Creative Officer, Galveston Historical Foundation

COMMITTEES

The Park Board is supported by several citizen-led committees that work with trustees and staff to develop and enhance our quality of service. Each committee is comprised of respective industry professionals and citizen advocates who make recommendations to the board.

- 🌀 Beach Maintenance Advisory Committee
- 🌀 Tourism Development Advisory Committee
- 🌀 Finance & Operations Committee

- 🌀 Workforce Development Committee
- 🌀 Parks & Amenities Committee
- 🌀 Galveston Music Development Advisory Committee (New!)



GALVESTON
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601 TREMONT ST. GALVESTON, TX 77550

409.797.5000

INFO@GALVESTONPARKBOARD.ORG

GALVESTONPARKBOARD.ORG

