

TourismMarketing Today

The Official Newsletter of Destinations Florida | www.DestinationsFlorida.org | July 2024

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Celebrating National Travel & Tourism Week

National Travel & Tourism Week is an annual celebration that underscores travel's essential role in driving our nation's economy, cultivating vibrant communities, and forging connections. Established in 1983, NTTW has become a cherished tradition, celebrating the U.S. travel community and highlighting how travel stimulates economic growth, creates quality jobs, inspires new businesses, and elevates the quality of life for Americans every day.

This year, the industry celebrated NTTW with nearly 10,000 social media posts, 16+ million people reached, 2,500+ media mentions, 100+ engaged elected officials, 85+ proclamations issued, and thousands of organizations activated from across the United States.

Here is a sampling of NTTW events held in Florida:



Levy County Visitors Bureau shares the importance of tourism during NTTW.

Levy County Visitors Bureau: 'Travel Is Essential'

The Levy County Visitors Bureau worked with U.S. Travel to develop a "Travel is essential" series of slides. The Levy County Board of County Commissioners declared May 19-25 Travel and Tourism Week. Levy County developed a social media campaign to share the unique places to explore and distributed a press release about the importance of tourism to the county, including \$40.2 million in economic impact, \$747,050 in local sales tax revenue, and \$11.7 million in compensation.

#NTTW24 continues on pg. 4

Whatcha think?

by Robert Skrob



How hard is it for people to understand what you do?

Even when you tell them, people hear the words but

don't always get the picture.

That's why many of your industry peers worked for two years to create "Tourism Marketing in Florida: A Newcomer's Guide."

The guide is a collection of training videos you can use to teach anyone about the Florida destination marketing industry.

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

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

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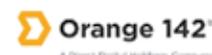
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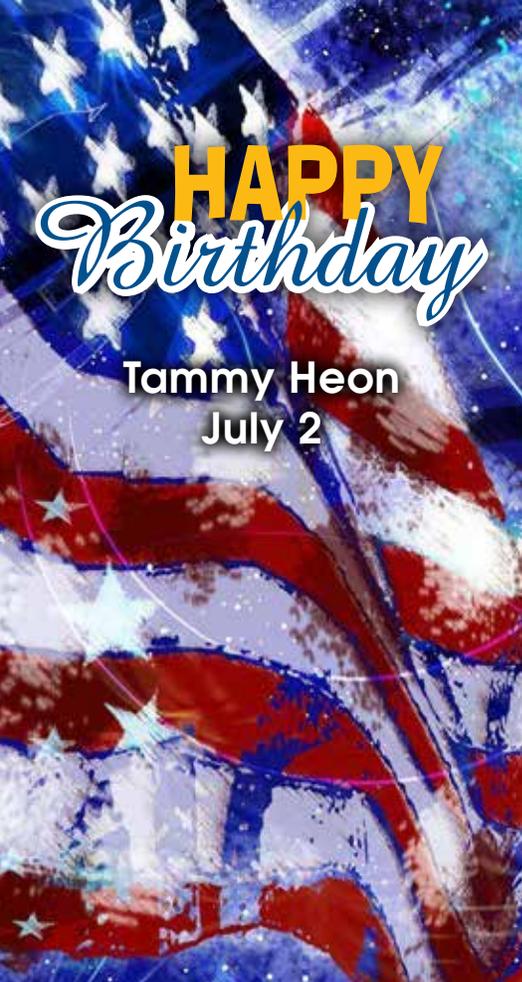


GOLD PARTNERS



SILVER PARTNERS





HAPPY Birthday

Tammy Heon
July 2

DESTINATIONS FLORIDA

TourismMarketing Today

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

Robert Skrob,
Executive Director

Suzanne Hurst, CAE,
Deputy Executive Director

MaryLu Winchester,
Member Database

On the Cover
Named for 19th-century cigar magnate Vicente Martinez-Ybor, Ybor City was the entry point for generations of immigrants from Cuba, northern Spain, Sicily, Germany, and Eastern Europe. Today, it serves as the area's historic epicenter. Tampa's dynamic downtown is a short ride away via the city's historic streetcar, with major attractions and Michelin-rated restaurants conveniently located around the city.

Visit Tampa Bay Welcomes Team Members to Newly Enhanced PR Team

Curtis Kellogg and Bryan Burns joined the Visit Tampa Bay team May 13 as part of an expansion of its Public Relations Department. Curtis Kellogg is Visit Tampa Bay's director of public relations, responsible for managing corporate and executive communications, as well as advocacy and Tampa Bay-based media. Kellogg has a decorated military career with 28 years of service as a U.S. Army officer, 18 of those years with direct experience in public affairs and media relations. Bryan Burns is Visit Tampa Bay's public relations manager, overseeing the organization's content creation and robust social media platforms. Most recently, Burns was the communications manager for the Vinik Sports Group and Tampa Bay Lightning, where he was responsible for daily operations, key messaging, and protecting and growing the team's brand and reputation. VisitTampaBay.com



Curtis Kellogg



Bryan Burns

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

Use the Newcomer's Guide for:

- New members of your team;
- New TDC members or board members;
- Industry leaders or new salespeople; or
- Anyone else who is curious about how a DMO does what it does for your community.

We want your feedback. What's missing, how can we improve the guide, and how are you able to use it within your DMO?

Check it out and let me know what you think.

NEW MEMBER RESOURCE:

"Tourism Marketing in Florida: A Newcomer's Guide"

The roadmap to mastering destination marketing in the Sunshine State!

Designed for new team members, staff, board members, and industry leaders, this comprehensive collection of video trainings illuminates the path to success in the world of Florida tourism marketing..

With *Tourism Marketing in Florida: A Newcomer's Guide*, you'll:

- Train your team faster by giving them access actionable strategies to elevate your destination.
- Bring TDC and board members a broader understanding of their role through insider knowledge from Florida's tourism marketing veterans.
- Help members of your industry appreciate the full impact of your efforts by demonstrating how to leverage collaborations for maximum impact.



Distribute this link and QR code to members of your team, board, and industry as a free benefit of Destinations Florida.

<https://bit.ly/NewFDM>



Keynote speaker Tim Tebow with Florida's Sports Coast Executive Director Adam Thomas, CDME

Florida's Sports Coast Holds Fourth Annual Tourism Banquet

Florida's Sports Coast's fourth annual Tourism Banquet underscored another year of robust growth and achievement with an attendance of more than 400, up from 150 in 2021. FSC reported a visitor rate of 1,491,700, coupled with an economic impact totaling \$1,026,067,300, and the DMO presented the inaugural Florida's Sports Coast Foundation Scholarship. A highlight of the evening was the keynote address delivered by former NFL quarterback Tim Tebow. A captivating drone show provided a dazzling finale.



Amelia Island CVB celebrates NTTW at the annual Opening of the Beaches. Photo: Deremer Studios LLC

Amelia Island Holds Opening of the Beaches Event

Amelia Island celebrated NTTW and Nassau County's Bicentennial during a special Opening of the Beaches community event with roughly 3,000 attendees. As a sponsor, Amelia Island CVB was able to thank the local hospitality community and share the recently released 2023 Value of Tourism report, which showed visitor activities on Amelia Island generated \$1.2 billion in total economic impact in 2023.



The Daytona Beach Area CVB recognizes area businesses and attractions with the third annual Visitors' Choice awards at the annual Lodging & Hospitality Association of Volusia County's National Travel and Tourism breakfast at the Hard Rock Hotel Daytona Beach.

Daytona Beach Area CVB Presents Third Annual Visitors' Choice Awards

The Daytona Beach Area CVB celebrated NTTW with its third annual Visitors' Choice Awards, which recognizes businesses and attractions that vacationers enjoyed the most in the destination. The program honors visitors' most beloved attractions and businesses through a survey that was sent to thousands of Daytona Beach area visitors in the CVB's database. Honorees included Volusia County Beaches, Daytona International Speedway, Ponce Inlet Lighthouse, and Museum of Arts & Sciences.



Mexico Beach celebrates NTTW with their annual Punch on the Porch.

Mexico Beach Hosts Annual Punch on the Porch

Giveaways, industry insights, and of course, punch were available as the Mexico Beach Welcome Center celebrated NTTW. The annual Punch on the Porch event showcased the destination's vibrant, and growing, tourism industry. This free event welcomed visitors to engage with tourism partners, enjoy delicious food, and walk away with fun prizes. It was a wonderful morning for visitors to immerse themselves in the beauty and hospitality of Mexico Beach.



Travelers arriving at St. Pete-Clearwater International Airport are greeted by Visit St. Pete-Clearwater during the NTTW Travel Rally.

Visit St. Pete-Clearwater Holds Travel Rally at International Airport

Visit St. Pete-Clearwater was joined by more than 20 partners and chambers of commerce at St. Pete-Clearwater International Airport on Monday, May 20, to kick off NTTW. Visitors arriving to pick up their bags were treated to the Travel Rally and had the chance to win prizes and pick up some swag as they arrived to America's Best Beaches!



Visit Indian River's Tourism Communications Manager Krista Hoyt and VP of Tourism and Marketing Ben Earman (foreground) receive an NTTW proclamation from the Board of County Commissioners.

Visit Indian River County Recognizes Tourism's Economic Impact

The Visit Indian River County team received a proclamation from the Indian River County Board of County Commissioners designating May 19-25 National Travel and Tourism Week. Tourism to Indian River County provides an economic impact of more than \$460 million and more than 10,000 jobs. Visit Indian River also rolled out a series of new videos and partnered with many local tourism partners on social media to highlight the importance of tourism in the area.



The crowd cheers for the winner of the 2024 Voice of Sarasota Tourism Award presented to Jennifer Rominiecki.

Visit Sarasota County Celebrates NTTW in Style

The annual acknowledgment of NTTW was celebrated in conjunction with the kick-off of Savor Sarasota Restaurant Week at the Bird Key Yacht Club this year for Visit Sarasota County (VSC). More than 150 members of the local industry came together for food samples, trivia, prizes, drinks, and the return of VSC's award program now deemed The Haley Hall of Fame Awards. VSC also honored Jennifer Rominiecki with the 2024 Voice of Sarasota Tourism Award.



Visit Pensacola hosts its annual Hospitality Olympics to kick off NTTW. The day includes a variety of fun, hospitality-themed challenges, including the Water Waiter Dash and the ever-so-popular Mullet Toss Relay, a spin on the local signature event, the Florida-Bama Interstate Mullet Toss.

Visit Pensacola Celebrates NTTW With Daily Industry Events

Visit Pensacola celebrated NTTW with events like the Hospitality Olympics, stakeholder breakfast, Hospitality Hero Award Ceremony, a trolley tour for industry employees, visitor center open houses, and The Way to Beach™ Passport—a give-back day with paid attractions and tours. President & CEO Darien Schaefer remarked, "Tourism drives our economy, creates jobs, and enriches our community. Celebrating this week with our front line hospitality community, partners, and stakeholders highlights our collective achievements and future potential in the tourism realm."



Discover Lake County staff members deliver appreciation gifts to partners at the Lakeside Inn. Photo: Discover Lake County

Discover Lake County Honors Tourism Partners

Discover Lake County took time during NTTW to honor the partners who contribute so much to the local tourism industry. Staff crafted appreciation bags, filled with branded goodies as well as sweet treats from a local bakery, hand delivering them to partners as a thank you for all they do to grow and support Lake County Tourism. Learn more about Lake County, and their partners, by visiting DiscoverLakeFL.com.



Punta Gorda Vice Mayor Bill Dryburgh, FRLA SWFL Regional Director Chris Lopez, award recipient Robin Jenkins, DVM, and VCB Director Sean Doherty

Punta Gorda-Englewood Beach VCB Celebrates NTTW in Charlotte County

Robin Jenkins, DVM, director of veterinary services of the Peace River Wildlife Center, was inducted into the Charlotte County Tourism Hall of Fame during the annual Tourism Celebration. The visitor bureau also recognized SUP Englewood as Partner of the Year and "Rock Stars" employees who work front and back of the house in restaurants and lodging establishments, and the Charlotte Chapter of the Florida Restaurant & Lodging Association provided five high school students with scholarships.



PortMiami and Miami International Airport Directors Hydi Webb and Ralph Cutié celebrate the success of the visitor industry and Greater Miami's leading economic engines with Miami-Dade County Mayor Daniella Levine Cava.

Greater Miami Touts Record Growth and Momentum During NTTW

The Greater Miami CVB's annual State of the Industry highlighted a record-breaking 2023 with 27.2 million visitors spending an estimated \$21.1 billion. Coinciding with NTTW, the event emphasized the visitor industry's vital role in economic growth, job creation, and enhancing quality of life throughout Miami-Dade County. Tourism accounted for more than 200,000 jobs, driving \$11 billion in wages and almost \$30 billion in overall economic impact, representing 9% of Miami-Dade County's total GDP.



Food, live music, and stunning bay views greet visitors and tourism partners at the Destination Panama City National Tourism Day celebration.

Destination Panama City Celebrates NTTW With Live Music and Lunch

Destination Panama City doubled its National Tourism Day turnout this year! More than 500 visitors and local tourism partners were welcomed to the Visitors Center in Downtown Panama City to celebrate the event. Guests enjoyed live music and delicious food from local food trucks, with a free lunch ticket offered upon newsletter sign-up.



Central Florida Hotel & Lodging Association President/CEO Robert Agrusa, Experience Kissimmee COO Misty Johantgen, Osceola County Commissioner Peggy Choudry, and Experience Kissimmee Senior Director of Industry Partner Relations Emily Shorrock

Experience Kissimmee Launches Value of Tourism Campaign

The Osceola County Board of County Commissioners honored the tourism industry's importance by presenting a proclamation recognizing its significant contributions to the community. To further emphasize tourism's benefits, Experience Kissimmee launched a Value of Tourism campaign, showcasing how tourism supports local businesses, boosts household tax savings, provides career opportunities, and enriches community heritage. Additionally, Experience Kissimmee demonstrated its commitment to community support by donating more than \$1 million to seven local nonprofits, reinforcing the positive influence of tourism.



Commissioner Mel Ponder joins Tourism Director Jennifer Adams in thanking tourism professionals for creating an enriching experience for visitors to Destin-Fort Walton Beach.

Destin-Fort Walton Beach Hosts NTTW Interactive Event

In recognition of NTTW, Destin-Fort Walton Beach hosted an interactive event celebrating the local businesses and individuals that make the destination unique. More than 150 members of the tourism community gathered alongside community leaders to enjoy live entertainment, local flavors, art, and more—ranging from an impressive charcuterie paddleboard to live sushi rolling, live art installations, fishing demos, and more.



Andrea Gonzmart Williams of the Columbia Restaurant and 1905 Family of Restaurants is warmly joined by her father, 1905 Family of Restaurants owner Richard Gonzmart, and Visit Tampa Bay President & CEO Santiago C. Corrada, after receiving the 2024 Gonzmart Family Tourism Ambassador of the Year Award.

Visit Tampa Bay Honors the Importance of Travel and Tourism in Hillsborough County

Visit Tampa Bay celebrated NTTW by doing something that comes naturally—giving back. Industry partners joined team members to create more than 11,000 meals and sort over 12,000 pounds of food for Feeding Tampa Bay. Local landmarks were aglow in red as part of Hillsborough County's and the City of Tampa's proclamation. And Visit Tampa Bay's annual awards luncheon recognized hospitality industry heroes, with Andrea Gonzmart Williams receiving the Gonzmart Family Tourism Ambassador of the Year Award.



The DTPB team gathers for a photo during Travel Rally Day in The Palm Beaches.

Discover The Palm Beaches Reports Record-Breaking Tourism Numbers

Discover The Palm Beaches (DTPB) reported record-breaking first quarter tourism numbers during the national celebration of Travel Rally Day. Visitation exceeded last year's figures by 1%, with a record-breaking 2.8 million visitors. Visitor spending grew more than 4%, reaching \$2.26 billion. International visitation also increased by 13%, with more than 302,000 visitors from other countries. At the event, Rick Rose received the 32nd annual Providencia Award, and DTPB recognized The Ben Hotel and Visit Palm Beach with Partner of the Year awards.



City of Jacksonville Mayor Donna Deegan, Visit Jacksonville President & CEO Michael Corrigan, and Jacksonville City Council President Ron Salem with the proclamation declaring May 19-25 National Travel and Tourism Week in Jacksonville.

Visit Jacksonville Honors Partners and Celebrates Tourism Week

Visit Jacksonville kicked off NTTW with a Jacksonville-themed trivia night at Wicked Barley. They also received an NTTW proclamation from the City of Jacksonville as well as the City Council, offered complimentary Go Tuk'n tours for partners, hosted a reception for tourism and hospitality partners in the Downtown Visitor Center that featured food and beverages from all three of Jacksonville's food trails, and handed out goodie bags to Jacksonville International Airport staff and visitors.



HGTV's *Hometown Takeover* wraps filming during NTTW. Both locals and visitors rally in Circle Park to celebrate.

Photo: Highlands News Sun

Visit Sebring Celebrates NTTW With HGTV Filming

Sebring celebrated NTTW with several days of filming HGTV's *Hometown Takeover* third season in downtown Sebring. HGTV renovated three commercial building interiors plus the exterior of each building facing the town's Circle Park. They added interactive features within Circle Park and murals throughout the downtown. The tourism power of the show is evident in towns renovated during previous seasons. Sebring has already seen more foot traffic since the HGTV announcement. Officials expect leisure travel to Sebring to increase dramatically after the six episodes air in early 2025.



Orlando North's social media campaign

Orlando North, Seminole County Highlights Tourism Partners for NTTW

Orlando North's social media campaign for NTTW highlighted the vital role of tourism in the community, showcasing its positive impact on local businesses, job creation, and community development. Through engaging content and interviews with industry partners, they brought a personal approach, illustrating how tourism directly benefits their partners' businesses. This initiative aimed to inspire visitors to support and explore Orlando North, ensuring a thriving local economy and a vibrant community.



Walton County Tourism staff speaks with local business partners about the role of the Tourism Department and the ways they can work together to best promote the destination. Photo: Walton County Tourism

Walton County Celebrates NTTW With Partners

Walton County Tourism celebrated NTTW with educational events and activities highlighting how tourism supports Walton County's economy. Throughout the week the Visitor Information Center staff gave away souvenirs and locally made treats, and the tourism staff shared insights about the DMO at a Lunch and Learn event. WCT also launched the *Tourism Talks* video series, an initiative featuring marketing tips, insights, and trends from the Tourism Department and partnering agencies.



Visit Gainesville, Alachua County gave away branded T-shirts to visitors and residents as part of NTTW and in celebration of the five-year anniversary of the Flagler Award-winning What's Good® guide of weekly events. Pictured are Dotty Faibisy and Elizabeth Reyes.

Alachua County Highlights Economic Impacts, Thanks Hospitality Workers, Celebrates Five Years of What's Good®

Visitors to Alachua County generated a record-setting \$8.2 million in Tourist Development Tax and \$20.5 million in sales tax in 2023. Highlighting the success of the tourism industry and in celebration of NTTW, Visit Gainesville, Alachua County promoted industry economic impacts with a full-length editorial article and thanked hospitality workers with visits to all 68 Alachua County lodging properties. The week also featured a week-long What's Good® T-shirt giveaway for visitors and residents.



Orange County Mayor Jerry L. Demings, Visit Orlando President & CEO Casandra Matej, and Central Florida Hotel & Lodging Association President & CEO Robert Agrusa pose with 2024 NTTW proclamation.

Visit Orlando's Action-Packed NTTW

Visit Orlando's week-long celebration of NTTW included hosting Central Florida's diverse chambers of commerce for a breakfast event; thanking frontline; an annual Travel & Tourism member luncheon, and a team member appreciation. At the annual luncheon; Orange County Mayor Jerry L. Demings shared an official proclamation recognizing National Travel & Tourism Week. Visit Orlando announced that Orlando welcomed more than 74 million visitors in 2023 with international visitation growing by 25%.



Lee County VCB's Annie Banion gives Barrier Island Parks Society Executive Director Sharon McKenzie a NTTW challenge coin at Port Boca Grande Lighthouse.

Lee County VCB Celebrates NTTW With Challenge Coins

Lee County VCB celebrated NTTW by giving challenge coins to more than 60 industry partners who go the extra SMILE to make the destination SHINE. Several landmarks participated in "Light Up Lee" and used blue lights to celebrate, including the Southwest Florida International Airport control tower and Cape Coral City Hall fountain. And, to make it official, the Lee Board of County Commissioners proclaimed the week National Travel & Tourism Week.



2024 ANNUAL MEETING

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2024

- 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 10, 2024

- 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 Annual Meeting Program
- 11:30 am – 1:00 pm Networking Luncheon
- 1:00 pm – 4:30 pm Annual Meeting Program
- 5:30 pm – 9:30 pm Miles Evening Extravaganza **miles**



FRIDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2024

- 8:00 am – 9:00 am Networking Breakfast
- 9:00 am – 11:00 am Destinations Florida Annual Business Meeting
2025 Legislative Session Outlook
- 11:00 am – 12:00 pm How DMOs and VISIT FLORIDA Can Work
Together to Bring More Visitors



HOTEL HAYA YBOR CITY

The Hotel Haya Ybor City is offering a special rate for Destinations Florida meeting participants at \$189 per night. You may make your reservation online using this link: <https://bit.ly/DF24Annual> or call the hotel directly at (813) 568-1200 and reference the group name Destinations Florida Annual Meeting.

Reservations must be made before the cut-off date of Wednesday, September 18, 2024. Be sure to make your reservation as soon as possible before the room block sells out.

Hotel Haya Ybor City
1412 E 7th Avenue
Tampa, FL 33605
(813) 568-1200

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Register at DestinationsFlorida.org



Subleases and Commercial Rental Tax

by Steven M. Hogan

Today we take a diversion into other Florida tax issues to address something you may come across in your operations. The question is this: If you have office space that you sublease to another tenant, is that sublease subject to commercial rental tax?



If you have office space that you sublease to another tenant, is that sublease subject to commercial rental tax? The answer is *maybe!*

Photo: Nick Youngson (nyphotographic.com), pix4free.org, CC BY-SA 3.0

The answer is *maybe!* The place to start is with Florida's tax on commercial leases. Florida is somewhat unique in imposing a tax on commercial lease arrangements, as such taxes are hard to find anywhere else other than New York City.



Steven M. Hogan

Generally speaking, every commercial lease is subject to the tax unless it is specifically exempt. The tax is due on the amount of rental consideration that changes hands. As of June 1, 2024, the commercial rental tax rate is the state-level 2% plus the applicable discretionary surtax in the county where the leased property is located.

Note: The state rate only recently dropped to 2%. More information on that can be found here: <https://bit.ly/fla-commercial-tax>

Importantly, if a tenant *subleases* space to a subtenant, that lease is *also* subject to tax. This means that tax must be collected from the subtenant and remitted to the state.

This does not mean, however, that taxes get "pyramided" on top of each other. To the contrary, only one tax can be collected on the rental or license fee payable for the occupancy or use of any such property, so the tax collected will not be pyramided by a progression of transactions (or decreased by a progression of transactions). § 212.031(2)(b), Fla. Stat. This is true even when the property is leased and re-leased to subtenants. *Id.*

To handle this, when a landlord leases real property to a tenant who then re-leases the property to a subtenant (or subtenants), the landlord may accept a resale certificate from the tenant in lieu of collecting and remitting tax on the tenant's lease. Fla. Admin. Code r. 12A-1.070(9). In this way, the tax is imposed only on the subtenant that actually uses the property and the tax is not "pyramided" by a series of transactions. § 212.031(2)(b), Fla. Stat.

However, if the subtenant is a government entity or a nonprofit, the subtenant's lease will be *tax free*. The exempt subtenant must provide its exemption certificate (Form DR-14) to avoid paying the tax.

Of course, the particular facts of a given situation may change the analysis. As always, legal counsel should be sought on specific questions impacting your county.

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.

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Quick Trips!

Florida Keys Promote Blue Star Operators

Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary-designed Blue Star fishing and dive operators in the Florida Keys & Key West are more now easily identifiable for visitors seeking fishing and dive experiences. Trained and certified Blue Star operators are committed to responsible tourism and to educating clients about the Florida Keys ecosystem, the Sanctuary, and responsible diving and fishing etiquette. A logo icon is displayed on website listings for active Blue Star-certified operators. Fla-Keys.com



Blue Star fishing and dive operators are newly identifiable on the Florida Keys' destination website through a new icon.

Image: Florida Keys News Bureau

Punta Gorda's Peace River Botanical & Sculpture Garden Named America's Best Hidden Gem

Trip Advisor has just named the Peace River Botanical & Sculpture Gardens in Punta Gorda America's Best Hidden Gem. The first phase opened only seven years ago, but it has grown every year. The gardens span 27 acres and have five unique eco-systems, 21 sculptures, a butterfly garden, a variety of events, and pathways around the beautiful gardens to take a stroll and enjoy the day. PureFlorida.com



Sculpted floral flamingos welcome visitors to Punta Gorda's Peace River Botanical & Sculpture Garden.

More to Explore in 2024

The Levy County Visitors Bureau has offered a unique list of places to explore in Levy County for several years, and for 2024 they wanted to create something new. *More to Explore in 24* offers a list of attractions complete with links. Guests to the area can also visit the website or call the Levy County Visitors Bureau at 1-877-387-5673 for more information and additional places to eat, stay, and play. VisitLevy.com

Kissimmee Golf Classic Breaks Records

This year's Kissimmee Golf Classic was a testament to the power of community, sportsmanship, and philanthropy. With a record-breaking turnout, it raised the number of participation and generosity. The event had a record number of 133 players and raffled more than \$19,000 in prizes. "I extend my deepest gratitude to everyone who participated. Thanks to you we can continue to make a difference in our community," said DT Minich, president and CEO of Experience Kissimmee. ExperienceKissimmee.com



EK staff
Photo: Experience Kissimmee



Space Coast Is a 10Best Summer Travel Destination

The Space Coast was voted #10 in *USA Today's* 10Best Reader's Poll for Best Summer Travel Destination in its first year nominated. Space Coast Office of Tourism's Sports Commissioner Terry Parks, MPA, was awarded the Florida Sports Foundation Larry Pendleton Emerging Leader Award. This award recognizes outstanding executives in the Florida sports community who have demonstrated exemplary leadership skills. This year, his program has supported 18 events representing golf, soccer, softball, running, robotics, and surfing. VisitSpaceCoast.com

EMERGING LEADER



Terry Parks

LARRY
PENDLETON
Awards

Space Coast Office of Tourism's Sports Commissioner Terry Parks, MPA

Welcome to Rockville in Daytona Is Biggest Rock Festival in N. America

Welcome to Rockville officially became the biggest rock festival in North America by hosting more than 200,000 spectators from around the world and 150 bands on five stages at the recent four-day event at Daytona International Speedway. Held on Mother's Day weekend, among the top headlining acts were Mötley Crüe & Disturbed, Limp Bizkit & Jelly Roll, Foo Fighters & Queens of the Stone Age, and Slipknot & Evanescence. DaytonaBeach.com



Jelly Roll is among the 150 acts that performed at the recent Welcome to Rockville at Daytona International Speedway.
Photo: Steve Thrasher

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The Blue Angels Perform at Vero Beach Air Show

The Blue Angels flew into Vero Beach and attracted many visitors and locals to enjoy the amazing show at the annual Vero Beach Air Show held May 3-5, filling the skies with the sights and sounds of the awe-inspiring navy jets. Besides the Blue Angels, the Vero Beach Air Show featured many other air show acts, activities for kids, food vendors, cargo plane tours, interactive activities, and meet-and-greet opportunities with pilots. It also featured an amazing fireworks show at the Friday evening event. VisitIndianRiverCounty.com



The Blue Angels perform at the Vero Beach Air Show every other year. The air show is held at the Vero Beach Regional Airport and presented by Piper Aircraft, Inc.

Florida's First Coast of Golf Celebrates National Golf Day

Florida's First Coast of Golf President David Reese, Chairman Lon Grundy, and Past Chairman Russ Libby celebrated National Golf Day in Washington D.C. in May to communicate the value of the golf industry to policymakers including Congressman John H. Rutherford. Florida-Golf.org



Florida's First Coast of Golf leaders meet with Congressman John H. Rutherford (center).

Visit Jacksonville Adds to Its Food Trail Experiences

A small fishing village where the Atlantic Ocean meets the St. Johns River, Mayport is home to one of the best spots to catch appropriately named Mayport Shrimp. It's become Jacksonville's



Mayport Shrimp Trail is Visit Jacksonville's newest food trail.

signature dish and is the latest food trail from Visit Jacksonville—Mayport Shrimp Trail. Trail-goers can dine at 20 locations throughout the city and check in at each on the Visit Jax app to be eligible for prizes, including tickets to a Jacksonville Jumbo Shrimp baseball game. VisitJacksonville.com

Orlando North, Seminole County Approves TID Ordinance

On May 14, Seminole County Board of County Commissioners unanimously approved the Tourism Improvement District (TID) Procedural Ordinance, paving the way for a possible new tourism capital project. With over \$300 million in economic impact since the construction of the current sports complexes, the sports tourism market has been vital to the local economy. The purpose of the ordinance is to establish the procedure for the establishment, operation, modification, and dissolution of TIDs and to ensure that TID assessments conform to all constitutional requirements. DoOrlandoNorth.com



Seminole County Board of County Commissioners issued an NTTW proclamation and approved the TID Procedural Ordinance during their May 14 meeting. Pictured with the commissioners are Orlando North tourism team members and CFHLA representatives.



Back for Summer: #LOVEThePalmBeaches

Discover The Palm Beaches has relaunched its #LOVEThePalmBeaches summer campaign. This resident-driven initiative encourages locals to become ambassadors for the destination by showcasing the area's attractions on their personal social media accounts and inviting friends and family to visit. The campaign, which resulted in more than 16K engaged residents in 2023, has returned with the goals of once again boosting summer visitation, supporting local businesses, and reinforcing The Palm Beaches' appeal. ThePalmBeaches.com



Discover The Palm Beaches encourages locals to promote the destination with its summer campaign.

Rolling Out the Red Carpet in Greater Miami

Miami-Dade County is ready to roll out the red carpet for the entertainment industry with the recently launched High Impact Film Fund Program (HIFFP). Designed to reignite the local film scene, HIFFP is the largest incentive program ever offered in the state of Florida, positioning Miami-Dade as a significant player on the global stage for film and television production. MiamiandMiamiBeach.com



The Greater Miami CVB's Matt Ratner (left) and Rolando Aedo (right) join Will Smith and Martin Lawrence at the launch of their new film, *Bad Boys for Life*.

Florida Blast Lacrosse Moves to Sebring

The Florida Blast Lacrosse Tournament recently moved to Sebring and joins the growing list of lacrosse events, including USA Lacrosse, that are making the Highlands County Multi-Sports Complex their home. The event brought 5,000+ people to Sebring and created a \$1.5 million economic impact. Event organizers credit the excellent conditions of the flat fields and sports complex, as well as the budget-friendly destination's hospitality for the event's relocation to Sebring. VisitSebring.com



Florida Blast Lacrosse relocates to the Highlands County Multi-Sports Complex in Sebring.

Bradenton Area Cleans 750 Pounds of Garbage for Memorial Day

Tied to the destination's Love It Like a Local initiative, the Bradenton Area CVB and nearly 100 volunteers worked together to preserve the sugar-white sand beaches and turquoise waters the region is renowned for. Volunteers came from as far as Germany to participate in the beach cleanup, learning how to respect local waterways and wildlife while on vacation. The Love It Like a Local initiative promotes responsible and sustainable travel while in the Bradenton Area. BradentonGulfIslands.com



Community members participate in the Love it Like a Local Beach Clean Up. Photo: Bradenton Area CVB



Brazil Travel Writers Visit Fort Myers Area

In June, Lee County VCB partnered with VISIT FLORIDA on a familiarization tour to bring eight travel journalists from Brazil to the Fort Myers area. With 1 million Brazilians visiting Florida in 2023, this trip highlighted more of what the state has to offer international visitors. In addition to the nature and wildlife, they met Brazilian-born Dr. José H. Leal, science director and curator of the Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum & Aquarium, who enjoyed speaking Portuguese with them. VisitFortMyers.com



World-renowned malacologist Dr. José H. Leal of the Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum & Aquarium leads travel journalists from Brazil on a seashell tour of Sanibel Island's Lighthouse Beach.

Visit Sarasota County Promotes Arts and Culture in London

The Sarasota Ballet performed their program *Ashton Celebrated* at The Royal Opera House in London this summer and kicked off "Ashton Worldwide" across the globe. Erin Duggan, president and CEO of Visit Sarasota County, and Brian Hersh, president and CEO of Arts and Cultural Alliance, attended a special event they put on for UK media while the ballet was performing in London. The two were able to promote all the amazing cultural assets Sarasota County has for visitors to enjoy that make up Florida's Cultural Coast®. VisitSarasota.com



Arts and Cultural Alliance of Sarasota County President & CEO Brian Hersh, The Sarasota Ballet General Manager Jason Ettore, and Visit Sarasota County President & CEO Erin Duggan attend the media event in London.

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Quick Trips!

Visit Orlando Launches Eight New Websites

Visit Orlando launched a suite of eight enhanced websites to promote the Orlando region to all audiences. After extensive research to uncover the needs of Visit Orlando's key audiences, VisitOrlando.com, OrlandoMeeting.com, VisitOrlando.org, MagicalDining.com, and four new in-language websites, including Spanish, Portuguese, French Canadian, and German, are now live. These websites serve as a gateway to Orlando for its unique audiences around the world and offer new enhancements including a more modern and engaging design, better performance, greater accessibility, multilingual support, and dedicated neighborhood pages. Learn more at VisitOrlando.com.



Visit Orlando's eight new websites serve as a gateway to Orlando for its unique global audiences, offering new visual and performance enhancements.

Florida's Sports Coast Receives Florida Sports Foundation Awards

During the annual Florida Sports Foundation Summit, the Florida's Sports Coast team was honored to receive two awards from Florida Sports Foundation during the Larry Pendleton Awards Dinner. They won the Small Market Event of the Year for the 2023 Tampa Bay Christmas Invitational Basketball Tournament. Additionally, the Florida's Sports Coast team was honored with two esteemed recognitions with Kayla Glazebrook being named a finalist for the Emergent Leader of the Year award and Consuelo Sanchez receiving the Sports Tourism Professional of the Year award. FLSportsCoast.com



Florida's Sports Coast's Tourism Deputy Director Consuelo Sanchez, Sports & Special Events Program Coordinator Kayla Glazebrook, and Sports & Events Program Coordinator Matt Bogdanoff

Gainesville Regional Airport Breaks Ground on Parking and Intermodal Transportation Center Expansion

Gainesville Regional Airport (GNV) has an annual economic impact of \$556 million with an estimated 547,457 commercial passengers flying in and out of GNV in 2023. The airport features nonstop service to Atlanta, Charlotte, Dallas Fort Worth, Fort Lauderdale, and Miami, and provides access to hundreds of one-stop flights. GNV is expanding with the construction of a \$13 million project featuring a four-level, 418-space parking garage and an intermodal transportation center, expanding the airport's parking capacity and adding convenience for travelers. Completion is expected by December 2024. VisitGainesville.com



Gainesville Alachua County Airport Authority (GACRAA) board members break ground on the Gainesville Regional Airport's (GNV) 418-space parking garage. Photo: Gainesville Regional Airport

Visit Tampa Bay Unlocks a Summer Adventure Like No Other

This summer, Visit Tampa Bay is amplifying the region's perfect blend of adventure and relaxation in its latest marketing campaign in conjunction with FKQ Advertising + Marketing. From now through the end of August, English- and Spanish-speaking travelers from Atlanta, Orlando, and Miami-Fort Lauderdale will have increased exposure to the unique experiences in Tampa Bay. In fact, the majority of the campaign will be customized to the diverse audiences in each target market, ranging from partnerships with local broadcasting companies to vivid imagery on digital billboards. VisitTampaBay.com



The campaign creative highlights major attraction partners including Busch Gardens® Tampa Bay, The Florida Aquarium, and ZooTampa at Lowry Park.



Walton County Tourism Launches Keep Walton County Beautiful

Walton County Tourism has launched Keep Walton County Beautiful, a local affiliate of Keep America Beautiful dedicated to preserving the county's natural environment through tree planting, beach and roadway cleanups, and litter prevention campaigns. "Through Keep Walton County Beautiful, locals and visitors will help protect our natural resources so everyone can enjoy them for generations to come," said Matt Algarin, director of Walton County Tourism. WaltonCountyFLTourism.com



Keep Walton County Beautiful (KeepWaltonCountyBeautiful.org) empowers individuals to take greater responsibility for the protection and enhancement of the community.

Publix Sports Park Mid-Market Venue of the Year at Florida Sports Summit

Visit Panama City Beach is proud to announce Publix Sports Complex was awarded the Mid-Market Venue of the Year by the Florida Sports Foundation. The Sports team has worked hard to bring in new tournaments and expand sports tourism in Panama City Beach. Since the opening of the Publix Sports Complex in 2019, the park has brought in 250 tourism events, 400,000 visitors, and \$271 million in direct visitor spending. VisitPanamaCityBeach.com



Visit Panama City Beach's Sports Marketing Operations Manager Justin Kelley, Director of Sports Tourism Chris O'Brien, and Sports Business Development Manager Kristen Krasinskas are joined by Publix Sports Park's Assistant GM of Operations Marissa Guarneiri at the awards ceremony.

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Palm Coast and the Flagler Beaches Sponsor Kiss-Your-Pup Photo Booth to Raise Money for Charity

Palm Coast and the Flagler Beaches sponsored a kiss-your-pup photo booth at the third annual Hang 8 Dog Surfing Competition in June. Spectators snapped photos with their pets in the booth and were invited to share their pics on social media using #VisitFlagler. The event, which featured small and large dog surf heats and a dog costume contest, raised money for local charities and received national news coverage. VisitFlagler.com



Spectators snap a group photo in the dog-kissing photo booth, sponsored by Palm Coast and the Flagler Beaches.

Discover Crystal River Creates Partners in Tourism to Unite Business Leaders

Discover Crystal River Florida's Auvis Cole, director of tourism, recently created a new Partners in Tourism (PIT) initiative to unite business leaders across Citrus County. The inaugural Partners meeting took place May 15 at the scenic Florida Cracker Riverside Resort in Homosassa. Cole and his dedicated team were joined by county officials and 45 attendees representing 33 tourism businesses from across the county. Partners in Tourism will meet monthly at different locations, showcasing the county's diverse attractions and restaurants. DiscoverCrystalRiverFL.com



Director of Tourism Auvis Cole, County Administrator Steve Howard, Administrative Assistant Christina Lamb, County Commissioner Holly Davis, Visitor Services Coordinator Kelly Miller, Sales & Marketing Manager Terry Natwick, and Special Projects Manager Veronica Kampschroer

Destin-Fort Walton Beach Hosts The Emerald Open

In May, Destin-Fort Walton Beach hosted The Emerald Coast Open, the world's largest lionfish tournament dedicated to raising awareness and promoting the removal of lionfish from local waters. The tournament concluded with a new record for the largest lionfish caught at 475mm (18.70 inches) and removal of 11,844 of the invasive species, despite bad weather. In addition to the tournament there were pre-tournament experiences, as well as restaurant week where local restaurants showcased lionfish dishes for guests to enjoy. DestinFWB.com



Coastal Resources Coordinator Jessica Valek shows off lionfish brought into the weigh station at the Emerald Coast Open.

Blessing of the Fleet & Free Your Feet!

The 27th annual Blessing of the Fleet & Sock Burning Festival marked the arrival of flip-flop season in Panama City. Nearly 50 boats paraded by the St. Andrews Marina, a tradition honoring fallen seafarers and seeking safe journeys for future voyages. The festivities culminated in the symbolic sock-burning ritual welcoming flip-flop season as residents "freed their feet" by tossing their socks into the flames. DestinationPanamaCity.com



Feet are free! Event-goers toss their socks into the flames, ushering in warm days and calm waves in Panama City. Photo: Mike Hollway Photography



Quick Trips!

Visit St. Lucie Launches Locals Only Campaign

Visit St. Lucie recently launched their Locals Only campaign—a multimedia campaign featuring exclusive offers and deals from hotels, attractions, and activity-based businesses that are redeemable only to residents of St. Lucie, Indian River, and Martin counties. This campaign aims to foster a deeper connection with the local community, especially new residents. From discounted hotel stays at oceanfront properties to BOGO admission tickets at local attractions, all of the offers are tailored to generate demand during times that need it most, such as weekdays. VisitStLucie.com



Special discounts for horseback riding on the beach are featured in the Locals Only campaign.

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#NTTW24 ... How Did Florida Celebrate?
..... Pages 1, 4-7

Join Us in Ybor City for
2024 Annual Meeting.....Page 8

Welcome to Rockville in Daytona
Is Biggest Rock Festival in
N. America.....Page 12

Orlando North, Seminole County
Approves TID OrdinancePage 13

Bradenton Area Cleans
750 Pounds of Garbage
for Memorial Day.....Page 14

