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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

***Visit Pasco Reports Strong Revenue Growth in First Quarter***

*~Tourist Development Tax Revenue Collections are up 27% from fiscal year 2015~*

**PASCO COUNTY, FL.** --- Following last year's record breaking collection of Tourist Development taxes, Pasco reports strong earnings in the first quarter showing impressive momentum year-to-date. Tourist Development Tax revenue collections are up 27% during the first quarter over last year.

"Last year during the first quarter of fiscal year 2015, October, November and December, Pasco County collected \$159,160.00," explained Ed Caum, Visit Pasco Tourism Manager. "In the 2016 first quarter (FY15/16) the County collected \$202,135.00."

"We are excited about this trend," said Kathryn Starkey, Chairperson of the Pasco County Board of County Commissioners, as well as Chair of the Tourist Development Council. "Staff has been working on improving how they tell Pasco's story through marketing and it appears to be paying off."

In 2015, Pasco County reached a new "Bed Tax" high collecting \$968,263.00 between October 1, 2014 and September 31, 2015. Similar gains were also seen throughout Florida as people have begun to travel again following the recession, according to the U.S. Travel Association.

According to Visit Florida, Florida welcomed 98.5 million out-of-state and international travelers and 20.2 million in-state visitors. This travel resulted in \$82 billion in spending, generated 23-percent of the state's sales tax revenues and \$4.9 billion dollars in sales tax collections.

"We are trying something new this year and have launched a Spanish campaign in Argentina, Columbia, Mexico and Venezuela by partnering with Brand USA," said Caum. "There is an emerging market in Central and South America and the Tampa Region is a natural destination for them to visit. We want to catch that next wave of international travelers."

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