

Vincent S. Long
Leon County Administrator
My View, September 27, 2013

Let's Show the World Why We Love This Place - #IHeartTally

What do you love about living in Leon County and Tallahassee? It's a simple question that I know has many answers but if you are willing to express your love for our community, then you can be a part of our burgeoning tourism economy.

Nearly 150 people joined the Leon County Division of Tourism (also known as Visit Tallahassee for marketing purposes) on Thursday at the new Bass Pro Shop for the debut of the annual marketing plan and release of the 2014 Visitor's Guide. Both are essential elements for the Board of County Commissioners' strategic priority to enhance economic development through the tourism program. This 'rollout' event is often full of industry insiders and tourism officials, but the County's plans for 2014 extend far beyond the norm. As we have done in other areas of County government to enhance our online presence and interact with our customers through social media, our 2014 tourism marketing campaigns leap forward to afford local residents, business leaders, startup entrepreneurs, college students and visitors the opportunity to help sell our destination.

The **#IHeartTally** social media campaign seeks those of us willing to express to the world our love for our community by telling, or showing, why Leon County/Tallahassee is such a special place to live, work, play and — most importantly to the campaign — visit. It may be because of the nature-based opportunities, visual or performing arts, history and heritage, dining, shopping, nightlife or all of the above — you name it. You can share pictures from a recent tailgate, video of your children at the Springtime Tallahassee Parade, or footage of family and friends exploring local museums, art festivals and Railroad Square. It is as easy as 1-2-3 to get involved, and early participants can win an 'I Heart Tally' T-shirt:

1. Take a photo or video of something you love about Tallahassee.
2. Tag it with **#IHeartTally** on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and/or Vine.
3. Share it with your friends.

Thursday also marked the official launch of **Trailahassee.com** (www.trailahassee.com) to serve as the primary and interactive source of information on outdoor activities for area visitors and residents. **Trailahassee** was once a casual nickname shared among active outdoor enthusiasts to describe the biking, hiking, running, paddling and equestrian trails in the Tallahassee area. Today, it is a one-of-a-kind website promoting nearly 600 miles of trails and interactive features such as "Find a Trail" maps, a blog, video and photo content via social media, as well as information on outfitters and recreation associations. This ecotourism website was developed for outdoor enthusiasts, residents and visitors alike, and offers travel tools to easily plan a visit to Florida's capital through the County's Division of Tourism.

We know that 70 percent of vacation planners view video content about a destination prior to making their final travel decision, so both of these marketing campaigns rely heavily on social media and consumer interaction to sell our product. However, we will also have boots on the

ground for the initial phase to help spread the news of *#IHeartTally* and *Trailhassee.com*. In the coming months, you will see street teams of volunteers at the Downtown Getdowns, FSU Block Parties, at the stadiums prior to FSU and FAMU football games, and at other special events getting both our residents and visitors involved in *#IHeartTally*. *Trailhassee.com* will be promoted extensively through national outdoor enthusiast publications, local outdoor organizations, and shared with visitors during the Florida High School State Cross Country Championships and the NCAA Southeast Regional Cross Country Championships at the Apalachee Regional Park this fall.

I encourage you to join Leon County Government in its efforts to ‘sell’ our destination by sharing your passion for our community with the rest of the world.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Vince Long became County Administrator in July 2011, and has worked for Leon County since 1995. He can be reached at (850) 606-5300 or LongV@LeonCountyFL.gov.