

TourismMarketing Today

The Official Newsletter of Destinations Florida | www.DestinationsFlorida.org | September 2023



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Summer of Barbie Inspires Tourism Promotion in St. Pete/Clearwater

There's no escaping it this summer: Barbie is more than a doll, more than a franchise, more than a sometimes controversial and always impossibly-perched-on-her-toes icon of femininity. She's a phenomenon.



Barbie relaxes poolside at The Don CeSar.

With the release of the new *Barbie* movie on July 21, the color pink (Pantone 219 to be exact) is not just in theaters, it's everywhere.

Barbie has inspired a new, glittery pink OPI nail polish collection, a special edition Xbox console, bubble-gum pink Crocs, a froyo flavor at Pinkberry, and a limited-edition rhinestone-encrusted pink watch from Fossil. In Brazil, Barbie even has her own Burger King meal (complete with "Ken's potatoes" and a pink milkshake). It was inevitable that the magenta mania would spill into the travel sector.

Here in Florida, the summer of Barbie was the inspiration for the Ultimate Barbiecore Itinerary in St. Pete/Clearwater.

SUMMER OF BARBIE continues on pg. 3

Marketing 101

by Robert Skrob



What if Destinations Florida created an "Introduction to Florida Destination Marketing" course?

The goal is to create an onboarding course for new members of your team. At this stage we are thinking it would be three hours long, perhaps eight 15-minute segments. It would introduce concepts focused on what DMOs do, how to work together within the industry, VISIT FLORIDA and why it's important, key media markets, niche marketing, and maybe even welcome centers.

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

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HAPPY Birthday

Bill Talbert
September 21

Julie White
September 24

DESTINATIONS
FLORIDA
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Today

The Official Newsletter of
Destinations Florida
1400 Village Sq. Blvd., Suite 3-250
Tallahassee, FL 32312
Phone: 850/222-6000
Fax: 850/222-6002
www.DestinationsFlorida.org

Robert Skrob,
Executive Director

Suzanne Hurst, CAE,
Deputy Executive Director

MaryLu Winchester,
Member Database

On the Cover

The setting sun in the Upper Florida Keys over Blackwater Sound is reflected in the swimming lagoon at Rowell's Waterfront Park in Key Largo.

Photo: JoNell Modys, Florida Keys News Bureau

It's no surprise that Barbiecore was a match for this fun-loving and pretty-in-pink destination. After all, St. Pete/Clearwater has not one, but two, historic grand dame hotels that have been likened to pink palaces. Then there are the rosy sunrises and sunsets. The giant flamingo sculpture at Tampa International Airport. The famous pink trumpet tree along St. Pete's waterfront. And the vibrant glass art at The Chihuly Collection.

Mackenzie Comerer, vice president at Lou Hammond Group, which handles the strategic PR consulting efforts for Visit St. Pete/Clearwater, was the first to suggest the opportunity to connect the destination to the Barbie brand. "It felt like a natural fit for our destination and one I wanted to encourage Visit St. Pete/Clearwater to take the lead on. The support from the entire team was immediate

and a great example of how a PR idea can be utilized across multiple channels to successfully create media momentum and heightened visibility."

Comerer's intuition that this promotional opportunity would be huge was correct: In fact, according to Axios, more than half a million Barbie-themed articles have been written since January, with everything from a *New York Times* story on Barbie's Dreamhouse through the decades to *Vogue's* Barbiecore is Everywhere this Summer to the *Tampa Bay Times'* fun quiz Which Tampa Bay Barbie are You?

Janet Kuliesh, content strategist at Miles Partnership, Visit St. Pete/Clearwater's digital agency, worked with Comerer to outline an enticing, pink-themed itinerary, which includes activities

SUMMER OF BARBIE continues on pg. 4

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

Possible outcomes from this course:

- When you get a new team member, it would save you at least three hours of one-on-one instruction.
- It may be appropriate to share with new TDC members.
- New hotel sales managers could take the course to better understand how to market their hotel property.
- It may be useful in building outreach efforts.
- It could include quizzes after each module to build a certificate program.

The Professional Development Task Force, created as part of the 2022 Strategic Plan, is creating training modules now. Our goal is to get something filmed and deployed so you can use it with your new hires to get feedback for future developments.

What do you think of the idea? Is it something that would be helpful as you onboard new members of your team?

Thank you again for your membership, support, and engagement in Destinations Florida. It is an honor to serve you.



TikTok Rulemaking: DMS Starts Process to Implement Section 112.22

by Steven M. Hogan

We have written before about the new section 112.22, Florida Statutes, that went into effect on July 1, 2023. The new statute effectively bans use of the TikTok app on government-issued devices. The full text of the law, which creates new section 112.22, Florida Statutes, can be viewed at <http://laws.flrules.org/2023/32>.

Section 112.22 directs the Department of Management Services (DMS) to create a list of prohibited applications, and to establish a waiver process.

DMS has started this process, and a public hearing was set for August 17, 2023, for development of the new rule. The text of the

new rule, tentatively referred to as Rule 60GG-2.008, can be accessed here: bit.ly/tiktok-rule

Generally, the draft rule states that DMS will create a list of prohibited applications and will periodically publish that list. The "meat" of the rule is in the waiver process it proposes for government employers to request to use apps that make it onto the prohibited application list.



Steven M. Hogan

The proposed waiver request form can be accessed here: bit.ly/tiktok-waiver

Among other information, the draft waiver request form requires a government employer to justify the need for use of a prohibited application, list the number of devices to which the waiver will apply, specify the length of time for the waiver (maximum of one year), and describe the risk-mitigation efforts that will be undertaken.

More information about the rule can be found at the DMS General Counsel's rulemaking website, under the heading "60GG-2.008." The website can be accessed here: bit.ly/gc-rulemaking

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. Nothing in this article constitutes legal advice. Please seek counsel of your own choosing before making decisions that impact yourself or your organization.



The Department of Management Services has begun the process of creating rules to implement the new statute that bans use of the TikTok app on government-issued devices.

SUMMER OF BARBIE... continued from pg. 3

such as mural spotting, strolling in beautiful botanical gardens, seeing stunning artwork, and ending a perfectly pink day with a gourmet beach picnic. "It was exciting to collaborate with the Lou Hammond Group on this, and so much fun to write," said Kuliesh.

More than simply including the Barbie itinerary on its leisure travel website, Visit St. Pete/Clearwater promoted the article in an email blast to potential travelers, created a sponsored Pinterest pin, and got playful on social media and Photoshop with Barbie

perfectly positioned relaxing in the pool at The Don CeSar. In collaboration with Visit St. Pete/Clearwater's three contracted PR agencies, as well as Brand USA's communications team, the teams pitched the idea to outlets both domestically and internationally, yielding incredible success with nearly 30 stories secured, amounting to 450 million earned impressions. Coverage appeared in target outlets such as Condé Nast Traveler, Delish, Thrillist, TimeOut, and many others.

"Visit St. Pete/Clearwater is always aiming to be at the

forefront of trends," said Brian Lowack, interim CEO/president at Visit St. Pete/Clearwater. "The buzz surrounding this summer of Barbie was a perfect opportunity for us to encourage travelers to take advantage of the many pink experiences found in the destination. We're thrilled to be able to insert ourselves into one of the most significant media narratives of the year."

BEST of CENTRAL FLORIDA!



- Discover Lake County
- Experience Kissimmee
- Explore Lakeland
- Ocala/Marion County VCB
- Orlando North, Seminole County
- Visit Central Florida
- Visit Orlando

Experience Kissimmee: A Year of Remarkable Tourism Success and Unique Initiatives

Experience Kissimmee has achieved remarkable success in advancing tourism and economic growth in Osceola County. With a 4% increase in domestic visitors to 9.4 million in 2022 and a 56% rise in hotel room nights, the region's resilience shines, despite figures still 9% below pre-pandemic levels. The Vacation Home Capital of the World® maintained its allure, restoring vacation home bookings to 2019 levels and achieving an 8% rise in booked listing nights.

The launch of the Kissimmee: The Big, Bold Heart of Florida campaign aptly captured the spirit and centrality of the destination. The *Kissimmee Experience* video series, featuring personalities enjoying local activities, highlighted vibrant regional

experiences, while the Kissimmee Birding Club bridged nature enthusiasts and outdoor attractions.

Partnerships with NFL UK London Games, Jacksonville Jaguars, and the Rangers Football Club highlighted global sports appeal. The Kissimmee Sports Commission's economic impact surged to \$200 million from hosting more than 75 events. Experience Kissimmee was recognized in Cvent's Top 50 Meeting Destinations 2023. The Meeting Sales & Services team saw a 107% lead volume increase since 2019, booking 172 more meetings from October 2022 to July 2023. Contracted room nights through "It Pays to Meet in Kissimmee" rose by 105%, now including Trees4Travel, an initiative to plant a tree for every paid room night as a commitment to sustainability.



DT Minich, Experience Kissimmee president & CEO, celebrates the many successes of the organization at IPW 2023.



The Experience Kissimmee team films an episode of *The Kissimmee Experience*, a 10-part video series currently airing. Visit TheKissimmeeExperience.com to watch.



Ocala/Marion County Scores Big With Cal Ripken World Series

This summer Ocala/Marion County proudly hosted the Cal Ripken World Series at Rotary Sportsplex, which brought a total estimated economic impact of more than \$1.6 million to the area. This weeklong tournament and the multiple events throughout the county welcoming the players would have not been possible without the collaborative effort of the Marion County Parks and Recreation team, Rotary Sportsplex board volunteers, the City of Ocala, and all the coaches and parents.

This year's event featured 22 teams in the 8U, 9U, and 11U divisions totaling around 1,000 visitors, including teams from Hawaii and the Bahamas. In addition to the daily tournaments, community engagement was inspirational with a welcoming parade featuring speakers like Marion County BCC Chairman Craig Curry and Ocala Mayor Kent Guinn, news coverage, and live streams.

The Ocala/Marion County VCB would like to thank everyone involved in setting up the tournament, coordinating events, maintaining the fields, and rolling out the red carpet to make all the players feel extra special.



Rotary Sportsplex in Ocala is host to the Cal Ripken World Series.



Ocala/Marion County welcomes the Cal Ripken World Series with a community parade.

Altamonte Springs in Orlando North Unveils Cutting-Edge Autonomous Vehicle Pilot, Paving the Way for the Future

Altamonte Springs is making headlines as it sets its sights on a smarter, greener future with the launch of its innovative autonomous vehicle pilot program, CraneRIDES. This exciting initiative aims to revolutionize transportation in the city and beyond, bringing cutting-edge technology to its residents and visitors.



City Manager Frank Martz speaks during the unveiling of CraneRIDES.

By partnering with Beep Inc., CraneRIDES plans to pave the way for safer and more efficient mobility solutions. The pilot program promises to reduce traffic congestion and improve accessibility while contributing to a cleaner environment.

With the launch of this program, the city showcases its forward-thinking vision and determination to be at the forefront of smart city innovation. Future expansion of the project will include service to Advent Health Altamonte Campus, Altamonte Springs Sunrail Station, and CentrePointe, a planned 55-acre mixed-use development with a hotel, retail establishments, and residential living.

As the pilot program commences this summer, all eyes are on Altamonte Springs to witness the real-world impact of autonomous vehicles. This bold move is sure to make waves in the transportation industry and inspire other cities to embrace the future of mobility.

Altamonte Springs is not only leading the charge in embracing autonomous vehicles but is also doing so with a commitment to affordability. The introduction of free autonomous shuttles demonstrates the city's dedication to providing inclusive and accessible transportation options for all.



CranesRIDES in motion in Altamonte Springs



Visit Central Florida and Polk County Look to the Future With 11 New Hotels

Visit Central Florida and Polk County's image is stronger than ever, spurring growth in the region that will benefit hotels that have plans in the pipeline through August 2026. These sought-after destinations have not only gained prominence but have also brought substantial economic prosperity.



The Best Western Plus Inn & Suites in Winter Haven, across from LEGOLAND Florida Resort and Peppa Pig Theme Park, is Polk county's newest hotel property and opened July 2023. It is the first of 11 properties that will open in the market by August 2026, adding more than 1,200 new rooms.

Polk County is looking to the future with 11 new hotels underway, adding more than 1,200 rooms over the next three years, promising extraordinary experiences and accommodations for visitors drawn to the area's natural beauty and attractions. Best Western Plus Inn & Suites (Winter Haven)—which opened in July—along with Home2 Suites (Davenport, Winter Haven, and Lakeland), Staybridge Suites (Winter Haven), Fairfield Inn & Suites (Lakeland), Wyndham Garden (Haines City), TownPlace Suites (Haines City

and Auburndale), Everhome (Lakeland), and Residence Inn (Winter Haven) will all have properties within the market.

The progress achieved by Visit Central Florida and Polk County is a testament to their efforts in promoting these regions as premier travel spots. This flourishing status will benefit various industries, such as hospitality, entertainment, retail, and dining, boosting the destination's overall profile.



Three of the 11 new hotels coming to Polk County by August 2026 will be Home2 Suites properties.

Discover Lake County Launches New Branding – Florida's Lakeside Escape

Lake County has launched new branding and advertising campaigns to connect with travelers in target markets in a fresh way. Rebranding as Discover Lake County, visitors will find a new badge-style logo that uses imagery to connect with the destination's outdoor signature activities, like seaplanes! Florida's Lakeside

Escape has complemented this new branding with updated advertising campaigns that encourage visitors to "tune out to tune in," hoping they drop the technology and slow down with immersive experiences that Lake County's nature offers. Ads are reaching potential visitors in key markets through an aggressive marketing strategy between digital billboards and panels, social media and responsive ads, along with branded videos. Additionally, this rebranding and messaging has serviced thousands of visitors who have attended major sporting events in Lake County, like the return of the Pro Beach Volleyball and World ParaVolley tournaments and THE Spring Games softball tournaments.

The new branding is complemented by a public relations strategy that has resulted in nine press visits, two target market media missions, and major press and headlines in target publications like *Southern Living*, *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, and *Volleyball Magazine*.



Discover Lake County invites visitors to "tune out to tune in."



A billboard in Lake County pictures the natural beauty of the area.



Visit Orlando Partners With Tripadvisor® on New Branded Travel Series *The Wanderer*

Visit Orlando teamed up with Tripadvisor® on a new branded travel series, *The Wanderer*, now streaming in five languages across 119 countries on Amazon Prime Video. Travelers organize an unexpected travel guide that is inspired by recommendations from locals.

The Orlando-featured episode, "Orlando: The Joy of the Unexpected," is the first U.S. destination explored with two New York *Wanderer* friends on their first visit to Orlando to discover the destination's hidden gems. Highlights from the episode include the new Orlando sign at Luminary Green Park; an event at the

Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts; dinner at Michelin-rated restaurant Knife & Spoon in the Ritz-Carlton Orlando, Grande Lakes Resort; kayaking in Rock Springs at Get Up and Go Kayaking, and hang gliding at Wallaby Ranch.

To promote the Orlando episode, Visit Orlando, in partnership with Tripadvisor®, sponsored a Flicks on the Beach movie series at Coney Island in New York. More than 800 New Yorkers, including families and adults, enjoyed orange creamsicles, engaged with Visit Orlando's orange wall photo opportunity, and had a chance to win flights to Orlando provided by Frontier Airlines.



Orlando's hidden gems are explored on the Orlando episode of Tripadvisor's *The Wanderer* on Amazon Prime.



Hang gliding at Wallaby Ranch



The Destinations Florida board created the **Florida Welcomes You** handout to address travel advisories and misconceptions raised about Florida.

Our goals with this document are to:

- Provide a resource for Florida DMO team members speaking with meeting planners that raise concerns.
- Standardize responses for anyone addressing concerns.
- Make it clear Florida is safe and welcoming to everyone.
- Deliver the facts about laws that some find controversial.
- Demonstrate Florida is Open for Business and is welcoming visitors.



You may use this document as it is or revise it with your own branding and messaging: DestinationsFlorida.org/Welcome

Let us know if you have feedback or additional questions we should address.



Florida Keys Kicks Off Lobster Season Public Awareness Campaign

The Florida Keys launched its annual public awareness campaign about non-impacting ways to enjoy the Keys' two-day lobster sport season dubbed "mini-season" and the traditional lobster harvesting season. Campaign elements include a dedicated website, *KeysLobsterSeason.com*, with interactive videos and dive and boating safety tips, up-to-date rules, regulations and daily limits, humane harvesting techniques, and ways to protect the marine environment. Florida Keys lobster season began at 12:01 a.m. August 6, and ends at midnight March 31, 2024. *Fla-Keys.com*



A Florida Keys snorkeler measures a spiny lobster carapace. Photo: Frazier Nivens, Florida Keys News Bureau

Avelo Airlines Offers Flights to Daytona Beach From Two New Destinations

The Daytona Beach Area CVB staff joined Volusia County and airport officials in celebrating Avelo Airlines inaugural flight to Daytona Beach International Airport (DBIA) on June 22. The ultra-low-cost carrier now offers nonstop service at DBIA to and from two new destinations—New Haven, Connecticut, on Thursdays and Sundays and Wilmington, Delaware, on Fridays and Mondays. The ribbon-cutting event included commemorative cake, free souvenirs for passengers, and remarks from officials. *DaytonaBeach.com*



Idir Aitsahalia (far right), manager of network planning for Avelo Airlines, is joined by Volusia County and Daytona Beach International Airport officials and Daytona Beach Area CVB Executive Director Lori Campbell Baker (second from left) in celebrating Avelo Airlines inaugural flight to Daytona Beach.

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Visit Sebring Hits a Home Run With Dixie Youth Baseball

Visit Sebring recently hit a sports tourism home run by hosting two Dixie Youth Baseball State Tournaments within two different divisions for a total of five different age groups. The events were held over two long weekends in Sebring and Avon Park and added nearly 600 room nights to the destination. The tournaments were funded in part by Visit Sebring/Highlands County TDC and served as a fund-raiser for Sebring Youth Baseball. VisitSebring.com



The Sebring T-Ball Team

JAINA Convention Draws 3,000+ to Lakeland, Injects \$2.5M Into Local Economy

The 2023 JAINA Convention, hosted at Lakeland's RP Funding Center June 30-July 3, ended successfully, garnering praise and a substantial economic impact. Organized by the Jain Society of Central Florida, the event drew 3,000+ attendees from the U.S. and abroad, injecting approximately \$2.5 million into Polk County and Lakeland's economy, leaving a lasting impression on the region. Past conventions have been held in Los Angeles, Toronto, and the Metropolitan New York City area. VisitCentralFlorida.org



The JAINA Convention is a biennial event that celebrates the principles and teachings of Jainism, an ancient religion originating from India. This year's convention aimed to promote spirituality, nonviolence, compassion, and cultural unity among the attendees.

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Visit Sarasota County Holds Nature Press Trip

Sarasota is home to so many remarkable outdoor adventures and natural wonders. This summer, a group of media were able to experience a few of the highlights the county has to offer. The guests experienced The Bay Park Conservancy and a hard hat sneak peek of Selby Gardens' multiphase expansion. The hidden gem of the Myakka Elephant Ranch also provided an exceptional educational experience to the group. VisitSarasota.com



Press trip attendees pose with a female Asian elephant.

'A Taste of The Palm Beaches' Comes to NYC

The Palm Beaches partnered with Platform by the James Beard Foundation to bring "A Taste of The Palm Beaches" to NYC. The culinary showcase featured local James Beard Award semifinalist chefs highlighting the epicurean experiences available throughout the destination. Because travelers seek out memorable food experiences, the organization presented its top chefs in this market to tell the story about its evolving food scene, its award-winning talent, and the exceptional cuisine travelers can expect when visiting The Palm Beaches. ThePalmBeaches.com



Chef Pushkar Marathe of Stage Kitchen and Bar and Ela Curry Kitchen; Chef Clay Conley of Buccan, Imoto and Grato; Chef Lindsay Autry of The Regional and Honeybelle; and Chef Jeremy Ford of The Butcher's Club
Photo: Eric Vitale Photography

Punta Gorda/Englewood Beach Is World Capital of Tarpon Fishing

Punta Gorda/Englewood Beach, known as the "tarpon fishing capital of the world" partnered with VISIT FLORIDA and Atlas Obscura to develop a video feature in the series *Atlas Obscura Tries... Tarpon Fishing*. Zak Martellucci, an AO operations manager visited and fished with a local captain, explored the shallows of Charlotte Harbor learning about Florida's second largest estuary (and finding a baby seahorse!), and making a laser-carved stainless steel tarpon with a local artist. PureFlorida.com



Port Canaveral Is Busiest Port in the World

Port Canaveral has had an impressive year, starting with taking over the #1 spot as busiest cruise port in the world, overtaking Port Miami's status. The Port also continues to grow its record number of homeported ships (14 by the end of this year), including Royal Caribbean's Utopia of the Seas and Wonder of the Seas, the second and third largest cruise ships globally, and has welcomed a new cruise line, Marella. VisitSpaceCoast.com



Cruise ships at Port Canaveral on Florida's Space Coast
Photo: Canaveral Port Authority



Dine Out Lauderdale Showcases 110 Restaurants and Eateries

In August, Visit Lauderdale's Dine Out Lauderdale Restaurant Month showcased more than 110 participating restaurants and eateries throughout Greater Fort Lauderdale. New this year were additional discounts on sweets and treats, brunches, happy hours, and exclusive culinary experiences such as cooking classes, dinners, wine pairings, and more. "Greater Fort Lauderdale not only welcomes everyone under the sun, we also proudly serve everything under the sun when it comes to a diversity of multicultural dining options," said Stacy Ritter, president & CEO of Visit Lauderdale. VisitLauderdale.com



During Dine Out Lauderdale, Greater Fort Lauderdale residents and visitors can enjoy tasting their way through curated, three-course prix fixe menus at \$45, \$55, or a luxe option for \$75.

Visit Jacksonville Is Keeping Everyone Cool While the Weather Is Hot

This summer Visit Jacksonville's Destination Experience team is doing its part to help keep everyone cool by offering ice pops, also known as a freezer pop or pop ice. Complete with a Flip Side-branded koozie to keep hands from freezing, the team handed out ice pops at the Jacksonville Beach Pier and Downtown Wednesday Art Walk. Additionally, anytime the temperature is above 95 degrees, visitors and locals can stop by the Downtown Visitor Center for a cool treat. VisitJacksonville.com



Visitors and locals keep cool while exploring Jacksonville - The Flip Side of Florida with an ice pop.

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Martin County Connects With Media in D.C.

The Martin County Office of Tourism & Marketing recently attended Travel Media Meetup, held in conjunction with the Southeast Tourism Society (STS) Congressional Summit in Washington, D.C. The team met with approximately 25 top-tier travel writers, editors, and influencers based in the greater D.C. region. In addition to hearing overarching destination updates, attending media also learned about the new Explore Natural Martin ecotourism program, developed in partnership with Leave No Trace. DiscoverMartin.com



Tonja Ray-Smith, STS director of marketing & communications, chats with Ian Centrone, Martin County tourism program manager, at Travel Media Meetup.

Florida's Paradise Coast Sizzles in September

Florida's Paradise Coast is turning up the culinary heat this September when Sizzle Dining takes over the destination as local chefs and restauranteurs offer lunch and dinner menus ranging from \$19 to \$29 for a two-course luncheon and \$29 to \$49 for a three-course dinner. Visitor and residents will discover hidden gems, new restaurants, and classic favorites at awesome prices while dining for a purpose—the event benefits Blessings in a Backpack, a local charity that feeds food-insecure elementary students during the school year. ParadiseCoast.com



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Amelia Island Makes World's Best Awards List for Five Years Running

Amelia Island was voted No. 8 among the Best Islands in the Continental United States by *Travel + Leisure* magazine. This is the fifth consecutive year Amelia Island has made the magazine's World's Best Awards list. The Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island was also voted No. 13 among the Best Resorts in Florida. "This recognition is high praise for our welcoming residents and hospitality community that delivers unforgettable experiences," said Gil Langley, president of the Amelia Island CVB. AmeliasIsland.com



Amelia Island is ranked No. 8 Best U.S. Island.
Photo: AmeliasIsland.com

Discover Crystal River Florida Receives Two TripAdvisor Accolades

Discover Crystal River Florida is thrilled to announce two new TripAdvisor accolades: Swimming with Manatees in Crystal River has been named the No. 8 Best Animal Experience in the World, and local tour operator Fun 2 Dive has placed the area in the top 10 for U.S. Top Overall Experiences (No. 8). These wonderful accolades, led by consumer reviews, are great publicity for the area, and reach prospective visitors with a high intent to travel. DiscoverCrystalRiverFL.com



Visitors can book with knowledgeable tour guides and swim among manatees in Crystal River Florida.
Photo: Carol Grant



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Job Board

Marketing Manager

Tourism Division, Green Cove Springs

The Clay County Board of County Commissioners seeks a marketing manager responsible for the execution of the marketing strategy of the Tourism Division. The marketing manager organizes communication, marketing materials, and campaigns for various tourist development and sports initiatives by specified county marketing objectives. The marketing manager coordinates original and modern marketing material(s) to invite visitors to Clay County, encouraging them to bring tourist dollars to the county while complying with state, county, and TDC standards. For information visit ClayCountyGov.com or call 904/529-4719.



Visit Panama City Beach Hosts 48th Annual National Softball Association of the Deaf (NSAD) Tournament

In an effort to continue support for its Fun.For.All. accessible travel initiative, Visit Panama City Beach welcomed more than 400 deaf athletes and umpires from across the country for the 48th annual National Softball Association of the Deaf (NSAD) Tournament August 4-6. Established in 1992, the National Softball Association of the Deaf is a nonprofit softball organization committed to hosting the National Deaf Softball Tournament every summer. VisitPanamaCityBeach.com



Frank Brown Park in Panama City Beach
Photo: Visit Panama City Beach

Navarre Beach Offers Innovative Partner Program

The Navarre Beach Tourism Development Office has introduced a new innovative Partner Program. In collaboration with local businesses, the county recently organized dynamic workshops attended by 40 participants. These workshops, focused on accommodations, attractions, restaurants, and more, were meticulously designed to harness the expertise of the community’s vibrant tourism ecosystem. The paramount objectives were to identify ways to enhance value to local partners and, in turn, foster economic prosperity for Santa Rosa County through tourism. GetRelaxing.com



Kristen Murphy, VP, client services + partner development at Paradise, presents a Partner Program workshop.

Florida’s Historic Coast Is the Place for Live Music

Florida’s Historic Coast is the place to see live music this fall as the Sing Out Loud Festival welcomes headliners The Black Keys, Mumford & Sons, Lord Huron, Maggie Rogers, Yola, War Hippies, Elle King, Amos Lee, S.G. Goodman, Yonder Mountain String Band, Railroad Earth, Keller & Keels, and many other great performances. Sing Out Loud festival begins with Free Local Showcases, free concerts that allow visitors to explore the vibrant musical landscape of Florida’s Historic Coast. FloridasHistoricCoast.com



Sing Out Loud Festival welcomes big names and local favorites in music to Florida’s Historic Coast September 8-October 1.

Orlando North Tourism Team Masters Hotel Industry Analytics!

The Orlando North Tourism team recently acquired their certification in Hotel Industry Analytics from the American Hotel & Lodging Association. This globally recognized professional credential demonstrates knowledge in hotel industry analytics including foundational metrics, definitions, formulas, and methodologies. The certification serves as a testament to their commitment to excellence and will undoubtedly bolster their efforts in delivering exceptional visitor experiences and driving tourism growth. DoOrlandoNorth.com





Garden & Gun Returns to Pensacola for Seafood Rodeo

Garden & Gun, one of the South's most notable publications, again joined forces with Visit Pensacola to host the Seafood Rodeo. For the second year in a row, this sold-out event invited travelers to experience The Way to Beach™, including a deep-sea fishing excursion and cook-what-you-catch fine dining experience featuring three of Pensacola's finest chefs. Hosted at the newly opened Lily Hall, the event garnered over \$5 million in program exposure. VisitPensacola.com



Chefs Alex McPhail of Restaurant IRON, George Lazi of George Bistro & Bar, and Darian Hernandez of Brother Fox join Visit Pensacola to showcase the destination's culinary offerings at the second annual *Garden & Gun* Seafood Rodeo.

Visit Tampa Bay Team Attends the National Geographic Food Festival

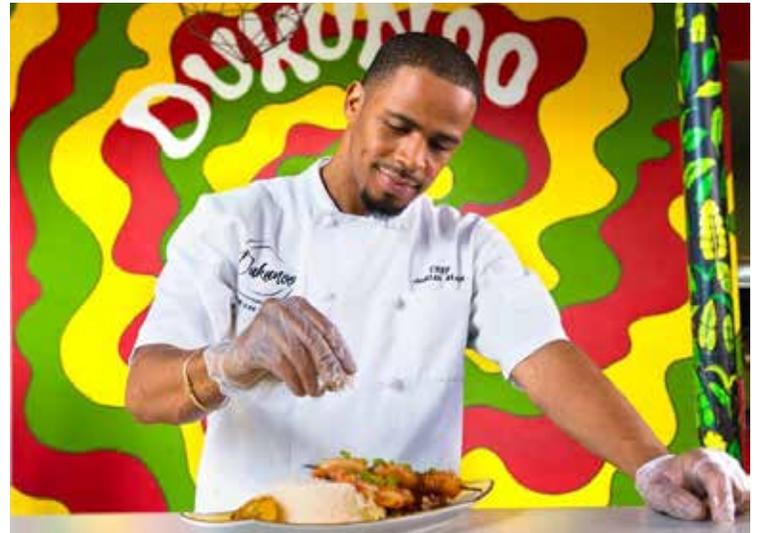
The UK got a taste of Tampa Bay at the National Geographic Traveller Food Festival. Chef Jon Atanacio of Élevage SoHo Kitchen & Bar and EDGE Rooftop Cocktail Lounge at the Epicurean Hotel hosted a masterclass during the festival, and attendees got a chance to sample the famous Cuban sandwich at the Visit Tampa Bay booth. In addition, Visit Tampa Bay hosted a cooking class with Chef Jon. More than 20 top travel advisors and trade publications were in attendance for the event in Manchester. VisitTampaBay.com



Visit Tampa Bay hosts a cooking class with Chef Jon and 20 top travel advisors.

Greater Miami Celebrates National Black Business Month

Throughout National Black Business Month in August, the Greater Miami CVB highlighted a variety of events, seminars, and more aimed at supporting the value and viability of Greater Miami and Miami Beach's multibillion-dollar Black-owned businesses and community. Highlights included the launch of Miami-Dade County's Support BOB 305 campaign promoting Black Business Month and the GMCVB's always sold-out annual Partner Tabletop Expo, featuring a spotlight on Black-owned businesses and many of the community's best restaurants and caterers. MiamiAndBeaches.com



Dukunoo Jamaican Kitchen, Greater Miami and Miami Beach

The Kissimmee Experience Captures the Wonders of Kissimmee

Visitors are invited to embark on an extraordinary journey with *The Kissimmee Experience* and delve into the city's concealed gems, exhilarating attractions, and rich cultural tapestry. Across this riveting 10-part escapade, a local host partners with a celebrity guest or personality to partake in the myriad activities the destination offers, weaving a dynamic narrative of its treasures. The unfolding series is currently streaming at TheKissimmeeExperience.com. ExperienceKissimmee.com



From *The Tonight Show* Starring Jimmy Fallon to *iCarly*, Jeff Musial (also known as Jeff the Animal Guy) enjoy a wild time in Kissimmee. See this episode now and more at TheKissimmeeExperience.com.



Savor the Shore Invites Lee County Residents to Eat Local

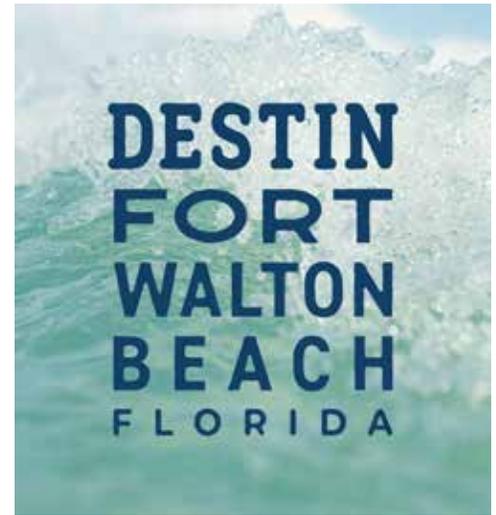
The Lee County VCB is sponsoring Savor the Shore, an awareness campaign to encourage residents to enjoy local restaurants during the off-season. Visitation is down and businesses are working hard to keep their doors open and workers employed. By having a dining experience at a coastal community, everyone receives a pick-me-up. Everyone can also take advantage of toll-free Sundays on the Sanibel Causeway, August 6-September 10, to savor the shore at restaurants on Sanibel and Captiva islands. VisitFortMyers.com/savor-the-shore



Savor the Shore campaign reminds residents to eat local.

Destin-Fort Walton Beach Awarded DMAP Seal

Destin-Fort Walton Beach, Florida was awarded the Destination Marketing Accreditation Program (DMAP) seal by Destinations International in recognition of the organization's commitment to industry excellence. "We are incredibly proud to receive this achievement with distinction," commented Jennifer Adams, the destination's tourism director. "As we look to the future, we remain focused on implementing innovative strategies that uphold these high standards to benefit our tourism community, residents, and valued visitors." DestinFWB.com



Destin-Fort Walton Beach received their DMAP accreditation with distinction, recognizing the destination organization's commitment to industry excellence and meeting industry performance and accountability standards.

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ADRIENNE HENNIS
Account Executive
✉ ahennis@al.com ☎ 251.243.8042

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2023 ANNUAL MEETING

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2023

- 2:00 pm – 5:00 pm Board of Directors Meeting
- 4:00 pm – 6:00 pm Registration Desk Open
- 5:00 pm – 6:00 pm Reception

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2023

- 8:00 am Registration Desk Open
- 8:00 am – 9:00 am Networking Breakfast
- 9:00 am – 10:30 am State of the State
- 10:30 am – 11:30 am Conflict Mitigation in Destination Marketing
- 11:30 am – 1:00 pm Networking Luncheon
- 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm Strong Relationships Despite Negative Publicity
- 2:15 pm – 3:15 pm Better Board Presentations and Data Storytelling
- 3:30 pm – 4:30 pm I Messed Up, Now What?
- 5:30 pm – 9:30 pm Miles Evening Extravaganza 

BRANNON CENTER

105 S. Riverside Drive
New Smyrna Beach, FL 32168
(386) 410-2880



FRIDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2023

- 8:00 am – 9:00 am Networking Breakfast
- 9:00 am – 11:30 am Destinations Florida Annual Business Meeting
2024 Legislative Session Outlook

SPRINGHILL SUITES NEW SMYRNA

The SpringHill Suites by Marriott New Smyrna Beach is offering a special rate for Destinations Florida meeting participants at \$169 per night. You may make your reservation online using this link: <https://bit.ly/DFLA23> or call the hotel directly at 386-427-0512 and reference the group name Destinations FL. Reservations must be made by Wednesday, **September 13, 2023**. Be sure to make your reservation as soon as possible because the room block will sell out.



512 Flagler Avenue
New Smyrna Beach, FL 32169
(386) 427-0512

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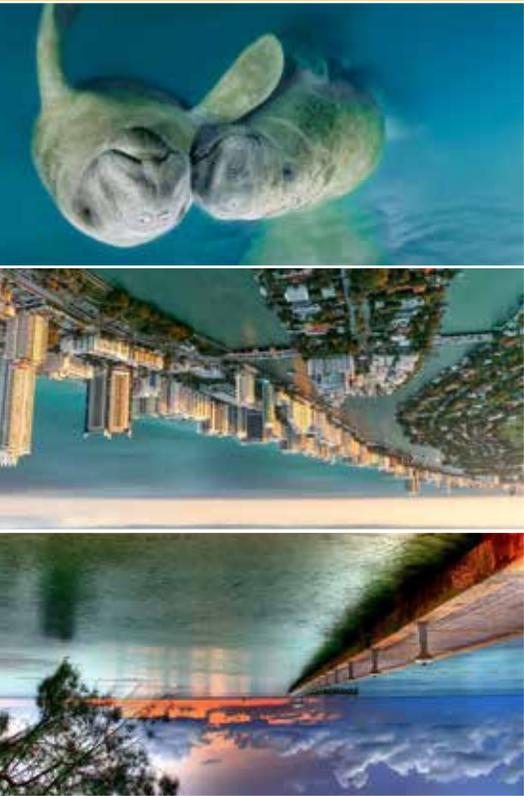
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INSIDE: Read about the BEST things happening in Central Florida.

Executive Director Robert Skrob | Lobbyists Brian Ballard and Mat Forrest, 850/577-0444
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Destinations Florida



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

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