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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SOUTH PADRE ISLAND GEARING UP TO ENFORCE ORDINANCE 15-03

With a deadline of July 1st to comply, the City of South Padre Island officials are ramping up to enforce the new Short-Term Rental ordinance.

South Padre Island, TX – June 24, 2015: With an effective date of June 15th, 2015 and a final deadline of July 1st, 2015 to be compliant, the City of South Padre Island HOT Task Force has been meeting weekly to discuss enforcement, the next phase of implementing Ordinance No. 15-03. Code Enforcement Officers will be issuing citations to the SPI Municipal Court. A fine not to exceed five hundred dollars for each offense may be assessed upon conviction of any violation of this ordinance or for each day such offense continues. “We encourage property owners to take advantage of this opportunity. The Code Enforcement Department will be required to issue citations to property owners found in violation after the July 1st deadline,” stated Environmental Health Director Victor Baldovinos.

Owners who rent their property for less than thirty days must register with the State of Texas Comptroller and MuniServices as well as acquire their City of South Padre Island Permit number in order to comply with City Ordinance No. 15-03.

The City registration number must be posted on all advertising and a 24/7 emergency contact number within one hour's reach of the property must be provided. In addition to the enforcement and collection of hotel occupancy tax, the ordinance is intended to bring credibility to the rental marketplace by deterring fraudulent listings, and to assist City authorities in enforcing quality of life ordinances: noise, disturbance and fire code occupancy.

This 4th of July season don't get scammed! In recent years, more and more fraudulent listings have appeared on third party vacation rental websites around the country such as HomeAway, VRBO, FlipKey, TripAdvisor and Airbnb. These listings are “scraped” or extracted electronically from legitimate websites such as the Multiple Listing Service (MLS) sales listings. Visitors show up on the island only to find out that they paid for a rental that does not exist or one that is not actually available for rental. If this happens during the busiest times, you may not be able to find alternative accommodations once you arrive.. To avoid this follow these tips to keep you from getting scammed:



1. Rent from a reputable vacation rental management company or rental property owner who registers their properties with the City of South Padre Island.
2. Look for the unique property registration number on any property before you agree to a rental.
3. Call the Chamber of Commerce or South Padre Island Visitors Center to check the reputation of any vacation rental management company or rental property owner.
4. Check the registration of individual properties with the City of South Padre Island.
5. Never agree to transfer cash or mail a check for your rental. Once you transfer cash you have no recourse should you later find that the rental is a scam. A reputable vacation rental management company or rental property owner will require credit cards for payment to protect both you and them.
6. Never rent from anyone who does not charge hotel occupancy tax. It is 14.5% in South Padre Island and is required by state and local law on any short-term vacation rental. If they don't collect it and you don't pay it, you are both breaking the law. A property registered and in good standing with the City of South Padre Island must be in compliance with all regulations and laws.

To view the ordinance, follow the link below:

http://www.myspi.org/egov/documents/1430945657_42936.pdf

For more information and registration forms visit <http://myspi.org/hottax>. The final compliance date is July 1st 2015. For questions call Nancy Botello: (956) 761-8382 or Email: HotTax@SoPadre.com

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