

# TourismMarketing Today

The Official Newsletter of Destinations Florida | [www.DestinationsFlorida.org](http://www.DestinationsFlorida.org) | April 2023



Would you like to distribute a PDF of this newsletter to your TDC, elected leaders, or industry members? Visit the Destinations Florida members-only website to get the PDF for distribution: <https://www.destinationsflorida.org/tourism-marketing-today>

## Florida Tourism Day 2023



Tourism colleagues gather in Tallahassee on Wednesday, March 22, to educate the Legislature, media, and all Floridians about the importance of Florida's tourism industry.

## HSMAI Adrian Awards Recognize Excellence Paul Beirnes Named a 2022 HSMAI 'Top 25' Extraordinary Mind Florida DMOs Claim 42 Adrians

The Hospitality Sales & Marketing Association International (HSMAI) presented the 2022 Adrian Awards on February 23, 2023, at the JW Marriott L.A. LIVE in Los Angeles.

Paul Beirnes, executive director of the Naples, Marco Island, Everglades CVB, was named one of the "Top 25" Extraordinary Minds for 2022. This is the 20<sup>th</sup>

year HSMAI has compiled the list, which annually recognizes exemplary achievement and leadership in hospitality sales, marketing, revenue optimization, and distribution. Beirnes is highly accomplished as an innovative destination marketing and brand strategist who has consistently

*HSMAI ADRIAN AWARDS continues on pg. 4*

## All Floridians

by Robert Skrob



With more than half of the members of the Florida Legislature new to their positions, educating

them about what you do is as important than ever.

We are focusing our messages on the value tourism brings to *all* Floridians—from the many jobs created within the industry as well as the tremendous benefits all Floridians experience as a result of Florida's vibrant tourism industry.

In the months after the pandemic, the connection between economic growth and

*E.D.'s MESSAGE... continues on pg. 3*

# Support from our partners makes Destinations Florida's industry & legislative representation possible

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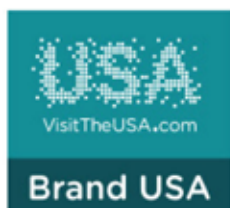
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# HAPPY Birthday

Misty Johantgen  
April 14



**DESTINATIONS  
FLORIDA**  
TourismMarketing  
Today

The Official Newsletter of  
Destinations Florida  
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Robert Skrob,  
Executive Director

Suzanne Hurst, CAE,  
Deputy Executive Director

MaryLu Winchester,  
Member Database

#### On the Cover

Florida's Paradise Coast is renowned for its 30-mile coastline ribboned with pristine white sand beaches along the Gulf of Mexico. On the cover is Marco Island Beach where shelling, bird watching, and breathtaking sunsets await visitors. Marco Island is the longest island in the Ten Thousand Islands.



## In the News

### Visit Jackson County Welcomes Chastity Sheffield to the Team

The Jackson County TDC is no longer a one-woman show! Chastity Sheffield joined the JCTDC in February as the visitors center coordinator. Sheffield brings over 16 years of tourism experience from her time with VISIT FLORIDA and the 231 Welcome Center. Chastity shares, "The industry has welcomed me back and warmed my heart. Everyone has been so excited to have me back to support the tourism industry. I'm looking forward to seeing Jackson County tourism grow." [VisitJacksonCountyFla.com](http://VisitJacksonCountyFla.com)



Chastity Sheffield

### Visit PC Beach Sports Marketing Director Named to Sports ETA Board

Visit Panama City Beach is pleased to announce that Chris O'Brien, director of sports marketing, has recently been elected to the Sports Events and Tourism Association (Sports ETA) Board of Directors. As the nonprofit 501(c)(3) trade association for the sports events and tourism industry in the United States, Sports ETA is the most essential resource for sports commissions, sports destinations, sports event owners, and industry partners. [VisitPanamaCityBeach.com](http://VisitPanamaCityBeach.com)



Chris O'Brien

### Greater Miami CVB Names New Director of Travel Industry Sales

The Greater Miami CVB has named Carolyn Corrigan director of travel industry sales for Latin America & Caribbean. Corrigan will promote Greater Miami and Miami Beach to travel industry professionals, joining a marketing and tourism team that includes a global network representing 50 countries. Corrigan brings nearly 30 years of hospitality experience to the GMCVB and extensive knowledge of the region and market. Most recently, she served as international business development director for Costa Cruises and Carnival Cruise Lines. [MiamiandMiamiBeach.com](http://MiamiandMiamiBeach.com)



Carolyn Corrigan

### E.D.'s MESSAGE... continued from pg. 1

visitors was obvious. Visitors flocked to Florida generating positive tax collections and job growth.

Florida's growth has been a standout over the last three years.

Many have already forgotten. It may be hard to imagine, but some lawmakers take Florida's tourism industry for granted. They don't see the connection between marketing and Florida's growing market share.

What's worse, some question whether the tourism industry

provides benefits to Floridians employed outside the industry.

The task of educating lawmakers is never complete. The Florida Legislature is more of a parade than an audience. Members of the Florida Legislature flow through their offices. As long-term members move on to other offices, new lawmakers move into those seats and ascend into leadership.

Thank you for all you do to help educate your lawmakers. Your efforts are more important than ever.



demonstrated the ability to elevate the performance of global travel brands. His career includes leadership roles with The Walt Disney Company, Visit Orlando, and Hilton Worldwide. Additionally,

he serves on the board of directors of the Florida Restaurant & Lodging Association, Florida Gulf Coast University President's Advisors Circle on Workforce and Economic Development, and is a recipient of the HSMIA President's Award (Recovery Campaign).



HSMIA Chair John Washko congratulates Executive Director Paul Beirnes of the Naples, Marco Island, Everglades CVB on being named a 2022 HSMIA "Top 25" Extraordinary Mind.

Congratulations to all of our Florida DMO award winners!

## GOLD WINNERS

### Discover The Palm Beaches

**Entry:** Travel + Leisure: A New Leaf

**Category:** Feature Placement Print – Consumer Magazine or Newspaper

### Fort Myers – Islands, Beaches, & Neighborhoods

**Entry:** Matador Network

**Category:** Feature Placement Online – Consumer Media

### Visit Orlando

**Entry:** Alexa, launch Visit Orlando!

**Category:** Innovation

### Visit St. Pete/Clearwater

**Entry:** Unwind & Be Kind Spring Travel Campaign

**Category:** Corporate Social Responsibility

### Visit Tampa Bay

**Entry:** Accessibility in Tampa Bay

**Category:** Influencer Marketing

## SILVER WINNERS

### Amelia Island CVB

**Entry:** Amelia Island Weather Trigger

**Category:** Innovation

### Amelia Island CVB

**Entry:** Naturally Amelia Island

**Category:** FEATURE PLACEMENT ONLINE – Consumer Media

### Destin-Fort Walton Beach

**Entry:** Little Adventures in Destin-Fort Walton Beach

**Category:** Print Collateral

### Destin-Fort Walton Beach

**Entry:** Little Adventures in Destin-Fort Walton Beach

**Category:** Content Marketing

### Discover The Palm Beaches

**Entry:** "The Original. The One. The Only." The Palm Beaches Leisure Campaign

**Category:** Business to Consumer

### Discover The Palm Beaches

**Entry:** Golden Age of Travel in NYC

**Category:** SPECIAL EVENT

### Discover The Palm Beaches

**Entry:** Family-Friendly Summer Travel in The Palm Beaches

**Category:** MARKETING PROGRAM – Consumer

### Experience Kissimmee

**Entry:** Florida Summer Shoulder Season Campaign

**Category:** Multimedia Multiple Channels

### Fort Myers – Islands, Beaches and Neighborhoods

**Entry:** Good Day Direct-Mail Piece

**Category:** Print Collateral

### Fort Myers – Islands, Beaches and Neighborhoods

**Entry:** Good Day Launch

**Category:** Multimedia Multiple Channels

### Discover The Palm Beaches

**Entry:** Integrated Marketing Campaign:

The Palm Beaches "Between-The-Sessions"

Groups & Meetings Campaign

**Category:** Business to Business

### Visit Tampa Bay

**Entry:** Accessible Travel @ VisitTampaBay.com

**Category:** Web Site

## BRONZE WINNERS

### Amelia Island CVB

**Entry:** Amelia Island Social Media Instant Experience Travel Guides

**Category:** Social Media Campaign

**Amelia Island CVB****Entry:** Amelia Island's NY Times Great Getaways Emails**Category:** Multimedia Single Channel**Amelia Island CVB****Entry:** Amelia Island Inspired Meetings**Category:** Business to Business**Destin-Fort Walton Beach****Entry:** Little Adventures in Destin-Fort Walton Beach**Category:** Television**Destin-Fort Walton Beach****Entry:** Little Adventures in Destin-Fort Walton Beach**Category:** Innovation**Discover The Palm Beaches****Entry:** "The Original. The One. The Only."**Connected TV Strategy****Category:** Connected TV/Streaming/Linear**Discover The Palm Beaches****Entry:** "Planet + People" Infographic with PCMA**Category:** Consumer/Group Sales/Travel Trade**Discover The Palm Beaches****Entry:** The Palm Beaches Restaurant Month 2022**Category:** Content Marketing**Discover The Palm Beaches****Entry:** The Palm Beaches Brand Campaign**Category:** RE-LAUNCH OF EXISTING PRODUCT**Discover The Palm Beaches****Entry:** Epic-curean Success**Category:** Innovation**Discover The Palm Beaches****Entry:** ELLE Escapes: Palm Beach**Category:** FEATURE PLACEMENT ONLINE – Consumer Media**Discover The Palm Beaches****Entry:** Travel + Leisure: Younger Travelers Are Flocking to Palm Beach**Category:** FEATURE PLACEMENT ONLINE – Consumer Media**Experience Kissimmee****Entry:** Destination Arrival Prediction Leads to Lower CPA for DMO Experience Kissimmee Post +42% Increase in Partner Referrals**Category:** Technology**Florida's Sports Coast (Pasco County)****Entry:** FLSportsCoast.com**Category:** Web Site**Fort Myers – Islands, Beaches and Neighborhoods****Entry:** Accidentally Wes Anderson showcases**Fort Myers, Florida****Category:** Social Media Campaign**Fort Myers – Islands, Beaches and Neighborhoods****Entry:** Good Day Ambassadors Influencer Campaign**Category:** Influencer Marketing**Visit Lauderdale****Entry:** AFAR Cruise Insert**Category:** Print Collateral**Visit Lauderdale****Entry:** "Welcome" Campaign**Category:** Business to Consumer**Visit Lauderdale****Entry:** Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show**Category:** SPECIAL EVENT**Visit Orlando****Entry:** Orlando's Rich Black History**Category:** Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Marketing**Visit Orlando and Orlando Economic Partnership****Entry:** Launching Orlando's New "Unbelievably Real" Brand**Category:** NEW OPENING/LAUNCH**Visit Panama City Beach****Entry:** REAL FUN REAL FAST**Category:** Social Media Campaign**Visit Tampa Bay****Entry:** Visit Tampa Bay welcomes meetings with their "Meet Confidently" campaign**Category:** Consumer/Group Sales/Travel Trade**Visit Tampa Bay****Entry:** Unlock the Block**Category:** SPECIAL EVENT**Walton County Tourism Department****Entry:** "Moments" Print Campaign**Category:** Consumer/Group Sales/Travel Trade



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- VISIT FLORIDA's plans for helping destinations bring more customers to our communities



**REGISTER NOW AT [DESTINATIONSFLORIDA.ORG](https://www.destinationsflorida.org)**

# SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

Wednesday, May 31, 2023

10:00 AM – 1:00 PM	Board of Directors Meeting and Working Lunch
2:00 PM – 2:45 PM	Preparing Your Team for the DMO Emergency Response Role
2:45 PM – 3:30 PM	It's Time for DMOcracy – Community Engagement, A Tourism Imperative
3:45 PM – 5:30 PM	Destination Marketing State of the State Report
5:30 PM – 6:30 PM	Welcome Reception at Margaritaville Resort Orlando
6:30 PM	Dinner on own

Thursday, June 1, 2023

8:00 AM – 9:00 AM	Networking Breakfast	
9:00 AM – 9:45 AM	Winning Big by Promoting Small	Vacation Decision- Making Among Young Millennials & Gen Zers
10:00 AM – 10:45 AM	Out-of-the-Box Marketing Is a Strategy, Not a Whim	Behind the Curtain: How the Travel Industry (and Others) Spend Their Digital Ad Dollars—and What to Do About It!
11:00 AM – 11:45 AM	Cultivating an Iconic Brand Through Partnership	Generative AI for Destination Marketing Organizations
11:45 AM – 1:00 PM	Networking Luncheon	
1:00 PM – 1:45 PM	A Picture Is Worth a Thousand Words, but These Are Worth a Million	Turning Insights Into Action: Understanding Evolving Traveler Expectations to Capture Demand
2:00 PM – 2:45 PM	The One Where You Learn How to Attract New Travelers on Any Budget	Destination ROI: How to Drive Measurable Performance With Audience-Driven Strategies
3:00 PM – 3:45 PM	Destination Advocacy and Tourism Branding	The Effects of Destination Competitiveness Stimuli on Visitors' Decision-Making
5:00 PM – 8:30 PM	Connect Evening Event	Sponsored by <b>Connect</b>

Friday, June 2, 2023

8:00 AM – 9:00 AM	Networking Breakfast	
9:00 AM – 10:00 AM	State of the Hotel Industry for the U.S. and Florida Vacation Rental Data: Beyond the Numbers	
10:00 AM – 10:30 AM	Legislative Update With Mat Forrest	
10:30 AM – 11:30 AM	How DMOs and VISIT FLORIDA Can Work Together to Bring More Customers to Our Communities	<b>VISITFLORIDA.</b>
12:00 Noon	Adjourn	

This meeting is made possible by the support of our Partners:

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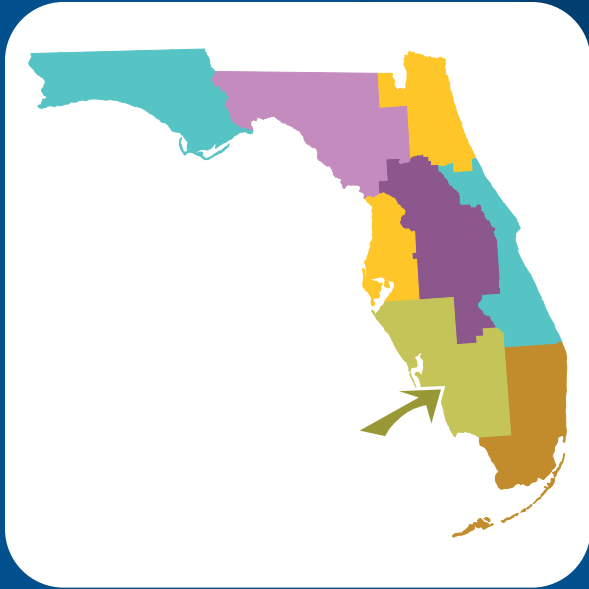


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- Bradenton Area CVB
- Hendry County TDC
- Lee County VCB
- Naples, Marco Island, Everglades CVB
- Punta Gorda/Englewood Beach VCB
- Visit Sarasota County

## Bradenton Area Breaks Records, Unveils Exciting Plans for 2023-24

More than four million people visited the Bradenton Area in 2022, including one million overnight visitors who created an estimated \$1.5 billion in total economic impact. Of that total, \$28.6 million in tourist tax revenues were collected and will be reinvested in beach renourishment, tourism-related capital improvements, and marketing campaigns to promote the destination to future travelers. The Sarasota Bradenton International Airport experienced its own record-breaking pace: passengers traveling through SRQ in 2022 surpassed 3.8 million, a new annual record.

For all the record-breaking excitement in 2022, there's even more to look forward to in 2023-24 in the Bradenton Area. This summer, visitors will be able to hop aboard a brand new water ferry service connecting downtown Bradenton to Anna Maria Island via the beautiful Manatee River. Early 2024 will bring a new Marriott hotel slated to open adjacent to the Bradenton Area Convention Center. When completed, the hotel will feature 252 guest rooms, a full-service restaurant and more than 10,000 sq. ft. of meeting space. Guests can enjoy a rooftop lounge deck overlooking the Manatee River, a fitness center, an outdoor pool, and 32,420 sq. ft. of outside event space.



The new Marriott hotel will be adjacent to the Bradenton Area Convention Center.



The new Marriott hotel will include a gathering area around the outdoor pool.





## Lee County VCB's Recovery Efforts Tap Into Fondness for Destination

The Lee County VCB's recovery campaign was based on the knowledge that while some of the destination's landscape may look different post-Hurricane Ian, the way Fort Myers' islands, beaches, and neighborhoods make people feel hasn't changed.

The VCB is sharing personal stories from destination ambassadors and inviting visitors to create their own #MyFortMyers memories. The campaign was designed to tap into the emotional attachment and fondness people have for the destination and, by doing so, reignite their passion and commitment to visiting.

"Tourists are partners in rebuilding our community," said Tamara Pigott, Lee County VCB executive director. "We recognize that the hard work and progress taking place now is what helps



An example of the supporting creative from the "My Fort Myers" campaign on [LeeVCB.com](https://www.leevcb.com)

bring visitors back to support our economy. They are a vital and important part of our recovery."

The VCB's *Road to Recovery* videos give industry partners the opportunity to tell their stories, and the Shellcast podcast episodes have celebrated milestones since the Sept. 28 hurricane, such as the reopening of the Sanibel Causeway.

The latest figures indicate that 68.6% of Lee County's guest rooms are now open for a total of 9,825 rooms.

In recent awards news, the VCB took home one gold, two silver, and two bronze statues at the 65<sup>th</sup> HSMIA Adrian Awards.



## Now Accepting Donations for the 2023 Dave Warren Silent Auction

Destinations Florida created the Dave Warren Scholarship Program in our continuing efforts to improve awareness about destination marketing. Named for Dave Warren, a destination marketing pioneer, this program awards scholarships to hospitality students and tourism professionals who want to advance their knowledge of the tourism industry.

To raise funds for the Dave Warren Scholarship, we are requesting donations from Destinations Florida members to the Silent Auction that will be held during the Destination Marketing Summit. Contributions of all kinds will be gladly accepted, such as weekend packages in your destination or gift baskets with items that showcase your unique location. Media agencies often contribute ad space in their publications for our DMOs to bid on. Our past auctions have raised over \$55,000 for this fund.

All Marketing Summit attendees are invited to bid to win exciting destination getaways, valuable ad space, and other great prizes.



**Donations Deadline: May 19, 2023**  
[DestinationsFlorida.org/23SilentAuction](https://DestinationsFlorida.org/23SilentAuction)



## Florida's Paradise Coast Enjoys Record High Economic Impact

Unprecedented visitation and ADR across the destination were the hallmarks of an outstanding and memorable 2022 for Florida's Paradise Coast. It would be remiss not to acknowledge the challenges the destination faced in the aftermath of Hurricane Ian, but the unwavering resolve and resilience of the community put recovery efforts on a highly successful trajectory that led to a swift recovery.

Economic impact hit an all-time high of \$2.79 billion, up 12.3% from 2021. This was supported by a 7.7% increase in room nights that generated \$2.67 million and a 3% increase in overall visitation that topped out at \$1.63 million for the year.

In support of the recovery efforts, the CVB quickly implemented daily communications with their hotel partners that presented a lifeline for first responders in need of accommodations. Updates on the CVB's website kept critical information flowing and allowed industry partners to experience every small "win" as restaurants, retail shops, hotels, and attractions began to reopen.

"We met the challenges of 2022 head on with outstanding results. I am proud of our community and industry for their remarkable response," said Paul Beirnes, executive director of the Naples, Marco Island, Everglades CVB. "Leisure and group visitors are the backbone of success for our hotels, restaurants, retailers, and attractions. Our intent was to keep our industry partners working and our visitors informed that our destination was open and ready to welcome them back."

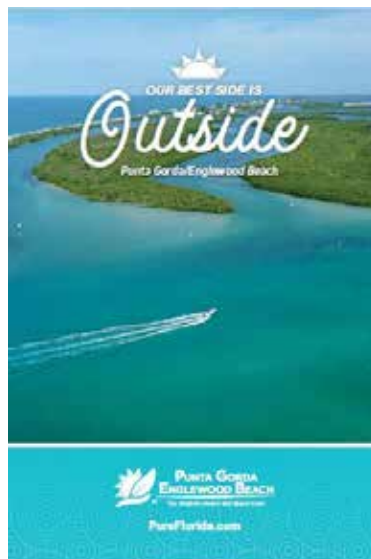


A sampling of the creative from Florida's Paradise Coast new "ONLY" ad campaign

## Punta Gorda/Englewood Beach Has Another Record-Setting Year

As travel demand returned, Punta Gorda/Englewood Beach captured the sentiment with a new advertising campaign—Find Your Outside. As an outdoor destination, the campaign highlighted the variety of activities the area has to offer—from beach, to watersports and fishing, to dining and family time, it encouraged personal discovery.

Fiscal Year 2022 TDT collections increased by 27.8%—another record year with 972,000 visitors and for the first time exceeding \$1 billion in total economic impact.



The Punta Gorda/Englewood Beach Visitor Guide beckons visitors to "Find Your Outside."

and development of new sales pieces for meetings and leisure sales.

The destination will enjoy the opening of the new Sunseeker Resort in October 2023 and will feature nearly 600 hotel rooms, more than 180 extended-stay suites, 60,000 sq. ft. of meeting and event space, a golf course, and 10 food and beverage concepts.

Allegiant Air continues to grow and serves Punta Gorda Airport from more than 50 cities.



Pure Florida Meetings invites groups to host their meetings in Punta Gorda/Englewood Beach.

Following the successful redesign of the website in late 2021, the evolution of the brand continued with a redesigned Visitor Guide





## Outdoor Attractions and Sports Draw Visitors to Sarasota County

Visit Sarasota County continues to emphasize the location's unique outdoor nature attractions and activities coinciding with recent expansions in the area. Celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Marie Selby Botanical Gardens will complete the first phase of a more than \$50 million update this fall, which will include a new Welcome Center, a cutting-edge Plant Research Center, and a Living Energy Access Facility (LEAF), making it the world's first net positive botanical garden. Additionally, The Bay is a recently opened bayfront park that includes more than 15 acres of revitalized greenspace, a larger-than-life Ibis playground, Common Ground lawns, a Mangrove Bayou Walkway, and unbelievable sunset views.



The Bay's phase 1 grand opening took place in late 2022. The "park for all" will continue to grow and promote conservancy in the county.

Sarasota County remains to be a perfect place to host a wealth of sporting events as well. They are looking forward to hosting the USA Swimming Open Water National Championship in April. The coming summer looks great and full of big events, too. These events include the USRowing Youth National Championship, the American Canoe Association Canoe and Kayak Sprint National Championship, the U.S. Dragon Boat Federation Club Crew Nationals, and the U.S. Masters Swimming National Championship. The future of sports in Sarasota County looks great!



U.S. Dragon Boat race in 2022 at Nathan Benderson Park, a unique 600-acre community park that includes North America's premier 2,000-meter sprint rowing course

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## Tourist Development Tax on Space for RVs

by Steven M. Hogan

We have recently gotten some questions on whether the Tourist Development Tax applies to space rented out for recreational vehicles. In light of that, this month's column revisits this TDT topic.

In general, a facility that rents space for RVs is subject to the TDT. The TDT statute states this clearly, in that "[i]t is declared to be the intent of the Legislature that every person who rents, leases, or lets for consideration any living quarters or accommodations in any . . . recreational vehicle park . . . is subject to [the Tourist Development Tax], unless such person rents, leases or lets for consideration any living quarters or accommodations which are exempt according to the provisions of chapter 212." § 125.0104(a)1., Fla. Stat. (emphasis added).

This definition leads us to Chapter 212 of the Florida Statutes to review whether any exemptions might apply. Section 212.02(10), which includes leases of space in "trailer camps" as taxable leases. § 212.02(10), Fla. Stat.

The term "trailer camp" is further defined to mean "a place where space is offered, with or without service facilities, by any persons or municipality to the public for the parking and accommodation of two or more automobile trailers, mobile homes, or recreational vehicles which are used for lodging, for either a direct money consideration or an indirect benefit to the lessor or owner in connection with a related business, such space being hereby defined as living quarters,

and the rental price thereof shall include all service charges paid to the lessor." § 212.02(10) (f), Fla. Stat. (emphasis added).

Further, section 212.03, which addresses transient rentals, states that "every person is exercising a taxable privilege who engages in the business of renting, leasing, letting, or granting a license to use any living quarters or sleeping or housekeeping accommodations in, from, or a part of, or in connection with any hotel, apartment house, roominghouse, tourist or trailer camp, mobile home park, recreational vehicle park, condominium, or timeshare resort." § 212.03(1)(a), Fla. Stat. (emphasis added).

Based on these statutes, rental of an overnight space in an RV park is a rental or lease of a living space within the contemplation of the TDT statute that is subject to tax. As always, legal counsel should be sought on specific questions, as particular facts can change the analysis.

**Steven M. Hogan** is a shareholder with the Ausley McMullen law firm in Tallahassee. Destinations Florida has retained Mr. Hogan to consult with our members on the Tourist Development Tax and related legal issues. You can contact Mr. Hogan at [shogan@ausley.com](mailto:shogan@ausley.com). Nothing in this article constitutes legal advice. Please seek counsel of your own choosing before making decisions that impact yourself or your organization.



Steven M. Hogan



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## Record Crowds Enjoy the 71<sup>st</sup> Annual 12 Hours of Sebring

Sebring's largest annual event, the 12 Hours of Sebring, took place the third weekend in March with a record crowd convening at the legendary Sebring International Raceway (*SebringRaceway.com*), known as the birthplace of endurance auto racing in North America. Now in its 71<sup>st</sup> year, the event takes place over five days and includes a variety of car races, concerts, fan activations, car manufacturer displays, and fan hospitality. *VisitSebring.com*



Celebrating in the Winner's Circle!

## Jacksonville Hosts Exciting Running Events

Jacksonville continues to be the go-to destination for exciting running events and races and has already hosted several events in 2023. In February, Jacksonville held the DONNA Marathon Weekend, which had a participant from every state, and the Spartan Race Weekend, a popular obstacle course race. The Gate River Run, the nation's largest 15K, sprinted its way through downtown Jacksonville and its bridges in March. Jacksonville's mild, beautiful weather in the winter months makes the city a perfect location for these outdoor events! *VisitJacksonville.com*



The DONNA Marathon is the only marathon in the U.S. dedicated to breast cancer research and care/benefits.  
Photo: The DONNA Foundation

## New FloridaKeys TV Streaming Channel

The Florida Keys & Key West—with Emmy winner Chad Crawford and Crawford Entertainment, creators of the *How to Do Florida* TV series—is launching FloridaKeys TV, an Over the Top (OTT) streaming channel. The channel is to be on Amazon Fire Mobile and TV, Android Mobile and TV, Apple TV, Apple IOS for iPhone and iPad, Roku, Samsung, and LG. A unique channel logo was created, and a public launch was set for March 29. *Fla-Keys.com*



The new FloridaKeys TV streaming channel app icon

## Visit Pensacola Spreads the Sunshine With NWFL Beaches in Chicago, New York, and Toronto Adventure Shows

Visit Pensacola had a busy winter sharing The Way to Beach™. In partnership with the Northwest Florida Beaches Coalition, Visit Pensacola and seven other Florida destinations banded together for a larger, more cohesive regional presentation, showcasing the region's underwater Gulf life through a touch tank and an inflatable Bote activation. So far, the coalition has been showcased in Chicago, New York, and Toronto. Upcoming shows include Calgary, Montreal, an activation in Dallas, and DEMA. *VisitPensacola.com*



Eight counties. One Adventure Destination. The NWFL Beaches team gathers in Toronto to create more relationships and share the NWFL sunshine.





## FLLUXE Arts Festival Takes Over the Streets of Downtown Panama City

FLLUXE Arts Festival brightened the streets of Downtown Panama City in March with vibrantly colored murals highlighting the funky, salty, and soulful vibe of the city. Nationally renowned street artists created 3D drawings that emerged off the ground with optical illusions festival-goers could jump into. Combining street painting, digital projection, music, and dance, FFLUXE attracted more than 5,000 people to Historic Downtown, where they enjoyed the festival and shopping and dining at local establishments. [DestinationPanamaCity.com](http://DestinationPanamaCity.com)



FLLUXE Arts Festival draws 5,000+ people to Historic Downtown Panama City.

## Palm Coast and the Flagler Beaches Releases New Dune Education Video

Palm Coast and the Flagler Beaches is proud to announce the release of its new *Dodge the Dunes* video, part of an ongoing conservation and awareness campaign to protect the area's fragile sea dunes. The two-minute video touches on the importance of the vegetation to the area's ecosystem as well as "Do's and Don'ts of Beach Access." Additional campaign assets include roadside signage, a digital parking map, and print collateral. [VisitFlagler.com](http://VisitFlagler.com)



A still image from the *Dodge the Dunes* video, which features a "meteorologist" who uses humor to entertain and educate on the importance of protecting the dunes.

## FFCG Celebrates 30 Years With 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Day at THE PLAYERS Event

Florida's First Coast of Golf had a record turnout with 100 regional golf industry leaders in attendance, representing Northeast Florida's visitor bureaus and VISIT FLORIDA, golf courses, hotels, resorts, vacation homes, the Superstore, distilleries, media publishers, golf operators, and special guests. The event opened up with a few words from Jared Rice, executive director of THE PLAYERS Championship, and led into a Q&A with PGA Tour professional player Joel Dahmen and his caddie, Geno Bonnalie. Joel and Geno are featured in Netflix's hit docuseries, *Full Swing*. [Florida-Golf.org](http://Florida-Golf.org)



THE PLAYERS draws crowds to TPC at Sawgrass in Ponte Vedra Beach.

## Visit Orlando Expands International Reach in Canada

Part of Visit Orlando's strategic plan is to expand its reach in international leisure markets. For the first time since 2014, Visit Orlando advertised in the Québec market by debuting the new "Unbelievably Real" brand as "Incroyablement Vrai." Canadian residents were also introduced to the fully immersive audio tourism experience utilizing Amazon's Alexa voice technology. By saying "Alexa, launch Visit Orlando," Canadian and U.S. audiences can experience highlights of undiscovered activities throughout the destination. [VisitOrlando.com](http://VisitOrlando.com)



By saying, "Alexa, launch Visit Orlando," users can experience Orlando's ecotourism attractions from hiking to airboat rides, celebrity-chef dining, and local arts and culture from museums to live performances.





## Daytona Beach Bike Week Draws Hundreds of Thousands to Volusia County

The 82<sup>nd</sup> annual Daytona Beach Bike Week was held March 3-12 and attracted hundreds of thousands of motorcycle enthusiasts to the Daytona Beach area and Volusia County for the 10-day rally. Hot spots were Daytona International Speedway, Main Street, and Midtown in Daytona Beach; U.S. 1 North, the Scenic Loop, and Teddy Morse's Destination Daytona in Ormond Beach; State Road 44 and U.S. 1 in New Smyrna Beach; and DeLand. Next year's rally is set for March 1-10. [DaytonaBeach.com](http://DaytonaBeach.com)



The Daytona Beach area and Volusia County hosts hundreds of thousands of motorcycle enthusiasts for the 82<sup>nd</sup> annual Daytona Beach Bike Week.  
Photo: Daytona Beach Area CVB

## Stuart Named a Best Coastal Small Town

The City of Stuart was recently voted one of the Best Coastal Small Towns during the 2023 10Best Readers' Choice Awards, organized by *USA Today*. Stuart was nominated by a panel of travel experts and celebrated for its under-the-radar charm, natural outdoor wonders, eclectic dining scene, and impressive attractions. Readers from across the country submitted their votes throughout February, ultimately helping Stuart earn the #2 spot. [DiscoverMartin.com](http://DiscoverMartin.com)



The Martin County Office of Tourism & Marketing encourages people to vote through original social media content, blog posts, and email marketing tactics.

## Florida's Paradise Coast Brings Sunshine to Chicago and Hartford

Florida's Paradise Coast spread some sunshine in Chicago and Hartford during their Winter Takeover campaigns that ran between January and March this year. Beach-laden creative and picturesque palms were well represented across a comprehensive advertising program that included billboards, bus wraps, cart corrals, EV charging stations, mail advertising, and mobile retargeting. Print ads in *Elle Décor*, *Smithsonian*, and *Food & Wine* magazines included "Scratch & Enjoy the Scent of Summer" cards that took readers on a scent-sational experience filled with the essence of coconut oil and balmy ocean breezes. [ParadiseCoast.com](http://ParadiseCoast.com)



The essence of coconut oil and balmy ocean breezes entices visitors to Florida's Paradise Coast.

## Miami Beach Live!

Now in its second year, Miami Beach Live! features weekend activations throughout March with a diverse lineup of programming from headliner concerts, art shows, and children's entertainment to free fitness classes and the world's best in beach volleyball and baseball. With the help of local celebrities and influencers, Miami Beach also reboots its award-winning "Take Care of Our City" campaign, promoting the destination's many experiences and educating visitors on local laws and regulations. [MiamiAndBeaches.com](http://MiamiAndBeaches.com)



Miami Beach Live! features beach volleyball among its diverse programming.





## Kissimmee: The Big, Bold Heart of Florida

Experience Kissimmee announces its new tagline! The organization dove deep into why people travel to Kissimmee and found that travel isn't just about seeing something new. It's about moments that touch your heart, creating long-lasting memories. The campaign captures this sentiment by highlighting the destination's welcoming spirit, its big, bold attractions and natural splendor, as well as the destination's unique name and location at the heart of Florida. [ExperienceKissimmee.com](http://ExperienceKissimmee.com)



A campaign image shows a visitor ziplining over alligators at Gatorland.

## Orlando North, Seminole County Expands on NIL With *Hot Shots* YouTube Series

Orlando North, Seminole County has begun producing a new YouTube series bringing viewers into the hot seat with some of college sports' top athletes. *Hot Shots* is set inside Spice is Nice International Heat Market, a locally owned specialty grocery store. Reigning Miss Florida 2022, Lindsay Bettis, interviews athletes and puts them to the test to see how they answer some of the craziest pageant questions she's ever been asked ... all while sampling some of the spiciest Florida-made hot sauce brands. [DoOrlandoNorth.com](http://DoOrlandoNorth.com)



UCF quarterback Timmy McClain and Miss Florida 2022 Lindsay Bettis

## Lake County Hosts THE Spring Games

Lake County was one of the recent host locations of THE Spring Games ([TheSpringGames.com](http://TheSpringGames.com)). The event, originally created to host northern softball teams with nowhere to play in the winter months, has now become the world's largest collegiate softball event. More than 5,000 players from 216 teams competed in games during February and March in both Leesburg and Clermont, which is the birthplace of THE Spring Games. [VisitLakeFL.com](http://VisitLakeFL.com)



Baseball players enjoy the spring weather in Lake County.

## MotoSurf Continental Cup Returns to Clay County

Stakeholders from Clay County, Airstream Ventures, and Keystone Heights recently met with MotoSurf WorldCup Director Martin Jancálek in preparation for the return of the MotoSurf Continental Cup to Keystone Heights, April 21-23. Last year's international motorized surfboard competition featured teams from Mexico, Canada, Great Britain, France, Italy, and the United States with 400 spectators in attendance. This year's competition will once again be broadcast nationally on CBS Sports. [ExploreClay.com](http://ExploreClay.com)



Clay County stakeholders meet in preparation for the upcoming MotoSurf Continental Cup.





## Visit Sarasota County Holds First Outdoor Tourism Workshop

Every year, Visit Sarasota emphasizes the importance of the destination's natural attractions and outdoor tourism opportunities. Recently they held their first-ever open forum to receive feedback and ideas from those who work to conserve the area every day. Advertising and public relations representatives were in attendance as well as others who are simply outdoor enthusiasts. Insight and inspiration abounded, and VSC is already looking forward to hosting another workshop in the future. [VisitSarasota.com](http://VisitSarasota.com)



A member from Sarasota County Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources presents strategies and plans to preserve the area while promoting its beauty.

## The Palm Beaches Hosts Fashion Show to Benefit PCMA Foundation

The Palm Beaches presented a fun and colorful fashion show with local designer and *Project Runway* alum Amanda Perna to inspire and connect attendees at Business Events Industry Week in Maryland, which raised over \$40,000 for the PCMA Foundation. With several meetings industry professionals walking the runway, the show highlighted The Palm Beaches' signature style and community partnerships and celebrated the message of Living in Color by embracing authenticity, inclusion, and connection. [ThePalmBeaches.com](http://ThePalmBeaches.com)



Fashion designer Amanda Perna (front left) with DTPB team members and meetings industry runway models.  
Photo: epnac.com

## Visit Central Florida Hosts Spring Training Welcome Back BBQ

Visit Central Florida organized and hosted the 76<sup>th</sup> annual Tiger BBQ at Publix Field at Joker Marchant Stadium in Lakeland on February 22. More than 900 guests attended the official "Welcome Back to Spring Training" event, held annually to engage the Polk County community with the excitement of Spring Training. Lakeland has the distinction of being the city with the longest standing relationship with a Major League Baseball team. The Detroit Tigers have held Spring Training in Lakeland for 89 years, yielding significant economic impact annually for Polk County. [VisitCentralFlorida.org](http://VisitCentralFlorida.org)



A Tiger BBQ guest enjoys the delicious offerings in celebration of Detroit Tigers Spring Training.

## Research Vessel MANTA Adds to Destin-Fort Walton Beach Artificial Reef

Destin-Fort Walton Beach continued the expansion of its extensive artificial reef network with the sinking of research vessel MANTA. Adding to the more than 400 reefs already in place, this deployment supports a longer-term vision of strengthening Destin-Fort Walton Beach's reputation as a sought-after destination for those seeking premier fishing and diving opportunities. The MANTA is 180 feet long, 55 feet tall, and 38 feet wide, and features a nine-foot tall statue of Jesus known as the "Christ of the Gulf." [DestinFWB.com](http://DestinFWB.com)



R/V MANTA is deployed on January 15, 16 nautical miles offshore in approximately 110 feet of water (N 30° 8.630' W 86° 39.192').





## Walton County Tourism Department Receives Bronze Award at Adrian Awards Celebration

The Walton County Tourism Department won a bronze award in the Advertising – Consumer/Group Sales/Travel Trade category for the “Moments” print campaign in February at the Adrian Awards Celebration in Los Angeles. The Hospitality Sales and Marketing Association International recognized the best in hospitality advertising, digital, PR/communications, and integrated campaigns. The “Moments” campaign is designed to give the reader a reason to pause, reflect, and see themselves in the moments featured. [VisitSouthWalton.com](http://VisitSouthWalton.com)



One of the six print ads featured in Walton County Tourism Department's award-winning “Moments” campaign.

## Visit Tallahassee Travels to Australia in Preparation for Worlds Cross Country 2026

Visit Tallahassee and Leon County Parks staff attended the 2023 World Athletics Cross Country Championships in Bathurst, Australia, in preparation for hosting the 2026 event at Apalachee Regional Park. In the days leading up to the Bathurst event, staff met with Australian and Croatian (2024 host) organizing committees to support their programming and to coordinate future activations to drive international visitation to Florida. The 2026 Championship will mark the first-ever world championship sporting event to be held in Florida's Capital City. [VisitTallahassee.com](http://VisitTallahassee.com)



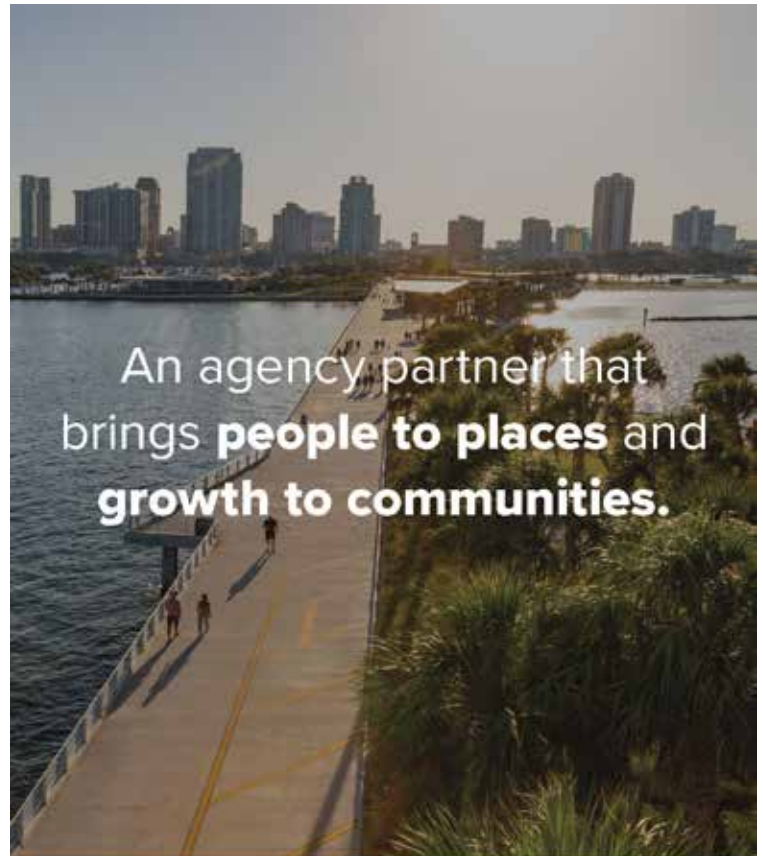
Tourism Sales & Sports Director Ryan Zornes, World Athletics President/CEO Sebastian Coe, Leon County Parks Director Amanda Heidecker, and Tourism Director of Marketing & Communications Scott Lindeman

## 54<sup>th</sup> Amalie Motor Oil NHRA Gatornationals Revs Up the Fun at Gainesville Raceway With Record-Setting Speeds and Attendance

NHRA officials at Gainesville Raceway announced a sellout attendance at the 54<sup>th</sup> Amalie Motor Oil NHRA Gatornationals this March. Great weather added to this year's record-setting participation yielding a crowd of approximately 70,000 spectators and pit crew members. Fox network reported that in all, 1.684 million total viewers tuned into the weekend broadcasts across FOX, FS1, and FS2. This prestigious annual event is part of drag racing history and was supported with a \$47,883.55 sports grant allocation by Visit Gainesville, Alachua County. [VisitGainesville.com](http://VisitGainesville.com)



Record broadcast viewership accompanies massive turnout at Gainesville Raceway, including a Saturday sellout crowd at the Amalie Motor Oil NHRA Gatornationals.



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INSIDE: Congratulations to the Florida DMO Adrian Award winners!

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Destinations Florida serves as the single unifying voice for all of Florida's DMOs, providing continuing insight and direction as we face an increasingly competitive tourism marketplace. Organized in 1996, Destinations Florida strives to increase the overall effectiveness of Florida DMOs' destination marketing efforts through industry education, legislative outreach, enhancing professionalism and facilitating communication.

Destinations Florida represents the 57 official county DMOs that promote their communities throughout the world. Tourism promotion activities help to attract 137.6 million visitors to Florida, adding \$101.9 billion to Florida's economy and supporting more than 1.7 million jobs. These activities are made possible by Tourist Development Taxes provided by Florida Statutes Section 125.0104. Statistics: VISIT FLORIDA Research