

ENGLEWOOD BEACH WATERFEST

MEDIA RELEASE

**2018 ENGLEWOOD BEACH WATERFEST GENERATED AN ESTIMATED
\$5.8 MILLION ECONOMIC IMPACT FOR CHARLOTTE COUNTY**



PUNTA GORDA/ENGLEWOOD BEACH, Fla. (December 19, 2018) – The Punta Gorda/Englewood Beach Visitor & Convention Bureau has released the economic impact data for the 2018 Englewood Beach WaterFest, held November 16 – 18, 2018 in Englewood. Commissioned research suggests 6,000 attendees who live outside of Charlotte County generated an estimated \$3,844,800 in direct spending benefiting Charlotte County, businesses, and citizens. When the increased business spending and increased household spending resulting from tourism dollars are factored with direct spending, the total economic impact is an estimated **\$5,882,500**.

“The Board of Englewood Beach WaterFest is very pleased with the 2018 WaterFest Economic Impact Report and the financial value that Englewood Beach WaterFest brings to our business community. We are also pleased that so many visitors and residents enjoyed WaterFest,” said Steve Schroeder, President of the 2018 Englewood Beach WaterFest.

Schroeder added, “2018 had a formidable challenge with red tide to our local businesses and to WaterFest. We appreciate the support and encouragement WaterFest received from Charlotte County and the sponsorships from local businesses. By all indications, all who attended WaterFest had a great time and the local businesses that supported our event found value in what WaterFest provided. The overall success of WaterFest in 2018 ensures a 2019 WaterFest and that we will continue our work to ensure we have the best Festival on the West Coast of Florida including the OPA World Championship Races, the Family Conservation Center and support local charities that foster the protection of our marine life, our beaches and water resources. Overall WaterFest attendance was estimated at 30,000 attendees. On average, out-of-town visitors stayed 7.8 nights in Charlotte County and occupied 6,930 room nights in local accommodations.

These estimated figures are based on research the Punta Gorda/Englewood Beach Visitor & Convention Bureau commissioned Downs & St. German Research of Tallahassee to conduct. Extensive face-to-face interviews were conducted with randomly selected visitors attending Englewood Beach Waterfest. Economic impact was calculated with data collected during the interviews, Punta Gorda/Englewood Beach Visitor & Convention Bureau visitor tracking studies, the tourism database of Downs & St. Germain Research, and attendance figures.

Economic impact is based on the spending by non-Charlotte County residents who stayed in paid lodging, dined in local restaurants, purchased groceries, utilized transportation such as rental cars, visited attractions, event admission, made purchases in shops, enjoyed entertainment, and spent money on other tourism-related expenses.

Englewood Beach WaterFest Inc. is a 501(c)3 Florida Corporation whose mission is to stage spectator events, participant competitions, and educational forums showcasing Englewood’s unique water resources and recreational opportunities. All proceeds benefit local charities, with a focus on water conservation and recreation. New during the 2018 event was the Family Conservation Center presented by State Farm and the Ron and Matt Smith Agency. It was a 5,000-square-foot tented area dedicated to showing participants how they can work with various agencies to preserve and protect

the local marine life and water resources.

WaterFest is an all-volunteer group with local citizens, civic groups, charities, and business people working toward a common cause. Although WaterFest occurs in the fall, committees work throughout the year to produce a memorable event.

Visit www.inglewoodbeachwaterfest.com for additional information.

The complete Englewood Beach Waterfest Economic Impact Estimate Report can be viewed at

<https://www.charlotteharbortravel.com/tdc/research/>

ABOUT PUNTA GORDA / ENGLEWOOD BEACH

Located halfway between Tampa and Naples on the Southwest Florida Gulf Coast, Punta Gorda

/Englewood Beach is a charming collection of nine coastal communities surrounding the state's second largest harbor. Florida's premier year-round eco-tourism destination, the area offers a pristine unspoiled beauty. In 2014, Port Charlotte was named the top "U.S. Best Value Destination" by Trivago (the world's largest online hotel search site), and the Charlotte Sports Park, spring training home of the Tampa Bay Rays, was voted "Best Spring Training Facility" by readers of USA TODAY. A haven for outdoor enthusiasts, Punta Gorda / Englewood Beach has been named one of SAIL magazine's "10 Greatest Places to Sail in the United States," ranked by Golf Digest as "Third Best Place to Live and Play Golf in America," and rated by MONEY magazine as one of the "Best Places to Live in the South." Englewood was named second of the Top Ten emerging travel destinations in the U.S. by TripAdvisor.com. The area is served by five airports: The Punta Gorda Airport (PGD) with private and charter air service, Sarasota Bradenton International Airport (SRQ), Southwest Florida International Airport, Ft. Myers, (RSW), St. Petersburg-Clearwater International Airport (PIE) and Tampa International Airport (TPA). For more information on visiting Punta Gorda / Englewood Beach visit <http://PureFlorida.com> or call 1-800-652-6090.

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