

## **SWFL Regional Days in Tallahassee Celebrates 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

The SWFL Regional Days in Tallahassee celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> year anniversary with a visit to Tallahassee March 23-25 for the 2025 Legislative Session. The trip brought together representatives from the Southwest Florida Alliance of Chambers, Leadership Lee County, and local businesses to advocate for the SWFL region through meetings with our regions' elected state officials. This year the group of 30 local leaders were able to meet with Senators Kathleen Passidomo and Jonathan Martin, as well as House Representatives Yvette Benarroch and Adam Botana.

The group was also visited by Samantha Padgett, VP of Government Affairs for the Florida Restaurant & Lodging Association, for an overview on the priorities of FRLA and the impacts of the industry on Florida's economy. Former Secretary of Economic Opportunity and Former House Majority leader, Dane Eagle of Ballard Partners led a discussion on the legislative process and how bills are designed, reviewed and passed in a typical legislative session. Andrew Wiggins of The Florida Chamber shared some of the priorities of the state chamber, including school readiness and childcare costs, among other issues. Our SWFL delegation of leaders also had the opportunity to support FGCU through attendance at the reception for FGCU Day at the Capital, which was sponsored by the SWFL Alliance of Chambers.

This marked the 25<sup>th</sup> trip that local advocates have taken to the Capital to share with our elected officials the needs and challenges faced by our Region. A variety of businesses shared their concerns regarding issues such as water quality, insurance coverage, business taxes, sustainable development, and healthcare concerns. Representing the SWFL Alliance of Chambers were staff and board members from The Chamber of Southwest Florida, Chamber of Commerce of Cape Coral, Fort Myers Beach Chamber of Commerce and the Greater Fort Myers Chamber of Commerce. Members of the 2025 Leadership Lee County class were also in attendance.

Southwest Florida Regional Days in Tallahassee began in 2000 through an initiative of the Chamber of Commerce of Cape Coral. For many years the program was led by former Cape Coral Mayor, Joe Mazurkiewicz and Heather Mazurkiewicz, now Public Information Officer at North Collier Fire Control Rescue District. In more recent years, it has been administered by The Chamber of Southwest Florida in cooperation with the SWFL Alliance of Chambers. The program's goal is to empower local business leaders to advocate for the regions' interests at the state level by learning how state government works and engaging with our state senators and representatives.



**Photo Caption:** Southwest Florida Regional Days in Tallahassee Participants gathered on the steps of the Florida Historical Capital Museum to celebrate SWFL Regional Days 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary trip.