



# Sandy Bend

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. . . on the Gulf beach.

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**SANDY BEND APARTMENTS**  
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## Looking Ahead

A few months ago, it was hard to imagine that spring would ever come. But here we are at last! It is not as though Hurricane Charley has totally faded from our memory, but as we look back over the months since August 13, it is hard not to be amazed at how far we have come.

We have repaired, renovated, refurbished, and renourished. Our accommodations have a fresh, new look. Landscaping is being replanted, and we are encouraged by the new growth on our native trees. Mother Nature has demonstrated once again her incredible ability to regenerate better and stronger than ever.

And that is what our industry has done. It has come back stronger and healthier than ever. There are still some finishing touches to be completed, but we are well on our way.

Most accommodations have reopened, and by the end of the year we expect our total room inventory to be back on line. You can tell by the welcome sight of traffic on our roads that tourism is strong.

And it is no surprise why. Bright, sunny skies. Glistening gulf waters offering some of the best fishing that we have had in years. Beautiful, sandy beaches blanketed with shells. Dolphins, manatees, birds, and other wildlife residents. Award-winning paddling trails through the area's back bays and estuaries.

It is as though nature has given us a message that all will be well again in our tropical paradise. We are moving forward.

Southwest Florida International Airport's new Midfield Terminal is scheduled to open this spring, one of the first in the United States to be built with new security equipment and procedures incorporated into the design. When it opens, the new

terminal will boast nearly twice the number of gates as the existing terminal.

The extensive, \$9-million restoration of the Edison & Ford Winter Estates will be completed this year. The project includes the refurbishment of the Edison House, the guesthouse, and a caretaker's cottage as well as historical plantings and other landscaping work to bring the estates closer to their appearance during the time of their famous residents.

The Randall Research Center on Pine Island has opened the Calusa Heritage Trail. The 3,700-foot interpretive walkway leads visitors past mounds, canals, and other features of the Pineland archaeological site of a Calusa Indian village that existed for 1,500 years.

We have many reasons for optimism and confidence in our future.

When Anne Morrow Lindbergh visited Captiva and penned her famous book *Gift from the Sea* in 1955, she wrote, "The beach was covered with beautiful shells and I could not let one go by unnoticed. I couldn't even walk head up looking out to sea, for fear of missing something precious at my feet."

That is what we have here in Southwest Florida, something very precious. Our tropical paradise is experiencing a rebirth, and we look forward to hosting our guests from all over the world who, like our residents, appreciate this beautiful part of the country.

D.T. Minich  
Executive Director, Lee County Visitor &  
Convention Bureau