

Wednesday, Apr. 06, 2011

Manatee tourism officials host ad fair

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Katy Demick, manager of Anna Maria Island Resorts, tells a Southern Living Magazine ad sales manager about how she's still getting calls from a story that ran in the magazine about Anna Maria Island more than a year ago.

Tom Aposporos, president of the Longboat Key/Lido Key/St. Armands Key Chamber of Commerce, thanked Conde Nast Traveller for naming Longboat Key the second most popular island destination in North America.

Relationship-building was the defining word Tuesday at the first-ever ad fair for the Bradenton Area Convention and Visitors Bureau. About 60 tourism and leisure industry leaders visited with representatives of 25 media as part of the CVB's renewed commitment to collaborative marketing.

Held at the Manatee Convention Center, the ad fair outlined to local hoteliers, restaurateurs and tourism destinations the cooperative marketing opportunities awaiting them in the fiscal year that starts in October.

The fair included online, print and broadcast media and highlighted regional, national and international opportunities. Most of the cooperative opportunities would cost a business about \$500 in media where going it alone could cost up to tens of thousands. Some opportunities cost as little as \$150; others reached up to \$1,250.

As a longtime cooperative advertiser, David Teitelbaum said he's thrilled the CVB is emphasizing benefits of pooling resources. The president of Anna Maria Island Resorts, who is also vice chair of the county's Tourist Development Council, said he can attest to the results.

"The phone rings. People show up clutching the ad in their hands."

Much of the talk among vendors and industry leaders focused on relationships other than paid advertising, such as Mixon's gift basket prospect and how editorial coverage has helped promote the area.

But the ad fair still received rave reviews from numerous business owners for its emphasis on how businesses can save money and reach farther by pooling together in advertisements.

"It's all about working together, sharing, and helping businesses buy into advertising at a small price," said Debbie Meihls, the new executive manager of the CVB who initiated the ad fair. "It's a win-win situation."



TIFFANY TOMPKINS-CONDIE/ttompkins@bradenton.com
Maggie Woodburn, Shelby Stewart and Val Saunders laugh as prize-winners' names are called out at an ad fair sponsored by the Bradenton Area Convention and Visitors Bureau.