



Privatizing Lee County Tourism Could Save Taxpayers \$3.1M–\$5.6M Annually — While Other Florida Counties Already Outsource

LEE COUNTY, FL — A new analysis from [TripleDippers.org](https://tripedippers.org) reveals that Lee County taxpayers could save **\$3.1 million to \$5.6 million every year** by privatizing the county's government-run Visitor & Convention Bureau (VCB). While Lee continues to fund bloated salaries and pension bonuses, Florida's largest counties have already outsourced tourism functions to lean, nonprofit contractors — avoiding long-term pension liabilities of Pension Bonuses and lifelong Pensions and Health Care Subsidies.

<https://tripedippers.org/lee-county-tourism-executives-paid-900k-in-retirement-bonuses-while-taxpayers-cover-22m-in-spending/>



Just two Lee County tourism executives are receiving **over \$619,000 in pension bonuses**, while collecting full-time paychecks and avoiding the standard 3% employee pension contribution. Their combined 8-year cost to taxpayers exceeds **\$4.14 million**.

Lee County Tourism Department: 8-Year Cost Breakdown For Just TWO Executives

NAME	TITLE	SALARY (ANNUAL)	8-YEAR SALARY PAYOUT	TAXPAYER MATCH TO FRS (22.02%)	NOT PAYING FRS 3%	ANNUAL BENEFITS (40% EST.)	PENSION BONUS EST.	ANNUAL PENSION EST	8-YEAR TOTAL COST EST
Tamara Pigott	Executive Director	\$199,534	\$1,596,277	\$43,937	\$47,888	\$79,813	\$408,336	\$95,777	\$2,734,942
Nancy MacPhee	Product Development Manager	\$103,157	\$825,263	\$22,715	\$24,758	\$41,262	\$211,368	\$49,516	\$1,414,200
TOTAL		\$302,692	\$2,421,540	\$66,652	\$72,646	\$968,616	\$619,704	\$145,293	\$4,149,142

Combined Cost: \$4.14 million for two positions — over 759K in pension subsidies alone.

62 Lee County Bureaucrats Demand 60% Pension Bonus Increase say Five Year Bonus not enough! A total of 128 Lee County employees, dubbed “Triple Dippers,” file fake retirement paperwork and at the same time to do the same job, collect a salary, a pension bonus and don’t pay the standard 3% of their salary into the Florida Retirement System. See the Full list of Lee County Government Pension Bonus Bureaucrats and Politicians at <https://tripledippers.org/fl-lee-county-2025-report/>

Tourism Budget Waste — And What Could Be Saved

Lee County’s Tourism VCB spending is out of line with fiscally responsible counties like Orange (Visit Orlando) and Miami-Dade (Greater Miami CVB), which outsource tourism through nonprofit contractors funded by Tourist Development Taxes. Methodology: How Savings Were Calculated

<https://tripledippers.org/> analyzed Lee County’s FY24 VCB budget line items and compared them to cost structures in counties that outsource tourism functions. Estimated savings were derived by applying conservative reduction ranges to key categories:

Privatization of Lee Co. Tourism Department and Estimated Savings

CATEGORY	FY24 BUDGET	PRIVATIZATION POTENTIAL	ESTIMATED SAVINGS
Salaries & Benefits	~\$4,3M	High	\$1,1M–\$1,7M
IT & Data Processing	~\$850K	High	\$170K–\$340K
Promotions & Advertising	~\$16.3M	Moderate	\$1,6M–\$3,2M
Travel & Training	~\$400K	Moderate	\$60K–\$100K
Admin & Indirect Costs	~\$550K	High	\$165K–\$275K
Total Estimated Annual Savings:		\$3,1M–5,6M	\$3,1M–5,6 M

The Fix Is Simple: Privatize the Tourism Bureau, Protect Taxpayers

calls for immediate reform:

- Privatize Lee County’s Tourism Department using a nonprofit contractor model
- Redirect millions to core public services or tax relief

“The Pension Bonus program rewards bureaucrats at taxpayer expense,” said Dave Jaye, Researcher <https://tripledippers.org/> . “Lee Tourism executives take six-figure pension bonuses and annual pensions, taxpayers are forced to pay 22.02% of their salary to Florida Retirement System while the tourism Executives don’t pay the standard 3% of Salary to the FRS. Why are Lee County Commissioners considering a sales tax increase to help fund Bureaucrat Pension bonuses and a government tourism agency when the private sector is faster, cheaper, and more accountable to taxpayers?”

TAKE ACTION

- Contact Lee County Commissioners: leegov.com/bocc
- Read the full spotlight report: [TripleDippers.org](https://tripleDippers.org)
- Share this data to demand accountability, transparency, and reform



If Lee County outsourced its tourism operations to a private firm:

- **No salary pension match (22.02%)**
- **No DROP pension bonuses**
- **No annual pension payouts**
- **No benefits package (typically 40% of salary)**
- **No skipped employee contributions 3% of Salary**

Assuming a **privatized staffing model** with:

- Equivalent service delivery
- Two senior-level contractors or firm-based roles
- Annual cost per role: ~\$120,000 (all-inclusive, no benefits or pension)

Total Estimated Annual Savings: \$3.1M–\$5.6M, based on comparative benchmarks from Orange, Miami-Dade, Monroe, Walton, and Okaloosa counties.

What Other Florida Counties Do Differently

Florida's largest counties outsource tourism through nonprofit contractors — delivering professional marketing at lower cost and without pension bonus and lifetime pension liabilities:

Orange County – Visit Orlando

Nonprofit DMO funded by Tourist Development Tax

<https://www.visitorlando.com>

Miami-Dade County – Greater Miami CVB

Independent nonprofit funded by tourist taxes & partnerships

<https://www.miamiandbeaches.com>

Monroe County – Florida Keys TDC

Advisory council funded by Tourist Development Tax

<https://www.monroecounty-fl.gov/328/Tourist-Development-Council>

Walton County – Visit South Walton

Tourism department with nonprofit-style branding, funded by bed tax

<https://www.visitsouthwalton.com>

Okaloosa County – Destin-Fort Walton Beach Tourism

Advisory council model funded by 6% lodging tax

<https://myokaloosa.com/tourist-development/home>