



Chamber Connection

915 N. Suncoast Blvd., Crystal River, FL 34429 · 352-795-3149 · 106 W. Main St., Inverness, FL 34450 · 352-726-2801

Mermaids & Margaritas debuts April 14th at Ft. Island Gulf Beach



TJ Brown Band added



Join in the fun on April 14 as the Chamber debuts its newest event on the shores of Fort Island Gulf Beach in Crystal River that is destined to become a legend!

Produced by the Citrus County Chamber of Commerce, "Mermaids & Margaritas", Citrus County's newest — and certain to be most entertaining! — festival will debut on Saturday, April 14th, from noon — 8 p.m. at the beach at the end of Fort Island Trail in Crystal River.

Originally scheduled to be held last fall, Mermaids & Margaritas was postponed when Hurricane Irma also decided to visit Florida at that time. But the postponement allowed us extra time to make the event even better and expand it to incorporate ALL of the beach for your beach-frolicking enjoyment!

Besides the fun name, what else is fun about this event? Exactly as the name implies! Mermaids!!

Who doesn't love mermaids!?? In partnership with the Chamber, The Mertailor's Eric Ducharme will feature a bevy of beauties modeling the exquisite custom mermaid and merman tails that his company creates right here in Citrus County and ships worldwide, including to numerous well-known celebrities. Enjoy the mermaids on the beach and in the water and get a close up look at each one-of-a-kind tail.

Want to be a mermaid yourself? Consider entering the Ms. Mermaid and Mr. Merman contests and strut your stuff.

Oh, yes, there are also the margaritas! A special "M/M" margarita will be offered for purchase, along with beer, wine and an assortment of Bud Light Lime-a-Rita flavors.

But that's not all there is to Mermaids & Margaritas! There are many ways to make waves at this festival:

Tropical-themed entertainment on the main stage:

New Addition: TJ Brown Band: 12 – 2 p.m.

Following their performance at the Floral City Strawberry Festival a few weeks ago, this exciting band is returning to Citrus County by popular demand to play at M&M. TJ Brown and his brother, Matthew, started playing music together 10 years ago. As time passed they added Will Yearty on keys, Shane Moore on percussion and John Mcravy on bass to bring more dynamic to the stage. Driven by high energy and soulful voices, the TJ Brown Band plays a mix of classic and modern music with an original twist.

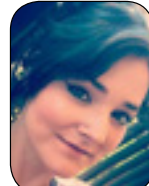


The Landsharks: 3 – 5 p.m.

Are you afraid of having too much fun? Then watch out for The Landsharks! As one of the most well-known, well-liked and in-demand bands in the country, they have performed throughout the world in thousands of concerts and shows! The Landsharks have played with Jimmy Buffett, in concert, and at Margaritaville. The Landsharks have performed at THE SUPER BOWL, several times! The Landsharks have performed in Disney at over 100 performances, and were the "House Band" at Jimmy Buffett's Margaritaville at Universal Studios for two years. The Landsharks have also played overseas for the Troops many times!

Ashley Young: 6 – 8 p.m.

Homosassa native Ashley Young grew up in Citrus County and is coming home for Mermaids & Margaritas! Ashley has been singing for most of her young life. Following high school, she attended the American Musical and Dramatic Academy in New York City. She is now a singer, songwriter, musician, and entertainer working out of Daytona Beach and is returning specially to perform for you at the festival. This young lady is on her way up as a headliner star! See her now and be able to say in years to come, "I saw her when she was getting her start!"



Food: Look for a great variety of food options from local Citrus County vendors who are whipping up the perfect beach food to keep you full and happy as you enjoy all of the festival activities.

Margaritas, Beer & Wine: For the adults, there will be an offering of frosty margaritas for purchase with just the right flair to remind you we are frolicking in a tropical paradise. Margaritas not your drink of choice? There will also be beer, wine and Bud Light Lime-a-Rita flavors.

FREE Kids' Zone: Mermaids & Margaritas will be a kids' delight! From inflatable slides and bounce houses, face painting, and more, there will be lots of great FREE beachy activities for all of the young ones.

Volleyball (NEW!): Citrus County Parks & Rec is getting into the spirit of the day and will bring out a volleyball net for some fast and fun beach volleyball! The Lowman Law Group is giving

away 200 sets of sunglasses and beach balls so the play can go on even if you don't have a regulation volleyball.

Nautical-Themed Costume Contests for Kids and Adults: 2 – 3 p.m.

This weekend, it's all about the beach and the sea! Come in your favorite nautical-themed costume and compete on stage with the Master of Ceremonies for crowd applause to win a prize. Think mermaids, pirates, sailors, fishermen, sea creatures, or anything related to water — dress up and have a great time!

Ms. Mermaid / Mr. Merman Contests: 5 – 6 p.m.

Participate in an early online contest that will be run by the Citrus County Chronicle to be selected as a finalist for the Ms. Mermaid / Mr. Merman contest. Information and rules for the contest will be published in the Chronicle and on the festival website. Those selected as finalists will compete for the grand prize at Mermaids & Margaritas behind waist-high cutouts of mermaids or, if you have your own tail, bring it and show it off! Winners will be selected by crowd applause, so tip the decks by getting your own cheering crowd together.

Paddleboard Rentals: Hunter Springs Kayaks will be on the beach ready to send you on a paddleboard experience. Paddleboards are all the rave for people of every age. Give yourself a feeling of freedom on the water with this low-impact activity.

M/M Merchandise: What is a festival without the opportunity to find that "perfect something" that you can take home as a memory of your day? Enjoy browsing and shopping for mermaid/tropical/nautical offerings from local merchants as gifts for yourself and others!

The Chamber thanks our

growing list of sponsors who are making Mermaids & Margaritas possible, including Presenting Sponsor Insight Credit Union; Siren Sponsor Plantation on Crystal River; Merfolk Sponsors Hunter Springs Kayaks, Specialty Gems, Crystal River Harley Davidson, D&M Property Maintenance and Kona Ice; and Media Sponsors Citrus County Chronicle, Tampa Bay Times, Citrus 95.3 / The FOX 96.7 / Naturecoast 103.3, and HomeTown Values.

What better way to celebrate the waning weeks of summer and scallop season than an exceptional afternoon and sunset evening on Citrus County's special Fort Island Gulf Beach? So bring your family, your bathing suits and cover ups, your sunscreen and your sense of adventure and join us! We hope to see you there!

WHAT: Mermaids and Margaritas Festival; www.MermaidsAndMargaritasFestival.com, or Facebook at "Mermaids and Margaritas Fest 2018"

WHEN: Saturday, April 14th, 12 noon – 8 pm

WHERE: Fort Island Gulf Beach, at the end of Fort Island Beach Trail, Crystal River

ADMISSION: \$5, children 12 and under are free FREE parking with FREE shuttle to the beach. Continuous shuttles from the festival parking lot at US19 & Fort Island Trail. Handicapped parking with accessible shuttles will be at the Chamber's parking lot at 915 N. Suncoast Blvd. (Be aware that parking at Fort Island Gulf Beach is not offered — it's 100% full of vendors! — and we encourage use of the shuttle.)

ABSOLUTELY NO COOLERS and NO PETS/ANIMALS (with the exception of service animals)

For more information, call the Chamber of Commerce at 352-795-3149

2018 Pillar Awards set for April 27 "Fire & Ice" at Black Diamond Ranch

The Chamber's Annual Pillar Awards event will be held on Friday, April 27, at Black Diamond Ranch under the theme, "Fire & Ice". Tickets now on sale will go fast for Citrus County's favorite evening of elegance.



Take a moment to make your nominations for this year's award winners. Nominations are open to the community and nominees need not be Chamber members. The deadline for nominations is April 6. The

nomination site can be accessed here. Sponsorship opportunities are also available. The complete sponsorship package can be accessed here.

We also welcome your donations for the popular silent and live auctions. Individual tickets for the event are \$45. Cocktail or evening attire is suggested.

To RSVP, make an auction donation or for more information about sponsorship, call Janet at 352-795-3149.

Florida TaxWatch's Robert Weissert to be April luncheon speaker

Robert Weissert, with Florida TaxWatch in Tallahassee, will travel to Citrus County to be the keynote speaker at the Chamber luncheon on April 13.

As an independent, nonpartisan, non-profit taxpayer research institute & government watchdog for more than one third of a century, Florida TaxWatch works to improve the productivity and accountability of Florida government. It began in 1977 when incoming Senate President Phil Lewis approached Mark Hollis, then Vice President of Publix Super Markets, about the business community coming to the Legislature to seek increases in consumer taxes rather than finding ways to hold the line on spending. The founders' vision was to create a citizen-funded, independent public guardian to monitor how taxpayers' money is spent, root out bureaucratic waste and inefficiency, and serve as a catalyst for positive change while balancing the interests of business, labor, government and citizens.



Robert Weissert

Over the past three decades, Florida TaxWatch has become one of the most respected independent government watchdog groups in the country. Florida's Governors, Cabinet officers, lawmakers, agency heads and state employees listen closely to what TaxWatch has to say in its research reports. TaxWatch recommendations help to shape state laws, constitutional amendments, budgets and new programs.

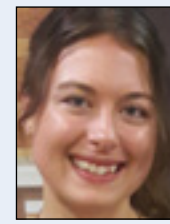
Weissert is the Executive Vice President for Research & Special Counsel to the President & CEO for Florida TaxWatch. Before joining Florida TaxWatch in 2007, Robert worked in Washington, D.C., as a policy analyst for the majority staff of the U.S. Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, and before that as a research analyst for the Congressional Research Service.

The April luncheon will be held at the Plantation on Crystal River. It is sponsored by Absolute Law Group. To RSVP, call Janet at 352-795-3149.



'Chamber Report' on WYKE

Watch the weekly Chamber Report show on WYKE-TV to stay abreast of Chamber events, issues and member spotlights with host Josh Wooten. Chamber Report is broadcast on Tuesdays at 4:30 p.m. on Spectrum Channel 16 and Channel 47 (digital antenna). This week's program features



Kathleen Grady-Weil

Josh and the Chamber's Special Events Coordinator Kathleen Grady-Weil discussing the upcoming Mermaids & Margaritas festival and the 2018 Pillar Awards to share all of the most up-to-date information.

Chamber Report is your ticket to the many happenings in Citrus County!

Chamber events

- March 30** — Google Workshop, Chamber Welcome Center, presented by Citrus County SCORE
 - April 5** — Chamber Mixer, Sunflower Springs ALF
 - April 13** — Chamber Luncheon, Plantation on Crystal River, Speaker: Robert Weissert, Florida TaxWatch; Sponsor: Absolute Law Group
 - April 14** — Mermaids & Margaritas, Fort Island Gulf Beach
 - April 27** — Chamber Pillar Awards Evening, Black Diamond Ranch
 - May 11** — Chamber Luncheon, Tuscany on the Meadow, Speaker: Rep. Ralph Massullo, MD, Sponsor: Seven Rivers Presbyterian Church & School
 - June 8** — Chamber Luncheon, Citrus Hills, Speaker: FDEP Secretary Noah Valenstein; Sponsor: Citrus County Education Foundation
 - June 22** — BWA Networking Breakfast, Citrus Hills (Women only)
- For more information on events, call 352-795-3149 or visit www.CitrusCountyChamber.com.

Chamber Legacy Partners

The Chamber recognizes our Legacy Partners that have made a special investment in the Chamber to support the programs and mission of the Chamber. For information on becoming a Legacy Partner, please contact the Chamber at 352-795-3149.

