



New Social Media Pages Attract Instant Fans

Facebook, Twitter pages kickstart VSPC's online overhaul; new Web site to debut this fall

St. Petersburg, FL (April 14, 2009) – Starting this week, the countless songbirds and seagulls that call the St. Pete/Clearwater area home won't be the only ones tweeting around here.

That's because **Visit St. Pete/Clearwater (VSPC)** has just launched new profiles on both Twitter and Facebook, two extremely popular interactive digital platforms that have taken the social media world by storm.



The addition of these pages is the first wave of a brand-wide digital overhaul that will culminate early this fall with the re-launching of an all-new Web site.

“Since the vast majority of travelers today are getting their primary travel information online, this social media outreach is a perfect next step for our digital media presence,” said DT Minich, executive director of Visit St. Petersburg/Clearwater.

“Plus it's an effective way to capture the attention of a generation of online users who prefer to get their info in real time using a variety of digital media platforms,” he added.

Collectively, Twitter and Facebook serve as information outlets for daily and upcoming events and provide forums for displaying media coverage, photos, videos and more. But each site has its own specific function.

At its core, **Twitter's** function is to ask a simple question---What are you doing?---which users answer in short updates called “tweets” (140 characters max), making it an ideal tool for touting daily or even hourly goings on in the St. Pete/Clearwater area.

Though it's been active for only a matter of days, VSPC's Twitter page has already been used to highlight Expedia's recent ranking of the Sandpearl Resort as one of the world's best hotels and touted events such as the St. Pete Honda Grand Prix.

Because Twitter, which the *New York Times* hails as one of the Web's fastest-growing phenomena, is both a Web site and a cell phone-based communication tool, tweets can be viewed and created either online at Twitter.com or by cell phones via text messaging. Owners of smartphones---such as iPhones and BlackBerrys---can also connect via any number of free, user-friendly applications.

The crux of Twitter's viral essence comes in the form of a "follow," and users who elect to follow a page receive that page's tweets immediately on their own home page, making it a real-time communication tool.

The more traditional **Facebook** Web site allows its registered users---some 200 million at last count---to create and update profiles using videos and photo galleries. Site visitors can become a "fan" of an organizations or product's page with one click, which automatically adds a link from that page back to their own page, creating yet another link in the viral network. [VSPC's Facebook page](#) includes a beach tour and other videos, a photo gallery with stunning images of the area, and a place for regular news and event updates.

Both of VSPC's social media pages, which incorporate the new [Ambassador advertising campaign](#) into their designs, can be accessed via the Twitter and Facebook icons on the homepage of [VisitStPeteClearwater.com](#).

The all-new VSPC Web site, which is slated to be completed by early this fall, will incorporate an innovative new navigation, enhanced video offerings and an expanded booking agent.

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Visit St. Pete-Clearwater is the destination marketing organization for Pinellas County, Florida.

For more information: www.VisitStPeteClearwater.com

Contact: Assistant Director David Downing: David@VisitSPC.com

Phone: 727.464.7213

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