



**May 02, 2008**

**“Dr. Beach”, aka Dr. Stephen Leatherman to Address Hospitality Industry & SCVB To Announce Winners of National Tourism Week Awards**

The Sarasota Convention and Visitors Bureau (“SCVB”) will announce the recipients of the 2007 National Tourism Week Awards at the National Tourism Week luncheon held at Michael’s on East, 11:30am, May 6, 2008. Winners in each of the below categories were nominated by their peers and voted on by a selection panel comprised of members in the hospitality industry. The winners will be announced at the luncheon. Tourism Leader of the Year and Guest Service Excellence for Front Line, Back of The House & Management.

The recipient of the Voice of Sarasota for 2007 will also be announced at today’s luncheon. Past winners for this esteemed award include Dick Vitale, Stuart Kaminsky, Howard Tibbals and Paul Rudolph.

Speaking at the luncheon is Dr. Stephen Leatherman. Dr. Leatherman, also known as “Dr. Beach”, earned his Ph.D. in Environmental Sciences from the University of Virginia in 1976. Since 1997, he has been the Chair Professor and Director of the Laboratory for Coastal Research at Florida International University in Miami. His major research focuses are coastal erosion, storm impacts, and the effects of sea level rise.

Dr. Leatherman has been in over 200 television appearances such as, ABC Live with Regis and Kelly, CNN News, Oprah and Travel Channel. The Tampa Tribune-Times quoted that “Leatherman’s List of America’s best beaches has become to a seashore what the Oscar is to actors and movies.” Sarasota County’s own Siesta Key Beach has consistently been included in this list of best beaches.

The Sarasota Convention & Visitors Bureau leads and supports the tourism industry in Sarasota County by providing the highest quality, and most innovative, marketing programs and promotions to ensure the continued growth of tourism and travel from visitors around the world. It is the mission of the SCVB to make Sarasota County the must see destination on Florida’s Gulf Coast.

\* Dr. Beach will be available for interviews before & after the luncheon. Call Erin Duggan at 941-356-0432 to schedule.\*