

- **MYTH:** Stated in an email to Brad Dean and cc'd other recipients, "I have been informed by the very highest of authorities that your time with us is now short. This "suddenly" may seem as a mystery to you as I am not accustomed to running in what you would consider powerful circles...I am proclaiming this soon end, not for your sake, but for those copied on this email. So that they can know that I made this statement and so that they may know the source of such a bold statement when it comes to pass... Soon, very soon, you will be put on notice. At that time, please do not look for the source of it as being a Federal Probe, or a hotel community that abandoned you, but rather as the very hand of God. You publicly claim him as savior. He is also Lord. He works in light and does not work in dark corners. He is wise, not clever. AND he is good. What he will bring about is for your own eternal good. He did establish you here in Myrtle Beach and he is the one that is calling an end to your era. He is also the one now holding you accountable. You will soon face an appointed judge who will call all things into light. This judge, however, can only put you behind bars. He is the servant of a judge who will call you to himself for your own surrender and your own good. It is here, that you will find freedom from the oppression of those you currently serve. You will also find rest."

Source: *Email sent from David Hucks to Brad Dean and cc'd multiple recipients* - August 22, 2013.

- **FACT:** It's hard to know what the author means but at best this is a nonsensical rant and at worst it's a mean-spirited attack laced with unsubstantiated claims and personal threats.

- **MYTH:** Accused the MBACC of developing the Facebook page (www.facebook.com/BoycottStupidity) against Myrtle-Beach.com & MyrtleBeachSC.com.

Source: *Myrtle Beach Chamber Works to Kill Free Speech on Water Quality* – MyrtleBeachSC.com - April 6, 2016.

FACT: This allegation is entirely false. The Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce has not, and will not, develop or promote social media pages intended to harm or defame other individuals or organizations. The Chamber will, however, continue to combat false and misleading information with facts.

- **MYTH:** Accused an MBACC member paid and unpaid trolls continually haunt the social pages of stories on MyrtleBeachSC.com.

Source: *Pardon Our Interruption: MyrtleBeachSC.com Cyber Attacked* – Myrtle BeachSC.com - August 10, 2016.

FACT: This allegation is baseless and untrue. The Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce respects the right of individuals to express their opinions and acknowledges the use of social media to express those opinions. However, the Chamber does take exception to misleading or incorrect information, especially when it is presented in an unfair or libelous manner. In these instances, the Chamber makes its views known publicly and does not rely upon others' social media pages to convey its views or correct others' lies, half-truths and misinformation.

- **MYTH:** Accused MBACC members of working to ensure our key stories stay out of Google News.
Source: Pardon Our Interruption: MyrtleBeachSC.com Cyber Attacked – Myrtle BeachSC.com - August 10, 2016.

FACT: This allegation is baseless and untrue. The Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce is not (nor has it ever been) working to keep stories posted on this website out of Google News or any other news media. The Chamber is not aware of any member organization doing such.

- **MYTH:** Claimed the MBACC sued David Hucks for his private trademark, worked to shut down the Myrtle-Breach.com Facebook page, and MBACC members have Google bombed the Myrtle-Beach.com maps listings in the past few weeks so as to have them removed from Google maps.
Source: Corporate Funded Police State Coming to Myrtle Beach: Myrtle-Beach.com - June 4, 2014.

FACT: These allegations are unsubstantiated and untrue. The Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce has never sued Mr. Hucks for a private trademark. The Chamber did contest an application for a Federal trademark which was too narrowly defined and could have led to unfair competition in the private sector. The Federal government agreed with the Chamber and rejected the application. The Chamber's stated policy is/was that no individual or organization should own exclusive rights to the trademark and that is the result of the Chamber's legal victory. The Chamber does not own the rights to that trademark, nor has the Chamber ever suggested it desired ownership of that trademark.

The Chamber did not work to "shut down" the social media platform referenced. The Chamber is not aware of any of its 2,700+ members, nor their 46,000 employees, who have intentionally obstructed the website referenced or any of its features.

- **MYTH:** States that every corporate media outlet in Horry County receives millions from the MBACC annually.
Source: Pardon Our Interruption: MyrtleBeachSC.com Cyber Attacked – MyrtleBeachSC.com - August 10, 2016.

FACT: This allegation is inaccurate and very misleading. As the primary destination marketing organization for the Myrtle Beach area, the Chamber regularly invests in out-of-state advertising on TV, Internet and other media. This includes purchasing advertisements on television stations in 90 markets. Because the television industry is largely owned by large corporations such as Raycom Media, Media General and Sinclair Broadcasting, it is common for the Chamber to purchase advertisements on stations owned by these three companies who also happen to own local tv stations. However, the local management are not involved in these purchasing decisions and receive no money from the Chamber for these out-of-state advertisements. We welcome the participation of local advertising professionals, including local advertising experts, to invest their time and talents in our marketing committees to help us develop our advertising strategy, but we purposely avoid allowing local business leaders or public officials to be directly involved in purchasing decisions. To suggest that local media personnel are influenced by the Chamber's decision to purchase advertising from their large Corporation is misleading, as these individuals are not involved in that decision-making and are likely unaware of the Chamber's purchases. It would be accurate to state that the Chamber purchases advertising from peer organizations

owned by the same Corporation as local media outlets but local management are not involved in the purchasing process.

- **MYTH:** Alleges “SC State Senators facing jail time” and their “ties to members of the Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce” and its President and CEO.

Source: Several SC State Senator Facing Jail Time – MyrtleBeachSC.com - July 13, 2016.

FACT: This is false and libelous. The Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce is not aware of any current or recent state senator who has been accused of a crime. Likewise, we are not aware of any current state senator who has been convicted of a crime that entails a jail sentence. The Chamber values the role played by public servants (including state senators) and works closely with local, state and federal officials, both elected and appointed, to advance issues of public policy that impact the Grand Strand. Each year, the Chamber, in partnership with other local organizations, hosts a reception in Columbia, SC to discuss the area’s legislative interests and many state senators attend that event. The Chamber believes it is essential for business leaders and community organizations to remain active in the public policy arena.

- **MYTH:** Reported that Brad Dean and Mayor John Rhodes visited China for the purpose of seeking out, pursuing and brokering the deal with Dan Liu. It was also stated that The Peoples Republic of China are now limiting Visas for Chinese nationals to visit Myrtle Beach.

Source: Chinese Could Cost MB Residents \$10 Billion – MyrtleBeachSC.com - May 21, 2016.

FACT: This allegation is false. Brad Dean, President and CEO of the Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce, and John Rhodes, Mayor of Myrtle Beach, traveled together to China in 2012 and 2014. Both trips were for the purpose of attending the China-U.S. Travel Summit, a joint meeting held by the US Travel Association and the Chinese National Tourism Administration. Dean and Rhodes were part of a 75-member delegation that met with Chinese tourism representatives and public officials. Dean also met with officials at the U.S. Consulate in Beijing as part of his role as a member of the U.S. Travel and Tourism Advisory Board, which advises the U.S. Secretary of Commerce on matters that impact travel and tourism. These two trips did not involve a meeting with Mr. Liu.

- **MYTH:** Claims the Tourism Works For Us campaign is used to re-elect incumbents and the MBACC is using tax payer money to fund the campaign.

Source: M.B. Chamber and Quality Beaches – MyrtleBeachSC.com - May 5, 2016.

FACT: This allegation is untrue and very misleading. The Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce manages the website TourismWorksForUs.com and publicizes it annually during National Tourism Week. The website does not advocate for our against elected officials. The Chamber does not use public funds to fund the website nor the campaign.

- **MYTH:** Claimed that representatives from the Starwood Brand 'Aloft' have no plans to invest in the Myrtle Beach market until a multi-year history of positive long term water quality test results lower their customer concerns.

Source: [3 Reasons Millennials Aren't Choosing Myrtle Beach](#) – MyrtleBeachSC.com - July 19, 2016.

FACT: This allegation is unproven and undocumented. The Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce has not heard concerns or questions about water quality from Starwood representatives nor from investors affiliated with Aloft. However, the Myrtle Beach area is home to two Starwood properties, both of which are successful businesses that employ hundreds of local residents and host thousands of visitors each year.

- **MYTH:** Claimed that MyrtleBeachSC.com reached out to 3 key brands that were focused on millennial tourism, who told them they would not consider investing in Myrtle Beach until the Chamber of Commerce and City address water quality.

Source: [3 Reasons Millennials Aren't Choosing Myrtle Beach](#) – MyrtleBeachSC.com - July 19, 2016.

FACT: This allegation is unproven, undocumented and highly questionable. The Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce regularly meets with private and corporate investors evaluating the Myrtle Beach area, including national hotel corporations. Not one single investment group has expressed concern about the area's water quality. Instead, we have seen steady investment in recent years by worldwide brands and have held recent meetings with national brand representatives that continue to evaluate the Myrtle Beach area for future investment.

- **MYTH:** The Facebook page named David L. Hucks promoted a link to another Facebook page www.Facebook.com/boycottstupidity2 called "Boycott Visit Myrtle Beach, South Carolina" states the MBACC Board of Directors and organization should be held personally responsible should anyone become sick swimming in contaminated water. The same page lists the names/businesses of each board member.

Source: [Boycott Myrtle-Beach.com and MyrtleBeachSC.com Facebook page \(now removed\)](#) - April 6, 2016.

FACT: This allegation refers to an anonymous web petition, perhaps posted by someone who lacks the courage to attach his/her name to the post. The notion that the Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors is somehow responsible for contaminated water or public health issues is absurd and entirely untrue. Rather, the Chamber's Board of Directors is comprised of savvy business and community leaders who are deeply committed to promoting, protecting and improving the Grand Strand Community.

These leaders, who collectively possess centuries of valuable experience, volunteer their time and talents to positively impact area businesses and our regional economy. Anyone alleging or publicizing otherwise is either grossly misinformed or maliciously seeking to harm innocent community servants.

- **MYTH:** Claims that MyrtleBeachSC.com was asked to provide documents to the FBI and IRS related to an investigation involving the Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce. Additionally, a news photo of Brad Dean is displayed with a caption reading “FBI Investigation of Brad Dean Continues.”
Source: Several SC State Senator Facing Jail Time – MyrtleBeachSC.com July 13, 2016.
Source: MB Chamber Employs Scorched Earth Policies – MyrtleBeachSC.com - April 26, 2016.

FACT: These allegations are questionable and information displayed is very misleading. The Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce is not aware of any document held or acquired by the website or its author that would be of interest to any federal agency. The author gives no basis for such a request, nor are any details of these documents offered. The news photo displayed was taken by media covering the testimony of Brad Dean, President & CEO of the Chamber, before the United States Senate. Mr. Dean was invited by the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Competitiveness to speak on matters related to tourism, international commerce and transportation infrastructure. The photo has been edited by an unnamed source to include the quote “FBI Investigation of Brad Dean Continues”.

- **MYTH:** Reported that in 2014 Brad Dean’s salary was split between the Chamber and the Myrtle Beach Commerce Center, ‘and describing the commerce center as the chamber’s for profit advertising machine.’
Source: Senator Rankin’s Tax Bill Hurts Carolina Forest Residents – MyrtleBeachSC.com - June 13, 2016.

FACT: This allegation is untrue and very misleading. The Myrtle Beach Area Commerce Center is a private corporation wholly owned by the Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce. This arrangement is necessary to adhere to IRS regulations related to tax-exempt organizations that have unrelated business income. The Commerce Center is not a “for profit advertising machine”. Furthermore, the Commerce Center does not employ any individual nor are salaries paid directly out of this entity. Rather, the Chamber contracts with a professional accounting firm that advises the Chamber on fair allocations of revenues and operating costs between the Chamber and its for-profit entity, with the sole purpose of adhering to IRS guidelines. In doing so, the Chamber reports taxable income and taxes owed for those parts of its operation which are deemed to be taxable.

- **MYTH:** Claimed that 80% of all Democrats in SC voted for allowing casino gambling in the City of Myrtle Beach and accused members of the MBACC of working behind the scenes in getting the vote on the Democratic ballot.
Source: 80% if SC Dems Want Myrtle Beach Casinos: Myrtle-Beach.com - June 13, 2014

FACT: The Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce has not initiated, assisted or supported efforts to add a question related to gambling on any referendum.

- **MYTH:** Claims again that the 1% local ad tax has created a local TV “news-out” because every local TV station in the Florence/Myrtle Beach market has been paid millions by the MBACC.
Source: Chinese Could Cost MB Residents \$10 Billion – MyrtleBeachSC.com - May 21, 2016.

FACT: This allegation is untrue. There is no such thing as a “news-out” created or encouraged by the Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce. And, as noted previously, the Chamber does not pay “millions” of dollars to local television stations.

- **MYTH:** Claims again that the MBACC pays media stations in the millions. Additional claims include:
 - WMBF – paid millions from the MBACC provided by local and statewide politicians.
 - WPDE – paid millions, accused of reporting inflated tourism numbers, then refused to comment when questioned by MyrtleBeachSC.com. Also claims the station manager is best friends with the Mayor of Myrtle Beach and has traveled with the Mayor on his trips to China.
 - WBTW – paid millions and didn’t print a correction after claiming they were misrepresented by the station during their reporting.
 - WRNN – paid millions and claims the station is part of the ‘money grab’.

Source: How Corruption In Myrtle Beach Continues – MyrtleBeachSC.com - May 18, 2016.

FACT: This allegation is untrue, misleading and libelous. As noted previously, the Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce does not pay “millions” of dollars to local media. We are not aware of any trip taken by the station manager of WPDE and Mayor Rhodes to China.

- **MYTH:** Claimed the Consumer Protection Agency was investigating statements related to a swim advisory by the MBACC and City of Myrtle Beach. Also claimed that the Consumer Protection Agency was looking into whether recent communications by the MBACC & city of Myrtle Beach circumvented or violated consumer disclosure laws.

Source: David L. Hucks Facebook page – March 12, 2016 @ 10:57 p.m. @ 5:01 p.m. @ March 13, 2016 @ 7:34 A.M.

FACT: This allegation is baseless, unverifiable and highly questionable. Neither the Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce, local governments, or state government agencies are aware of any probe or investigation by the U.S. Consumer Protection Agency related to swim advisories. It’s highly unlikely that a federal agency would disclose its investigation of public health matters to an unnamed blogger without alerting local government officials. Furthermore, the allegations, if true, would likely be investigated by other government agencies, which suggests the writer is unfamiliar with the basic functions of key federal agencies.

- **MYTH:** Claimed numbers of visitors to the Myrtle Beach area have remained stuck at 15.2 million tourists for the past 8 years despite \$180 million in marketing dollars spent by the MBACC.

Source: Myrtle Beach Needs New Focus – MyrtleBeachSC.com - May 29, 2015

FACT: this allegation is inaccurate, citing outdated information. D.K. Shifflet, a well-known and respected tourism research firm, regularly provides estimates of annual visitation for many U.S. tourism destinations, including the Myrtle Beach area. Shifflet has reported localized estimates for nearly two decades. The most recent numbers reported by Shifflet are:

2009	13.70 million
2010	14.00 million
2011	14.50 million
2012	15.20 million
2013	16.10 million
2014	17.20 million

2015

17.95 million

Note that the writer is using Shifflet's 2012 estimate, while ignoring subsequent years' data.

- **MYTH:** Accused the MBACC worked with WMBF to optimize the city of North Myrtle Beach for Google key word search terms related to the city of Myrtle Beach's water quality.

Source: *MB Chamber Employs Scorched Earth Policies* – MyrtleBeachSC.com - April 26, 2016.

FACT: This allegation is baseless and untrue. The Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce has not undertaken any effort to "optimize" online search terms for the City of North Myrtle Beach as it relates to water quality, nor has WMBF or any other media outlet. Rather, the Chamber currently serves more than 400 member businesses in the North Myrtle Beach area and maintains productive working relationships with business leaders and public officials in North Myrtle Beach.

- **MYTH:** Reported that political corruption associated with a Chinese Ponzi scheme, members of the MBACC, high crime rates, etc. have caused national tourists to prefer neighboring beaches.

Source: *2016 Tourists Expected Down by 2 Million Visitors* – MyrtleBeachSC.com – April 22, 2016.

FACT: This allegation is baseless and inaccurate. The writer cites several unverified reasons that tourists prefer "neighboring beaches" but we are unaware of any verifiable study or recent survey suggesting this.

- **MYTH:** Claimed that The State Newspaper reported that Brad Dean and Mayor Rhodes pursued Chinese investors on behalf of Burroughs & Chapin and Brittain Resorts and that the two made trips to China on behalf of these companies to sell 22 golf courses.

Source: *Chinese Ponzi Scheme Embarrasses Mayor, Chamber President and Hurts Myrtle Beach's Image* – MyrtleBeachSC.com – April 15, 2016.

FACT: This allegation is false and libelous. Neither Brad Dean or Mayor John Rhodes have pursued investors on behalf of any local entity. As noted previously, the two trips made by Dean and Rhodes were part of the China-U.S. Travel Summit and did not involve the sale of local golf courses.

- **MYTH:** Claimed TV 15 is a favorite of the City and MBACC as it received millions of dollars in tax subsidized funding from the city through the MBACC.

Source: *Elected leaders Silent on No Swim Advisory* – MyrtleBeachSC.com - March 7, 2016

FACT: This allegation is baseless and untrue. No local media outlet, including WPDE, has received "millions of dollars in tax-subsidized funding".

- **MYTH:** Claimed tourism industry forecasters predicted vacationers to Myrtle Beach may be down by as many as 800,000 visitors due to the beach tent ban.

Source: [Summer Visitors Expected Down by 800,000 – MyrtleBeachSC.com - June 3, 2015](#)

FACT: This allegation was inaccurate. D.K. Shifflet, a respected national research firm, estimates tourism increased by 750,000 visitors in 2015. Furthermore, the local tourism industry generated more tax collections in 2015 than in any previous year. It appears the writer's forecast was grossly inaccurate.

- **MYTH:** Accused the MBACC and business competitors of starting a whisper campaign that pointed people to Google links related to his arrest and further claimed the ordeal subsequently halted of his efforts to adopt a child.

Source: [David Hucks – Beyond the Single Story – MyrtleBeachSC.com - July 24, 2015](#)

FACT: The Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce has not been a part of, nor did it start, any "campaign" to publicize the arrest of the writer. Furthermore, the Chamber had no involvement in the individual's arrest and does not have any specific information about that arrest.

- **MYTH:** Accused the MBACC of working behind the scenes with attorneys, Senators, and lawmakers and Governor on the state level in an attempt to block the Myrtle Beach Black Chamber from collecting any local option sales tax funds. Claims that "few at MBACC and fewer in the hotel industry want to see the black community empowered by owning such a database. MBACC has cleverly attacked at every level to block this group. Efforts have included a public relations charm offensive for the general black community in Myrtle Beach to MBACC attracting key MBBC board members (sic) since the launch of MBBC on May 5, 2015. Still others have approached MBBC as black investors, who actually turned out to be no more than fronts for white corporate America."

Source: [Help Versus Empowerment – MyrtleBeachSC.com - July 29, 2015](#)

FACT: This allegation is absurd, unsubstantiated and inaccurate. The Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce has never attempted to stop funding of any chamber of commerce in South Carolina. Furthermore, neither the Chamber staff or Board of Directors are working against the Myrtle Beach Black Chamber or minorities. Beyond misleading and misinforming, the writer makes unsubstantiated allegations about the board members of the very organization he/she claims to promote or represent.

- **MYTH:** Claimed the MBACC sued The Sun News for reporting on the "questionable money issues related to their operation."

Source: [Rise of the Corporate State – Myrtle-Beach.com June 18, 2015](#)

FACT: This is untrue. The Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce has never sued The Sun News or its parent companies.

- **MYTH:** Commenting on the Memorial Day Bikefest, claimed the "Myrtle Beach Area Chamber would later vote to put \$5 million in tax dollars towards policing this year's rally. This plan was ultimately rejected as the funds could not, by law, be used for such purposes." Also claimed "As of May, the Myrtle Beach Peoples Rally, reported that 70% of those guests will not return Summer 2015. Noted that "bike loops and barricades endorsed and implemented by a Chamber of Commerce is certainly a peculiar arrangement for a tourist destination."

Source: [Beach Tents, Barricades and Bikers](#) – Myrtle-Beach.com - June 25, 2015

FACT: This allegation is inaccurate. The Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce fully supports efforts by local and state government agencies to manage the activities surrounding the Atlantic Beach Bikefest, including a traffic loop and additional police presence. The Chamber has committed funding to pay for that police presence, although the number referenced is inflated by more than 400%. The Chamber sought a change in state law to allow advertising funds to be used to pay for law enforcement during May events, and the South Carolina General Assembly changed the law in June 2014. The suggestion that 70% of guests would not return in 2015 was unsubstantiated and clearly inaccurate, based on 2015 visitor counts and tax revenues.

- **MYTH:** Stated the City, County and MBACC endorsed the beach tent ban which “caused over 32,000 white tourists to light up social media claiming to choose other beaches in 2015. Subsequently, the Myrtle Beach People’s Rally reported that 70% of those guests will not return in 2015.”

Source: [Beach Tents, Barricades and Bikers](#) – Myrtle-Beach.com - June 25, 2015

FACT: This allegation is unsubstantiated and highly questionable. There is no evidence that 32,000 thousand out-of-town visitors expressed their intent to visit other communities because of a change in local ordinances related to beach tents, nor is it likely that the unnamed, unspecified source could measure social media by race. Furthermore, there is no mention of the impact this change in local ordinance would have on visitors who prefer the current ordinance. And, the Myrtle Beach People’s Rally was a poorly attended event that could hardly have yielded a reliable statistical base.

- **MYTH:** Claimed the 17.2 million in visitors reported for 2014 reflects a 25% increase in tourism (over 2009) but this is not reflected by comparable growth in hospitality and accommodations revenues. In the June 19, 2015 edition of the Myrtle Beach Herald, Hucks was quoted as saying, "With two million more visitors over the previous years, there should have been a big jump in hospitality taxes, revenues, and airport numbers, but there wasn't."

Source: [Myrtle Beach Chamber Mum on Black Chamber Request: Myrtle Beach Herald](#) - June 19, 2015.

FACT: This allegation is false and inaccurate. The annual number of visitors has increased from 13.7 million in 2009 (the year in which the 1% TDF was implemented) to 17.2 million in 2014, per D.K. Shifflet, a national tourism research firm that reports on annual visitation estimate for numerous destinations. This represents a 26% increase. During that same time period, the Horry County countywide hospitality fee collections increased by 27%, according to the S.C. Department of Revenue. The annual growth rate in visitors has trended very closely with hospitality and accommodations revenues.

- **MYTH:** Exhibits interpreted by Hucks "show no new passengers at Myrtle Beach International Airport. In fact, we were down from 2007, 2010, and 2011. Where did these new 2 million customers come from?"

Source: [Email thread from David Hucks to Jim Caldwell; DKSA](#), June 13, 2015

FACT: The assertion is inaccurate and ignores historical tourism trends. While arrivals dropped in 2008 and 2009 as a result of the recession, arrivals in 2010 (the first full year after the implementation of the TDF) exceeded those recorded for 2007. 2010 arrivals were also exceeded by 2011, reflecting a clear upwards trend. In March of 2012, Direct Air filed Chapter 11, followed by Chapter 7 just two months later. This clearly had an adverse impact on 2012 and to some extent, 2013. 2014 saw a return of arrivals at a level approaching pre-recession and pre-Direct Air bankruptcy. When comparing 2014 to 2007, an increase of 4% is seen. Further, the question posed by Mr. Hucks is not reasonable as it asserts that a substantial portion of the 2 million increase in visitors would have come from air travelers. Despite consistent growth in the number of visitors flying to the Myrtle Beach International Airport, fly-in visitors still account for a very small portion of the local tourism industry. More than 90% of our local visitors drive to the destination. Based on historical trends, it is obvious that a substantial portion of the 2,000,000 increase came from those choosing to drive to the destination.

- **MYTH:** Exhibits interpreted by Hucks "shows we did as much in retail in 2007 with only 15.2 million visitors. We did almost as much in retail in 2006 as well. 2 million more tourists spending \$50 each per stay should have produced \$100 million more in revenues for 2014. Why no increase?"

Source: Email thread from David Hucks to Jim Caldwell; DKSA, June 13, 2015.

FACT: This assertion is inaccurate and ignores basic economic data. When comparing the real numbers relative to Gross Retail Sales for Horry County for 2014 against 2007, it can clearly be seen that such sales increased by \$340,000,000, far exceeding the \$100,000,000 computed by Hucks. Further, 2006 and 2007 were fueled by a record level of construction and real estate development market. The area has not returned to such levels since the recessionary environment in 2008-2009. Accordingly, it is reasonable to conclude that declining real estate sales, declining construction levels and decreased employment levels substantially impacted local retail sales. The assertion made seems to assume that tourism accounts for 100% of local economic activity, which entirely incorrect.

- **MYTH:** In his questioning of the accuracy of recently published visitor data for 2014, Hucks states, "Taylor Damonte, at CCU, stated he did not do individual numbers, but was surprised by the 2 million person jump reported so late, as well."

Source: Email from David Hucks to Brad Dean, Jim Wright & Kathy Richardson - June 12, 2015.

FACT: This assertion is inaccurate and very misleading. Mr. Damonte's comments were clearly taken out of context and misquoted. In an email from Taylor Damonte to the Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Damonte clarified his comments, stating, "I have made no comment regarding the validity of this estimate, except to say to many (students, media, others including Mr. Hucks) that the approach used by Shifflet estimates all tourists, not just those that stay in commercially rented property. I also always point out that it may be an under estimation of the total since it is my understanding from the folks at Shifflet, that they only survey U.S. residents, not internationals, so whatever their estimate is, it does not include international visitors."

- **MYTH:** Claimed \$180 million of the 1% Tourism Development Fee has been collected by the City and "spent to date" by the MBACC.

Source: Email from David Hucks to John Pedersen, Bill O'Reilly & Governor Haley - June 20, 2015.

FACT: This assertion is inaccurate. Since its inception in 2009 and through March of 2015, \$124,367,438 had been collected by the City under the 1% Tourism Development Fee. Of these proceeds, \$102,985,993 has been forwarded to the MBACC and invested in tourism marketing and promotion efforts. The remaining \$21,381,445 (less an administrative fee assessed by the State) has been retained by the City for use in property tax reduction and infrastructure.

- **MYTH:** In a June 19, 2015 Myrtle Beach Herald, Hucks was paraphrased as follows; "Hucks said despite the growing number of all minorities in the tourism market, his research has shown that the current Myrtle Beach chamber's marketing efforts have not been directed to any minority audiences in any of the targeted marketing destinations."

Source: Myrtle Beach Chamber Mum on Black Chamber Request: Myrtle Beach Herald - June 19, 2015.

FACT: Visit Myrtle Beach annually implements a comprehensive, multifaceted marketing and promotions program to achieve its short-term and long-term objectives. The strategic marketing direction is comprised of broad-based mass market efforts and targeted niche market efforts that are geared toward travel lifestyle interests that also include cultural and ethnic diversification. The aim for all Myrtle Beach marketing initiatives is to effectively inspire all audiences regardless of race, age, or demographics; to communicate inclusion for any and all prospective visitors.

Guided by market research and a focus to deliver results, our destination advertising continues to adjust to reflect consumer preferences. To ensure success, both general marketing and ethnic marketing efforts focus on year-round implementation, and evolve based on seasonality and market conditions. A key component to the strategic marketing initiative is the publicity strategies that help to generate inspiration to visit. In addition to general public relations initiatives designed to best portray the Myrtle Beach area throughout the year, we have incorporated a list of minority publications focused on travel and continue outreach to them as well as ethnic bloggers and freelancers who receive ongoing public relations outreach, messaging, and invitations to attend in-market familiarization trips. Further, a portion of our media pitching efforts emphasize the rich history and culture of the Myrtle Beach area, specifically tied to the Gullah Geechee culture, both past and present. On our NYC press trip, we included two experts on Gullah Geechee history to talk to approximately 40 media folks at our press dinner. In addition, last year we secured a great media segment featuring our Gullah Geechee history on PBS' Original Food Fare (30-minute televised show).

- **MYTH:** Claimed a local group thinks free parking issues are muddled between the city, chamber, the DRC and chamber members. Also referenced a quote by Skip Hoagland stating he believes the MBACC is at the root of the city's parking issues. Accused the MBACC and City of Myrtle Beach of "work(ing) together to hide what occurs behind the scenes."

Source: Mayor, Chamber CEO Back to China: MyrtleBeachSC.com - August 31.2016.

FACT: This assertion is untrue and unsubstantiated. The Myrtle Beach Area Chamber is not involved in the management of planning of local parking.

- **MYTH:** Referenced a quote from Skip Hoagland which declared that when forensic audits were completed on the MBACC's financials, the result would be prison terms.
Source: [City Can't Get Chinese Story Straight](#) – MyrtleBeachSC.com - August 31, 2016.

FACT: The MBACC undergoes a full, independent audit each year. The results of the audit are available on the Chamber's website.

- **MYTH:** Claimed that the 'Coastal Kickback was nothing more than a crime committed by the Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce (and its most powerful members) against the merchants and residents of Myrtle Beach.
Source: [Who Pays For the Perfect Myrtle Beach Crime?](#) – MyrtleBeachSC.com - September 3, 2016.

FACT: This is false and unsubstantiated. No crime has been committed.

- **MYTH:** Claimed that advance projections from rental owners indicated that city of Myrtle Beach tourism will be down by 2 million visitors in 2016.
Source: [2016 Tourists Expected Down by 2 Million Visitors](#) – MyrtleBeachSC.com – April 22, 2016.

FACT: This statement is unfounded and incorrect. The Myrtle Beach Area has not experienced a decline of 2 million visitors. Rather, Coastal Carolina University reported that local hotel and condo occupancy rates have increased over 2015, which clearly demonstrates this allegation is not accurate.

- **MYTH:** Claimed that "According to data from the South Carolina Department of Revenue in Columbia, Accommodation Tax collections (a direct measure of tourism) for Horry County increased over the last five years from \$18,334,209 in 2012 to \$19,884,491 in 2016. This is an increase of \$1,550,282 over 5 years. Compare this to the next two largest Accommodations Tax collection counties, Beaufort and Charleston. With no TDF taxes, Beaufort increased from \$5,878,067 in 2012 to \$7,893,622 in 2016 for an increase of 34.29% equaling \$2,015,555. With no TDF, Charleston County increased from \$11,899,673 in 2012 to \$15,427,128 in 2016, an increase of 29.64% equaling \$3,527,455! So the tax is not working. Where is that money actually going? What did we get for our millions?"
Source: [Resident Says End Tourism Development Tax](#) – MyrtleBeachSC.com - September 23, 2016.

- **FACT:** According to the SC Treasurers office and SC Department of Parks Recreation and Tourism, the figures cited for 2012 accommodation tax collections are not correct, understating the growth realized. The use of 2012 ignores the previous three years of growth, totaling 29%, since the TDF was implemented. This assertion ignores the substantial growth that has occurred in other key tourism metrics such as airport deplanements, hospitality fees, admissions tax collections and tourism employment. In summary, the assertion is wrong, misguided and misleading.

- **MYTH:** Claimed County Residents pay over \$6 million to the Myrtle Beach Area Chamber annually in ATAX dollars.
Source: [Residents Beg City Leaders for Help](#) - MyrtleBeachSC.com - September 23, 2016.

- **FACT:** This assertion is untrue. Throughout our state, transient rental properties collect a 2% accommodations tax. Per state law, a portion of this must be invested in tourism marketing and publicity. Horry County invests its required promotional funds (approximately \$1.3 Million annually) in regional tourism promotion through the Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce. Since local residents rarely rent hotel rooms, the accommodations taxes are mostly paid by tourists.
- **MYTH:** Claimed the Ride 3 tax would give Brad Dean and his associates another \$600 million.
Source: Brad Dean Wants Another Penny Tax – MyrtleBeachSC.com - October 24, 2016
- **FACT:** The funds collected by RIDE 3 would not be distributed to the Chamber of Commerce or its President. Rather, the funds are paid to local government and used exclusively for the projects identified on the ballot measure approved by voters.
- **MYTH:** Claimed an “unknown group called Citizens for Better Roads has spent over \$500,000 promoting the Ride 3 Horry County tax to local residents”.
Source: Ride III May Be Better Than Ride IV - MyrtleBeachSC.com - November 5, 2016
- **FACT:** Citizens for Better Roads is not an unknown group. Rather, it is an alliance of local business groups that represent more than 60,000 employees. The makeup of Citizens for Better Roads is listed on its website, www.Ride3ForHorry.com and the group held a press conference on October 24, 2016, announcing its RIDE 3 campaign
- **MYTH:** Claimed that stateside polling has been conducted on Ride 3 and “indicates the votes of ‘no’ versus ‘yes’ are as close as any in recent history” and the Ride 3 project list “contains an array of pork barrel projects.”
Source: Who is Citizens For Better Roads - MyrtleBeachSC.com - November 7, 2016
- **FACT:** RIDE 3 is a local issue, related only to Horry County. There is no statewide polling on RIDE 3, as voters in the other 45 counties would not be familiar with RIDE 3, nor would it impact them in any significant way.
- **MYTH:** Claimed “millions of dollars are annually spent with corporate media that include: WBTV – Nextstar Broadcasting Corporation (Formerly Media General), WPDE – Sinclair Broadcasting Corporation, WMBF – Raycom Broadcasting Corporation.”
Source: When Questioned Local Leaders Hide - MyrtleBeachSC.com - November 15, 2016.
- **FACT:** This is inaccurate and very misleading. The Chamber does not spend “millions of dollars” with local TV stations. The Chamber does, however, invest in television advertising in 200+ stations located in 85 markets outside of South Carolina. Some of those television stations are owned by the same companies that own local television stations. However, local TV stations are not involved in those purchasing agreements.

- **MYTH:** With regard to the statement above, claimed “Hard statistics show that none of these ad purchases have amounted to any real return on investment since the \$175 million tax was passed into law in 2009.”
Source: [When Questioned Local Leaders Hide](#) - MyrtleBeachSC.com - November 15, 2016.
- **FACT:** This is false. Each year, an economic analysis is conducted by an independent economist, measuring the impact of the Chamber’s advertising efforts. The results of these studies are reported on our accountability website, www.MyrtleBeachAreaMarketing.com.
- **MYTH:** Again, regarding the same statements above, claimed “reports were run locally on all three major local stations and then re-broadcast in a viral way among all corporate channels of those stations. TV stations throughout NC, SC, NY, NJ, PA, VA, etc. re-broadcast each of these local “nothing to see here, poor water quality stories in Myrtle Beach are not true” reporting. These “everything is good here” reports were all based on one (1) water sample conducted at tax payer expense by the Myrtle Beach Area Chamber. For the record, DHEC tests the water every week, yet the Myrtle Beach Chamber based its entire findings on one water sample.
Source: [When Questioned Local Leaders Hide](#) - MyrtleBeachSC.com - November 15, 2016.
- **FACT:** This is incorrect. The Chamber does not purchase nor “conduct” water samples.
- **MYTH:** Claimed “The Myrtle Beach Area Chamber spent millions and used its paid corporate media partners to spread misinformation among the public at large.”
Source: [When Questioned Local Leaders Hide](#) - MyrtleBeachSC.com - November 15, 2016.
- **FACT:** This is inaccurate and very misleading. The Chamber spent approximately \$300,000 addressing misinformation about water quality, not “millions”. And, the Chamber reported accurate timely information to refute misinformation and innuendo.
- **MYTH:** Claimed “Independent monitoring agencies like Neighborhood Scout, continue to rate Myrtle Beach as the 17th most dangerous city in America.” and “Organizations (like Neighborhood Scout) pull FBI crime statistic information from arrest records made by the city.”
Source: [When Questioned Local Leaders Hide](#) - MyrtleBeachSC.com - November 15, 2016.
- **FACT:** Sources like Neighborhood Scout attempt to rank communities based on relative crime statistics. Unfortunately, their reports can be misleading as the figures used do not take into account the tourists that come to the area. This inflates the local crime statistics when compared to communities that have far fewer tourists. Even the FBI, the source of the crime data, cautions against using the data to compare one community against another.
- **MYTH:** Claimed Mayor, John Rhodes, and Chamber President, Brad Dean, have well recorded visits and business meetings with officials of the Peoples Republic of China. They both just returned from a joint 10-day trip taken in September and paid for by the Myrtle Beach Area Chamber.
Source: [When Questioned Local Leaders Hide](#) - MyrtleBeachSC.com - November 15, 2016.

- **FACT:** Brad Dean did not travel on a 10-day trip to China. Dean's trip lasted 4 days, including flying time.
The meetings that Dean and Rhodes attended together were part of the China-U.S. Tourism Leadership Summit, which included travel and tourism leaders from both nations.
- **MYTH:** Claimed the Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce paid Travel Girl Magazine writer Stephanie Oswald to attack MyrtleBeachSC.com and attached a video which discussed misinformation regarding Myrtle Beach water quality. Then subsequently claimed the MBACC used taxpayer corporate news influence to have the video broadcast as 'honest news' on hundreds of their paid mainstream media news network channels.
Source: Local Leader Attacked by Travel Writer - MyrtleBeachSC.com – December 11, 2016.
- **FACT:** This is inaccurate and misleading. The results and context of local water quality tests were misrepresented via the Internet. Stephanie Oswald, a respected journalist, assisted in clarifying the results of water quality tests and providing relevant context. Ms. Oswald did not attack anyone but, rather, explained the facts to consumers in a meaningful way.
- **MYTH:** Claimed "The Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce pays the parent news corporations Sinclair Broadcasting, Raycom Media, and Nexstar Broadcasting Group millions annually to promote the Myrtle Beach area."
Source: Local Leader Attacked by Travel Writer - MyrtleBeachSC.com – December 11, 2016.
- **FACT:** This assertion is baseless, misleading and appears to overlook the obvious: the Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce regularly invests in destination promotion as a part of its mission. The Chamber purchases advertisements on 200+ Television stations throughout the United States and Canada, some of which are owned by large corporations such as Sinclair, Raycom and Nexstar. Every major tourism destination does the same. However, the purchase of advertisements is a contractual arrangement to run pre-produced Television spots within selected programming, and does not carry any influence on local news coverage whatsoever.
- **MYTH:** Claimed that "local condo owners believe that city government, the Myrtle Beach Area Chamber, and property managers are colluding to allow city government to pollute oceanfront beaches."
Source: 20 Thousand Condo Owners Discuss Organizing - MyrtleBeachSC.com – December 14, 2016.
- **FACT:** This claim is false, slanderous and unsubstantiated. There is no organized group of condo owners that share this belief. Furthermore, there is no collusion between the parties mentioned nor is there an effort to pollute the local environment.
- **MYTH:** Claimed that when DHEC reported bacteria readings on area beaches, the Myrtle Beach Area Chamber used taxpayer dollars to pay for fake news stories across traditional media. MyrtleBeachSC.com also reported that these stories caused tourists to mistrust the Myrtle Beach brand.
Source: 20 Thousand Condo Owners Discuss Organizing - MyrtleBeachSC.com – December 14, 2016.

- **FACT:** The Chamber invested promotional funds to correct misinformation about local water quality. The suggestion that promoting accurate, fact-based information hurts a destination brand indicates the author does not have a full grasp of marketing or branding.

MYTH: Claimed that “records pulled by MyrtleBeachSC.com show that Pluff Mud Public Affairs was also paid \$60,031.00 of TDF (Tourism Development Fees) tax monies by the Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce... MyrtleBeachSC.com has been made aware that detailed registry records of these TDF fund payments are on file with Solicitor David Pascoe.”

Source: Chamber used \$60k In Tourism Dollars to Pay Money Launderer – MyrtleBeachSC.com - December 25, 2016

- **FACT:** The records referenced are not “pulled” by anyone. Rather, they are referenced on the Chamber’s website, www.MyrtleBeachAreaMarketing.com, where the Chamber publishes its expenditure of public funds, meeting minutes, research, metrics, etc. The expenditures cited represent consumer research performed for the Chamber. Copies of the research results are also on the same website.

- **MYTH:** Claimed “Myrtle Beach City Council and the Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce are once again under the scrutiny of state-wide prosecution. However, the chairman of South Carolina political watchdog Common Cause says it is likely that indicted General Assemblyman Jim Merrill and his brother, John Denver Merrill, will choose to remain silent and take the political punishment personally rather than exposing what locals believe is the true source of high crime in Myrtle Beach and South Carolina.”

Source: Shootings Continue City-Wide Over Christmas – MyrtleBeachSC.com – December 26, 2016

- **FACT:** These unsubstantiated claims are false and misleading.

- **MYTH:** Claimed that “every local corporately owned station is in on the take” and there was a circular payment system in place, described as:

- 1) “General Assembly passes a Tourism Tax...(\$25 million annually in TDF payments to MBACC)”
- 2) “The funds are then cycled into Corporate Media...(These funds are actually paid to these station’s corporate parents: Sinclair, Raycom, Nexstar - Note: these corporations have merged over time and have formerly known corporate names - Examples: Nextstar was Media General, Sinclair just recently purchased WPDE).”
- 3) “Corporate media from MB to Florence then pushes strong incumbency for those politicians already in office.”
- 4) Corporate media takes TDF (out of market monies only) and pays 20% kick back to MBACC which goes into the MBACC general fund or one of MBACC’s four PACs...”

Source: Email from David Hucks to multiple recipients – January 3, 2017

- **FACT:** This allegation is false and misleading.

- **MYTH:** Claimed that “David Korten, of the Institute for Policy Studies, a Washington, D.C think tank called the current Myrtle Beach debt situation a coming “time bomb” for local, resident Myrtle Beach homeowners.”

Source: [City Debt Called "Time Bomb" For Myrtle Beach Homeowners - MyrtleBeachSC.com](#) – March 28, 2017.

- **FACT:** David Korten responded directly to this claim in the comments section of this article, stating; *"I am David Korten. The opinion attributed to me in this article was just called to my attention. The only truth in this attribution is that I have an adjunct appointment with the Institute for Policy Studies in DC. I do not have, and never have had, any connection with, knowledge of, or opinion on this project. Nor to my knowledge have I ever had any contact with or been interviewed by David Hucks. The claimed assessment attributed to me here is totally bogus."*
- **MYTH:** Stated "Senator Lindsey Graham sent out a note to the media on Monday at 3:40 p.m. to let them know that he would be meeting with the (MBACC). He invited the media to attend documenting coverage of his visit. Then, at 5:11 p.m., the senator sent out another note: Only the first 5 minutes of the chamber meeting would be open to the media for photo ops and introductions. The rest of the meeting was held in private."
Source: [Rhodes Says He Is Running: With 5 Shootings This Week, Can Leaders Continue to Buy Elections?](#) – Myrtle BeachSC.com – April 20, 2017.
- **FACT:** Several media from throughout the Grand Strand, including The Sun News, Waccamaw Publishers, Grand Strand Happenings, WPDE, WBTW & WMBF, all attended the meeting with Sen. Lindsey Graham at the offices of the Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce. No media were asked to leave midway through the meeting. In fact, nearly all media stayed for the entire meeting and covered it in full.
- **MYTH:** Claimed "Both local elected leaders and questionable Myrtle Beach area associated groups [PACs] of whom merchants have expressed as having close ties to Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce board members have used Quinn's political marketing firm for ongoing political attack ads hostile to any challenger willing to run against incumbents. Those elected incumbents feed this group of insiders over \$30 million of corporate tax welfare annually. These funds are paid to insiders by way of a local ad tax that Senator Luke Rankin helped establish and local Myrtle Beach city councilmen voted into law without a public referendum."
Source: [Indicted Representative Helped Local Leaders Stay In Office](#) – Myrtle BeachSC.com – May 19, 2017.
- **FACT:** The PACs referenced are administered and led by boards of directors, as per state laws and guidelines, not by the Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce. We are not aware of the PACs using the services of Richard Quinn and Associates, although that is perfectly legal for them to do so. The tourism development fee was implemented in full accordance with state law and is used for tourism promotion, tourism-related infrastructure and property tax relief.
- **MYTH:** Claimed "S.C. Senator Luke Rankin successfully hired Richard Quinn's [father of Rick Quinn] firm last year to belittle Governor Nikki Haley supported challenger Scott Pyle with a series of Gomer Pyle T.V. ads largely run on local Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce corporately funded media."

Source: *Indicted Representative Helped Local Leaders Stay In Office* – Myrtle BeachSC.com – May 19, 2017.

- **FACT:** The ads referenced are not related to the Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce. The notion that local media are funded by the Chamber is misleading and inaccurate.
- **MYTH:** Claimed “Recent sources have also expressed concerns of a Chamber of Commerce suggestion that Councilman Wallace and Councilman Lowder align themselves with a Mayoral challenger to ensure they each get re-elected. This would allow Brad Dean, Chamber C.E.O. to continue to maintain control of the votes on city council.”
Source: *City Councilman Randal Wallace – Key Influencer* – MyrtleBeachSC.com – June 1, 2017
- **FACT:** This is a misguided allegation with zero truth, accuracy or verification.
- **MYTH:** Claimed “The Myrtle Beach area Chamber will be allowed to use approximately \$27 plus million in advertising funds with little to no oversight. No public audit will be done by any independent group on how these monies are spent or whether the spending is effective or not.”
Source: *City Grants \$30 Million In Unchecked Spending Authority To The Myrtle Beach Chamber* – MyrtleBeachSC.com – June 13, 2017
- **FACT:** This is inaccurate and very misleading. The Chamber is subject to guidelines set forth in state law which restrict the use of these funds; the Chamber adheres to these guidelines when investing all public funds. The Chamber is audited by an independent CPA firm. A copy of the Chamber’s full audit, including all financial statements and notes, is made available on the Chamber’s website. Furthermore, the Chamber receives an economic conversion study which measures the effectiveness of its advertising, performed annually by an economist. These results are also made available to the public on the Chamber’s accountability website, MyrtleBeachAreaMarketing.com , which includes details of the Chamber’s public fund expenditures, research, meeting minutes and other information.
- **MYTH:** Claimed “The Myrtle Beach Area Chamber associated PACs have spent whatever funds necessary needed to keep incumbents in local political office.”
Source: *City Grants \$30 Million In Unchecked Spending Authority To The Myrtle Beach Chamber* – MyrtleBeachSC.com – June 13, 2017
- **FACT:** This is inaccurate. The Myrtle Beach Area Chamber does not manage, own or operate any Political Action Campaign (PAC), nor has it ever done so.
- **MYTH:** Claimed that “As MyrtleBeachSC.com covered this past Spring, Mr. Dean and the Myrtle Beach Area Chamber is now caught red handed paying felon Jim Merrill \$60,000.00 of those very tax monies provided by the S.C. General Assembly. At the request of the State Law Enforcement Division of S.C., MyrtleBeachSC.com turned those records directly over to the Pascoe investigation ourselves last Spring.”

Source: Will Convicted S.C. Representative Bring Down State-Wide System? MyrtleBeachSC.com, 9/4/17

- **FACT:** This is not true. The Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce did not pay any funds to Rep. Merrill or any other member of the South Carolina General Assembly. On four occasions, the Chamber purchased consumer research through Pluff Mudd Affairs, a South Carolina corporation that provides market research. Mr. Merrill is (or was) one of the owners of that firm. The records mentioned are listed on our online accountability report, and copies of the research purchased are also included on our accountability website. There is no investigation of this matter and, if anyone wanted to view the records of payment or related documents, they would simply visit our website, where this information is published in the interest of transparency.