

# TourismMarketing Today

The Official Newsletter of Destinations Florida | [www.DestinationsFlorida.org](http://www.DestinationsFlorida.org) | November 2025



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## Wheel of Fortune Features Five Iconic Florida Destinations

Five Florida destinations joined with VISIT FLORIDA during the "Live More Floridays" week of shows on the iconic game show *Wheel of Fortune*, which aired Oct. 13–17.

Pensacola started off the week as the featured grand prize on Monday, Oct. 13. The package, "The Relaxed Way to Beach," invited viewers to experience America's First Settlement and discover the laid-back pace of

the Pensacola Bay area. The getaway includes a stay at the Hilton Pensacola Beach, dining downtown on coastal Italian or fresh seafood with a Great Southern Restaurants gift card, kayaking under the stars with Glow Paddle, and all-day family fun at Lagunas Adventure Park overlooking vibrant Pensacola Beach.

"Pensacola was excited to help kick off VISIT FLORIDA's 'Live More Floridays' campaign with *Wheel of Fortune*," said Darien Schaefer, President and CEO of Visit Pensacola. "As The Way to Beach™, this partnership gives us a national stage to showcase the beauty, history, and hospitality that make our destination special. We're proud to support VISIT FLORIDA in highlighting the



*Wheel of Fortune* recently invited viewers to "Live More Floridays," offering vacation prizes in Tampa, St. Pete-Clearwater, Pensacola, Kissimmee, and the Florida Keys and Key West.

*WHEEL OF FORTUNE continues on pg. 4*

## VISIT FLORIDA's New CEO

by Robert Skrob



On Oct. 2, Destinations Florida members had the opportunity to hear directly from Bryan Griffin, the

new CEO of VISIT FLORIDA, in a fireside-style conversation with me. More than 60 DMO leaders joined us for an engaging discussion that highlighted both Bryan's personal commitment to Florida and his vision for the future of our industry.

A fourth-generation Floridian, Bryan shared his journey through law, business, international affairs, and

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

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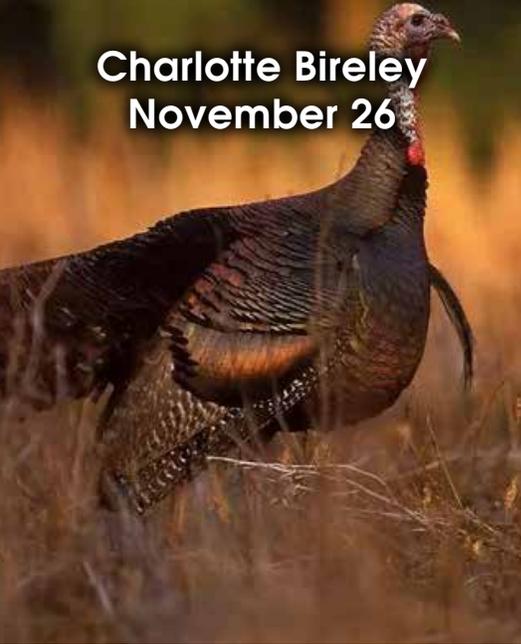
## SILVER PARTNERS



# HAPPY Birthday

DT Minich  
November 22

Charlotte Bireley  
November 26



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Suzanne Hurst, CAE,  
Deputy Executive Director  
MaryLu Winchester,  
Member Database

#### On the Cover

Palm Coast and the Flagler Beaches, located on Florida's northeast coast, is a quirky coastal escape that boasts more than 135 miles of serene hiking and biking trails, cinnamon-colored sand beaches, a spectacular independent foodie scene, and bucket list-worthy adventures like swimming with dolphins and horseback riding on the beach.

DON'T MISS IT!

3

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

his time as communications director in the Governor's Office before stepping into his new role. He emphasized that tourism is not just an activity but an investment—one that must deliver measurable returns for Floridians. From ROI data to transparent metrics, he reinforced the importance of accountability in demonstrating the impact of tourism marketing.

Bryan also underscored advocacy as a priority, reminding us that

resident satisfaction and legislative support go hand-in-hand with visitor growth. He encouraged open communication, data-sharing, and collaboration to ensure our industry continues to thrive.

It was an inspiring conversation that left me energized about the road ahead. Florida's tourism future looks strong, and with Bryan's leadership, we are well positioned to showcase our state's unmatched value to visitors and residents alike.

diverse experiences that make the Sunshine State so unforgettable.”

Kissimmee was the featured destination on Tuesday, Oct. 14, with a prize package that includes a stay in a luxury vacation rental from Top Tier at Reunion Resort; tickets to Wild Florida Adventure Park, SeaWorld Orlando, and Aquatica Orlando; and dinner at El Cilantrillo in Old Town, part of the Experience Kissimmee Latin Culinary Trail.

“*Wheel of Fortune* is an American classic that audiences across the country have loved for generations, and it’s known for celebrating incredible destinations around the world. It was truly a privilege to have Kissimmee featured as the Vacation Home Capital of the World and one of Florida’s most iconic destinations,” said DT Minich, president and CEO of Experience Kissimmee. “We’re honored to share our community with millions of *Wheel Watchers* and showcase how Kissimmee offers the perfect mix of thrilling adventures, family-friendly attractions, and relaxing stays in beautiful vacation homes, where unforgettable memories are made every day.”

Tampa Bay took the spotlight as the featured grand prize on Wednesday, Oct. 15. The package includes a stay at the Tampa Marriott Water Street, plus Tampa Bay CityPASS® for admission to top attractions like Busch Gardens and The Florida Aquarium. The adventure continues with a treetop zipline experience at Empower Adventures.

“Showcasing Tampa Bay on one of America’s most beloved game shows gave us a unique platform to share the vibrant spirit of our community with millions of *Wheel Watchers* nationwide,” said Corrada. “From our award-winning and MICHELIN-recognized restaurants and cultural neighborhoods to our dazzling waterfront adventures, this was an opportunity to inspire travelers to discover why Tampa Bay is the hip, urban heart of Florida’s Gulf Coast.”

On Thursday, Oct. 16, St. Pete-Clearwater was featured with a stay at the JW Marriott Clearwater Beach, a visit to Clearwater Marine Aquarium and The Dalí Museum, and dinner at the MICHELIN-recognized Fortu.

“With so many convenient flight options around the country, America’s Favorite Beaches being featured on one of America’s favorite game shows was a great way to showcase how close paradise is for the avid *Wheel Watchers* across the U.S.,” said Brian Lowack, president and CEO of Visit St. Pete-Clearwater. “St. Pete-Clearwater is full of hidden gems waiting to be discovered—with world-class arts and entertainment, MICHELIN-recommended restaurants, incredible outdoor activities, and endless sunshine.”

The Florida Keys and Key West rounded out the week on Friday, Oct. 17, offering tips during the entire episode dedicated to experiencing the southernmost island chain.

“This was a great opportunity to put the Florida Keys in front of millions of viewers in a fun and engaging way,” said Kara Franker, president and CEO of Visit Florida Keys. “We’re excited to share what makes our destination truly unforgettable.”

The Keys’ grand prize includes a stay at the luxurious and historic Casa Marina Key West and experiences at the Key West Butterfly & Nature Conservatory, the Turtle Hospital in Marathon, and an unforgettable visit to Robbie’s in Islamorada to feed the tarpon and enjoy fresh seafood and spectacular views.

Along with the prizes for contestants on the air, viewers at home tuned in and entered the Bonus Round Puzzle online for a chance to win one of the five Florida vacations.

“With a reach of 8 million per episode, partnering with *Wheel of Fortune* brought our ‘Live More Floridays’ campaign into millions of homes across the country each night,” said Bryan Griffin, president and CEO of VISIT FLORIDA. “We hope to inspire viewers to seek out ‘Floridays’ for themselves with a visit, and we are also proud to offer tremendous value to our local destination partners by hosting these episodes together.”



## TDC Membership

by Steven M. Hogan

From time to time we get questions from Destinations Florida members about who can serve on the Tourist Development Council, or "TDC." Fortunately for us, the TDC statute lays out in detail the requirements for TDC membership.



Section 125.0104(4)(e) of the Florida Statutes should be the starting place for determining who may fill the seats on a county's Tourist Development Council.

Each county that levies the Tourist Development Tax within its borders must create a "Tourist Development Council," or "TDC." § 125.0104(4)(e), Fla. Stat. The county must create the TDC by ordinance.

The TDC is composed of nine members appointed by the "governing board" of the county. All nine members must be persons with the right to vote in county elections ("electors" of the county).

These nine members must include the following: (i) the chair of the county's governing board or another member of the governing board designated by the chair; (ii) two elected municipal officials, at least one of whom must be from the "most populous municipality" in the county or in the subcounty special taxing district in which the tax is levied; and (iii) six members who are involved in the tourist industry, of which not less than three nor more than four must be owners or operators of motels, hotels, RV parks, or other tourist accommodations within the county and subject to the tax.

For the six "tourist industry" members, there is no requirement that they must be from different organizations. Stated differently, the statute allows multiple TDC members to be employed by the same company.

The county's governing board has the option of designating the chair of the TDC, or allowing the TDC itself to elect a chair.

TDC members serve staggered four-year terms. When a county is starting a new TDC, the county is required by section 125.0104(4)(b)

to pass a resolution prescribing the terms of office for the original TDC members.

The TDC's responsibilities include general oversight of the use of Tourist Development Tax funds. The TDC must meet at least once per quarter to perform its oversight function.



Steven M. Hogan

The statute itself should be the starting point to answer any questions regarding whether particular individuals qualify for TDC membership, and whether any particular action of a TDC falls within the TDC's statutory authority.

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](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.*

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# BEST of NORTHEAST FLORIDA!



- Amelia Island Convention & Visitors Bureau
- Clay County Board of Commissioners
- Florida's Historic Coast
- Palm Coast and the Flagler Beaches
- Visit Jacksonville

## Amelia Island Boosts Overnight Visitation With NCAA Bowl Game Promotion

The Amelia Island CVB identified the TaxSlayer Gator Bowl, an annual NCAA bowl game in nearby Jacksonville, as a strategic opportunity to boost overnight visitation during a typically slower travel period. The matchup draws tens of thousands of fans, media, and support personnel from across key drive markets. Through a collaboration with ESPN, the CVB launched targeted television advertising positioning Amelia Island as the perfect home base for fans, strengthening brand recognition and showcasing the destination's beaches, outdoor adventures, and luxury accommodations.



The campaign showcased families enjoying the wonders of Amelia Island.

"By aligning Amelia Island with one of the Southeast's most celebrated college football traditions, we were able to showcase our destination to passionate fans while also giving back to the community," said Gil Langley, president of the Amelia Island CVB. "Beyond boosting our local economy during a quieter season, this campaign highlighted what makes Amelia Island a welcoming home base for visitors throughout the year."

As for impact, the TaxSlayer Gator Bowl reached 5,032,217 average viewers (+46.9% YOY) and was the No. 4 most watched non-CFP game. On *AmeliaIsland.com*, views topped 1,900 uniques leading up to the game (+18% YOY). The partnership also included the ACC teams' island stay and a community initiative benefiting 100 Nassau County children.



The dual-campaign also promoted couples' retreats.



## Clay County Is a Cornerstone of Sports Tourism in NE Florida

The HUB Jacksonville in Clay County has quickly established itself as a cornerstone of sports tourism in Northeast Florida. As the largest covered pickleball facility in the region, The HUB features 24 courts—16 covered and eight open-air—creating a premier setting for both competitive and recreational play.

The facility recently hosted the 2025 USSP East Regional Championship, a major event that drew players and visitors from

across the Southeast, and it's preparing to welcome the 7th annual Florida-Georgia Pickleball Classic.

With amenities including a restaurant, gym, fire pit, and event center, The HUB offers an all-encompassing experience for athletes and spectators alike further enhancing Clay County's growing reputation as a destination for sports and recreation.



Pickleball enthusiasts enjoy the 16 covered courts at The HUB Jacksonville in Clay County.



The HUB Jacksonville in Clay County offers eight open-air pickleball courts in addition to the 16 under roof.

## Supporting a Strong Tourism Community on Florida's Historic Coast

With a population nearing 300,000—and more than 32,000 residents working in tourism—St. Johns County is a vibrant destination driven by a connected, collaborative industry. Over the past decade, the population has grown by nearly one-third, and Florida's Historic Coast has solidified its reputation as a premier travel hotspot.



The St. Augustine, Ponte Vedra VCB socials, like this one at the Savannah Bee Company, are the perfect networking opportunity for the local tourism community to learn about and support each other.

A standout example of community engagement is the *Must-Do Experiences* video series. These 90-second promotional videos spotlight local business owners who not only showcase their own offerings but also highlight other memorable experiences in the area. This peer-to-peer endorsement has fostered a spirit of mutual support, reinforcing the value of collaboration across the industry.

Through these programs, the VCB continues to cultivate a tourism industry that thrives on connection, cooperation, and community spirit.

To maintain a close-knit and engaged tourism community, the St. Augustine, Ponte Vedra & The Beaches VCB has implemented several programs designed to keep industry professionals connected and supportive of one another. One key initiative is the monthly networking social. These gatherings are hosted by local businesses—restaurants, retailers, hotels, tour operators, and galleries—offering industry professionals a chance to build relationships and share insights.



Florida's Historic Coast's award-winning *Must-Do Experiences* video series is a successful marketing tool where local tourism industry leaders share with potential visitors their "must-do" recommendations, like a drive along the A1A Scenic & Historic Coastal Byway.

# Florida Stories That Make Waves.

From the Gulf Coast to the Atlantic, Madden supports Florida communities to create tourism marketing that moves more than travelers—it moves economics, pride, and possibilities.

We're the creative collaborators behind campaigns that make people feel something real about a place, and then book the trip to experience it. With over 200 tourism partners nationwide, we know how to craft strategies that cut through the noise and connect straight to the heart.

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## Palm Coast and the Flagler Beaches' Visitor Eco-Discovery Center Project Advances

Palm Coast and the Flagler Beaches Tourism Development Office will move forward with its plans for a state-of-the-art Visitor Eco-Discovery Center after the Flagler County Board of County Commissioners approved the project during its regular BOCC meeting on Sept. 15. Collage Companies won the bid to design and construct the center.

"We're thrilled that the Visitor Eco-Discovery Center project will advance and look forward to seeing Collage Companies bring



A conceptual rendering of the front of the Visitor Eco-Discovery Center planned for Flagler County

this long-standing vision to reality," said Amy Lukasik, executive director for Palm Coast and the Flagler Beaches.

The Visitor Eco-Discovery Center is a top strategic plan initiative to construct a state-of-the-art facility that will benefit both travelers and residents by allowing them to learn more about the recreational, natural, historical, and cultural resources of Flagler County. Features will include interactive displays, exhibits, public rest rooms and picnic areas, and more.

The 10,000 sq. ft. facility will be located on a 23-acre county-owned parcel on SR100 near the existing pedestrian bridge and will serve as a gateway to the conservation nature center park and the extensive network of trails throughout the county and surrounding areas, including the future 1,000-acre Bulow Creek Headwaters Regional Park (BCHRP) conservation area.



Two attendees view a Flagler County trail connectivity map during an informational meeting of the Visitor Eco-Discovery Center in August 2024.

## Visit Jacksonville's Explorers Program Offers Experiences for Visitors and Locals

Visit Jacksonville's Explorers Program is an initiative to offer visitors and local residents unique and creative experiences they might not otherwise encounter in Jacksonville. All events in the program are completely free for attendees.

Explorers events take place throughout the year, and so far there have been five in 2025, with two more scheduled before the end of the year. Past events included a fishing clinic on the Jacksonville Beach Pier, sound baths both on the beach and at the Museum of Contemporary Art, trivia nights at Jax Ale Trail breweries, and pickleball at Toon Town Pickleball. Attendance varies by event, ranging from 15 to 100 people, depending on the type of activity and venue. Some events allow walk-ins while others require preregistration.

"We know a majority of people who come to Jacksonville are coming to visit family and friends, and the Explorers Program is a



Attendees relax on the beach at Visit Jacksonville's Explorers Program sound bath.

great opportunity for those visiting and locals alike to learn about things to do throughout Jacksonville," said Michael Corrigan, president and CEO of Visit Jacksonville.

Marketing for the Explorers events is multi-channel: event listings on Visit Jacksonville's website, mobile app alerts, social media posts, and printed flyers delivered to hotels and surrounding businesses.



Attendees of Visit Jacksonville's Explorers Program enjoy playing pickleball at Toon Town Pickleball.



# Call for Papers

**Destination Marketing Summit**  
**May 13-15, 2026**  
**Bradenton Area Convention Center**  
**Palmetto, Florida**

DMO members are encouraged to submit presentations sharing their successes and challenges over the past year. Affiliate partners, advertising agencies, and other vendors interested in educating and networking with DMOs are also encouraged to submit presentations.

**Deadline: Friday, December 5, 2025**

Submit your presentation online at:  
[DestinationsFlorida.org/2026SummitSpeakers](https://DestinationsFlorida.org/2026SummitSpeakers)



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## Amelia Island CVB Hosts 'Tide to Table' Dinner

In partnership with *Garden & Gun Magazine*, the Amelia Island CVB hosted a "Tide to Table" dinner at The Preserve at The Amelia River Club. With 90+ guests, it was one of their most successful East Coast events. Guests enjoyed an alfresco cocktail hour and incredible fare from three local chefs with sweeping views of the salt march and Intracoastal. The intimate evening was the perfect close to Amelia Island's popular Dining Month, a seasonal celebration of the destination's culinary scene. [AmeliaIsland.com](http://AmeliaIsland.com)



"Tide to Table" dinner attendees enjoy decadent dishes and picturesque views.

## Mermaid Nova Returns to Florida's Adventure Coast

One year after Hurricane Helene swept her away, Nova the mermaid was finally returned to Rogers Park in Weeki Wachee on Florida's Adventure Coast. She came back restored, repainted, and stronger than ever. Her return means more than just a statue coming home. It's a symbol of the resilience and heart of the Hernando Beach community. Through loss and recovery, neighbors stood together and rebuilt. Nova's homecoming reminds us that even after the storm, we rise, rebuild, and keep moving forward. [FloridasAdventureCoast.com](http://FloridasAdventureCoast.com)

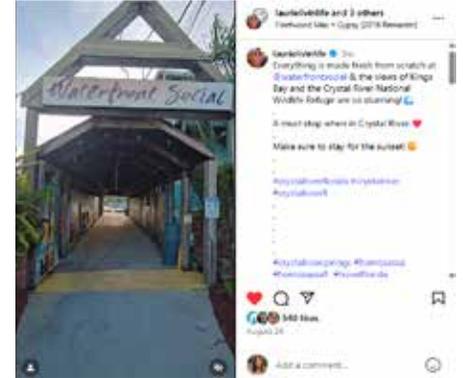


Sarah Hill Realty along with residents of Hernando Beach celebrate Nova's return.

## Discover Crystal River Florida Hosts Foodie Influencers

In August, Discover Crystal River Florida (DCRF) leveraged shoulder season to host media and focus on the evergreen "under-the-radar eats" story angle. Targeting the No. 1 drive market of Tampa, DCRF coordinated visits for three top foodie influencers, including customized itineraries for each.

Three accommodations, three parks, and 13 different dining partners participated. Social coverage quickly followed, tastefully highlighting Citrus County's scratch-kitchen menus, fresh seafood, and waterfront views, generating 133k impressions, 68k views, and 3k engagements. [DiscoverCrystalRiverFL.com](http://DiscoverCrystalRiverFL.com)



First-person video reels capture the under-the-radar food scene throughout Citrus County.

## Daytona Beach Area CVB Launches Fall Fine Dining Initiative

The Daytona Beach Area CVB promoted "Savor September," a Daytona Beach area restaurant dining month designed for visitors and residents to explore the diverse dining options within the destination. It's the second straight year that the CVB has put together a special dining month where participating restaurants offered specially crafted menus with two- or three-course meals at \$20, \$40, and \$60 price points. [DaytonaBeach.com](http://DaytonaBeach.com)



From fresh seafood and other appetizing creations, "Savor September" showcased Daytona Beach's emerging cuisine scene to both residents and visitors. Photo: Daytona Beach Area CVB



# Quick Trips!

## Cedar Key Clam Trail Is SunSational!

Levy County is a second place award winner in the 2025 SunSational Awards sponsored by the Florida Festivals & Events Association. The Cedar Key Clam Trail, a self-guided culinary and educational experience along Florida's Big Bend coast, was recognized in the Community Outreach Program category. It focuses on the region's clam and other shellfish industries. The Clam Trail was used as a recovery campaign for Cedar Key after a difficult storm season in 2024. [VisitLevy.com](http://VisitLevy.com)



Two of the clam sculptures in the award-winning Cedar Key Clam Trail

## Shalimar Beach Resort Reopens on Sanibel Island

Shalimar Beach Resort recently reopened as the first fully rebuilt resort on Sanibel Island after Hurricane Ian. The 33-room property offers Gulf-front studios plus one- and two-bedroom villas. Family-owned since 1959, it is also the island's first new hotel in 40 years. Shalimar is the first project to meet the updated Sanibel Island Resort Housing Development District Standards. Built for resiliency, it features impact-resistant construction, elevated buildings, and more than 500 concrete pilings. [VisitFortMyers.com](http://VisitFortMyers.com)



The rooms at the all-new Shalimar Beach Resort include a kitchenette, microwave, refrigerator, and stove.

## Palm Coast and the Flagler Beaches Celebrates Compass Hotel by Margaritaville Opening

Palm Coast and the Flagler Beaches Tourism Development Office welcomed the Compass Hotel by Margaritaville to the destination in May. The boutique hotel, located at 111 S. Daytona Ave. in Flagler Beach, features 100 spacious guest rooms, a complimentary guest breakfast, meeting space, and a private outdoor pool. Dining options include an on-site restaurant, The Salty Rim Bar and Grill, and a rooftop bar boasting ocean views. [VisitFlagler.com](http://VisitFlagler.com)



The Compass Hotel by Margaritaville celebrated its grand opening in late May.

## Discover Lake County Partners With UCF Athletics

Discover Lake County and UCF Athletics have partnered to promote tourism and showcase Central Florida's natural beauty and athletic spirit. Through this collaboration, Lake County—known for its 1,000 lakes, rolling hills, and outdoor adventures—connects with UCF fans and visitors, encouraging them to explore the region beyond the game. The partnership highlights Lake County as Florida's Lakeside Escape, where sports, recreation, and hospitality come together to create unforgettable experiences for residents and visitors alike. [DiscoverLakeCountyFL.com](http://DiscoverLakeCountyFL.com)





## Clay County, Florida Is Leading Destination for Rodeos, Equestrian Events

Clay County, Florida has become a leading destination for rodeo and equestrian events, blending Southern tradition with top-tier facilities at the Clay County Fairgrounds' Cattleman's Arena. The arena hosts major events like the JC Kitaif Pro Rodeo/Clay County Pro Rodeo and River City Hunter Jumper Association shows. Nearby, Seamark Ranch has emerged as a new venue, hosting its first rodeo last year with plans to expand. Beyond the arenas, visitors can enjoy horse riding lessons, scenic trail rides, and group tours year-round, adding to the county's vibrant equestrian culture. [ExploreClay.com](http://ExploreClay.com)



"Rodeo and equestrian events are a staple in Clay County, Florida," says Teddy Meyer, director of tourism.  
Photo: Torrefect Media ([TorrefectPhotography.com](http://TorrefectPhotography.com))

## Red Bull's First-Ever Tandem Rollercoaster Thrills in Orlando North, Seminole County

Cranes Roost Park in Altamonte Springs welcomed more than 40,000 spectators for the first-ever U.S. Red Bull Tandem Rollercoaster—showcasing Orlando North, Seminole County as a premier venue for headline-grabbing sporting events. The high-flying competition featured 30 creative tandem bike teams and celebrity judges including Orlando Magic legend Dwight Howard. The event highlighted the destination's growing appeal for innovative, high-energy activations that draw major crowds and global brands alike. [DoOrlandoNorth.com](http://DoOrlandoNorth.com)



Celebrity judges Dwight Howard, Meagan Ethell, and Zack Fairhurst score competitors at Red Bull's first U.S. Tandem Rollercoaster in Orlando North, Seminole County.

## 2025 North With the Tigers Trip: A Home Run Success!

The annual 2025 North With the Tigers trip, led by Publix Supermarket CFO Barney Barnett and sponsored and organized by Visit Central Florida, proved to be another overwhelming success. Approximately 35 sponsors and official representatives from Polk County made the journey to Philadelphia to cheer on the Detroit Tigers against the Philadelphia Phillies. The annual trip is critical to deepening the partnership with the Tigers and creating more community partnerships. [VisitCentralFlorida.org](http://VisitCentralFlorida.org)



Polk County officials and sponsors enjoy a Detroit Tigers' win at Citizens Bank Park in Philadelphia against the Phillies. Polk County and the Tigers have the longest standing partnership between a Major League Baseball organization and a Spring Training home, entering its 90th year this spring.

## Sunsets & Slow Days in Mexico Beach

Discover Mexico Beach celebrated an unforgettable September with its Sunsets & Slow Days series. The month-long lineup included the return of the weekly Thursday night's Music in the Park, which drew record attendance. Then, a self-guided beach cleanup on Fridays was incorporated. Visitors and residents were invited to participate in self-guided cleanups to collect trash that ensured a pristine shoreline. More than 60 participants took part, receiving branded merchandise as a thank-you for helping maintain The Unforgettable Coast. [MexicoBeach.com](http://MexicoBeach.com)



Crowds gather to enjoy live music and breathtaking sunsets for Discover Mexico Beach's September Music in the Park concert series—Music, Sunsets, and Slow Days.



## Visit Jacksonville Names Inaugural Tourism Ambassador of the Year

Visit Jacksonville recently named Tina Sauvage the 2025 Jacksonville Tourism Ambassador of the Year. With an unmatched passion for all-things Jacksonville, Tina turns Jacksonville's history and culture into living stories through her historic walking, culinary, and new family-friendly Junior Explorer tours with her company, Jax Tours. She also recently spearheaded the restoration of the iconic Jacob's Jewelers clock in Downtown Jacksonville. Through her creativity, enthusiasm, and visitor-first mindset, Tina inspires pride in locals and sparks curiosity in travelers. [VisitJacksonville.com](http://VisitJacksonville.com)



Visit Jacksonville's President & CEO Michael Corrigan, Jacksonville Tourism Ambassador of the Year Tina Sauvage, and Visit Jacksonville's Community Outreach Manager Joey Bell

## VCB-Led Project Helps One of Florida's Most Popular Events Shine Even Brighter

The St. Augustine, Ponte Vedra & The Beaches VCB launched a new app to enhance the 32nd annual world-renowned St. Augustine Nights of Lights experience. Developed with input from local officials, businesses, and residents, the app features real-time event updates, parking and shuttle schedules, new curated walk-through routes, and more—offering visitors and locals a more informed and illuminating holiday experience. The app is available on the Apple App Store and Google Play. [FloridasHistoricCoast.com](http://FloridasHistoricCoast.com)



Discover St. Augustine's Nights of Lights app is a real-time guide to parking, events, dining, shopping, and holiday fun.

## Greater Miami CVB Helps Turn Food Waste Into 1,550 Meals

The Greater Miami CVB convention services team partnered with [FoodRecovery.org](http://FoodRecovery.org), the Miami Beach Convention Center, and the Americas Food & Beverage Show to support a food recovery initiative that made a big impact. Through this effort, [FoodRecovery.org](http://FoodRecovery.org) collected 1,868 pounds of prepared food that was redistributed to people in need through Feeding South Florida. The donation provided more than 1,550 meals and, by diverting food from the landfill, also prevented 0.09 metric tons of CO2 emissions (equal to driving 2,342 miles) while saving 123,000 gallons of water. [MiamiandMiamiBeach.com](http://MiamiandMiamiBeach.com)



A Feeding South Florida truck brings food to people in need.

## Martin County Joins Satellite Media Tour, Gains 14M+ Impressions

Martin County was one of just two destinations selected to join VISIT FLORIDA's latest Satellite Media Tour (SMT) in celebration of National Thrive Outside Day on Oct. 9. Travel expert Jennifer Broome highlighted Martin County's 22+ miles of uncrowded beaches, 115,000 acres of parks and conservation land, and diverse range of outdoor adventures. She completed 25 interviews across national and local broadcast in key markets including Chicago, Philadelphia, Boston, and more—garnering more than 14M impressions. [DiscoverMartin.com](http://DiscoverMartin.com)



Jennifer Broome shares exciting updates from Martin County and Ocala/Marion County.



## Visit St. Pete-Clearwater Brings America's Favorite Beaches to Atlanta

Visit St. Pete-Clearwater brought some serious flavor to this year's Atlanta Food and Wine Festival! Chef Cruz and the Bon Appetit team from Dunedin served up sumptuous selections from America's Favorite Beaches over the city's signature four-day celebration. The menu of Florida pink shrimp stuffed with blue crab, petit Cuban sandwich, Gulf grouper with mango slaw and Key lime aioli, and burrata cheese with Florida strawberries gave Atlanta a dynamic taste of Visit St. Pete-Clearwater's culinary culture. [VisitStPeteClearwater.com](http://VisitStPeteClearwater.com)



Chef Cruz and the Bon Appetit team prepared delicious dishes all weekend at the Atlanta Food and Wine Festival.

## Visit Orlando Launches New City Break Campaign

Visit Orlando launched its first City Break campaign to position Orlando as a top urban getaway for Gen Z travelers. Running Sept. 15–Nov. 15, with a TikTok-first strategy, the campaign spotlights the culinary scene, nightlife, shopping, and cosmopolitan appeal of the destination. The integrated campaign features places to visit and experience through TV spots, a Gen Z-focused landing page on [VisitOrlando.com](http://VisitOrlando.com), and more. By highlighting Orlando as both convenient and upscale, Visit Orlando is working to redefine the city as a vibrant, value-rich urban escape for younger audiences. [VisitOrlando.com](http://VisitOrlando.com)



A TikTok-first strategy, part of Visit Orlando's new City Break campaign, positions Orlando as a top urban getaway for Gen Z travelers in the U.S.

## Okaloosa Island's Bridge-to-Bridge Path Lights Up the Night

Destin-Fort Walton Beach is lighting up the coast with the grand opening of its new four-mile glow-in-the-dark Bridge-to-Bridge Multi-Use Path on Okaloosa Island. This 12-foot-wide path connects the Brooks and Marler bridges, glowing after dark with photo luminescent materials and offering a fun, safe route for walkers, runners, and cyclists alike. Funded by tourism dollars, state grants, and private support, the path boosts recreation and connectivity along the scenic Highway 98. [DestinFWB.com](http://DestinFWB.com)



The new four-mile Bridge-to-Bridge Multi-Use Path on Okaloosa Island features glow-in-the-dark materials, offering a safe and scenic route for pedestrians and cyclists between the Brooks and Marler bridges.

## A Taste of Tradition: Kissimmee's Latin Culinary Trail Debuts

Experience Kissimmee, in partnership with Atlas Obscura, has launched the Kissimmee Latin Culinary Trail, a curated journey featuring restaurants, cafés, food trucks, and bars that celebrate Osceola County's Hispanic and Latino heritage. The trail showcases local culinary traditions and highlights standout establishments, providing travelers with an authentic taste of Kissimmee's diverse food scene. Extended content, including recipes, videos, and a podcast episode, will be released throughout the year to further showcase the region's rich culture and vibrant flavors. [ExperienceKissimmee.com](http://ExperienceKissimmee.com)



Authentic Latin dishes from Mi Llano Grill, a participating partner of Experience Kissimmee's Latin Culinary Trail



## Ocala/Marion County Draws Global Media Attention Through Press Trips

The Ocala/Marion County VCB concluded another successful year of FAM trips, hosting a total of 38 media both domestic and international—from Brazil, Canada, Mexico, Germany, France, and the UK. FAMs highlighted Ocala/Marion County with unique angles covering a diverse range of stories, including outdoor, leisure, wellness, family, history, equine, and culinary travel. These press trips contributed to the VCB's \$14M in earned media coverage and a reach of more than 1.7B for the year. [OcalaMarion.com](http://OcalaMarion.com)



Florida Huddle 2025 in February hosted media from around the world.

## Accessible Adventures Await in The Palm Beaches

Discover The Palm Beaches is proud to partner with Wheel the World to promote and enhance accessible tourism in the region. Through this collaboration, Wheel the World has completed 80 accessibility assessments at hotels and attractions across The Palm Beaches, showcasing inclusive experiences for travelers with disabilities. The initiative includes an online travel booking platform and video content, reinforcing the region's commitment to welcoming all visitors with sensory-friendly and wheelchair-accessible adventures. [ThePalmBeaches.com](http://ThePalmBeaches.com)



Ocean Reef Park on Singer Island offers coastal beauty as one of many accessible areas in The Palm Beaches.

## Sarasota County to Host BMX World Cup

Visit Sarasota County is thrilled to welcome back the UCI BMX Racing World Cup in both 2026 and 2027 at Sarasota BMX, previously held locally in 2016. These events serve as qualifiers for the 2028 Summer Olympic Games in Los Angeles. First built in 1974, the Sarasota BMX track is the oldest continuously running BMX track in the United States. Hosting international events brings strong economic returns and continues to position Sarasota County as a premier destination for world-class competition. [VisitSarasota.com](http://VisitSarasota.com)



Sarasota County BMX track where UCI BMX Racing World Cup will be held

## Florida's Space Coast Office of Tourism Promotes Destination in Switzerland

Florida's Space Coast Office of Tourism participated in the Visit USA Switzerland Roadshow Sept. 16–18 in five Swiss cities: St. Gallen, Zürich, Lucerne, Basel, and Bern. Twelve USA partners presented their product information and highlights to approximately 100 Swiss travel agents during the week. Each event began with an overview by Visit USA and Brand USA, and the partners presented to the agents in small groups with 15-minute presentations. [VisitSpaceCoast.com](http://VisitSpaceCoast.com)



Rukhsana Timmis (center, green shirt) represents Florida's Space Coast Office of Tourism at the Switzerland Roadshow.



# Quick Trips!

## Statewide Spotlight on Alachua County

Alachua County proudly hosted the Florida Association of Counties Innovation Day and Policy Conference, welcoming more than 200 leaders from all 67 counties. Delegates toured West End Park, the Alachua County Agriculture and Equestrian Center, the Sports & Events Center, Ben Hill Griffin Stadium, and the UF/IFAS Field & Fork Farm and Gardens. Led by Visit Gainesville, Alachua County's successful bid, the event highlighted the county's innovation, collaboration, and the exceptional places that define the county on the statewide stage. [VisitGainesville.com](http://VisitGainesville.com)



During the Florida Association of Counties Innovation Day tour, statewide delegates explored how Alachua County and the University of Florida set the standard for game day safety and collaboration, serving more than 90,000 attendees at Ben Hill Griffin Stadium.

## Visit Panama City Beach Joins With Tourism Partners for Sales Training

Visit Panama City Beach proudly hosted a sales training with Dynamic Sales Solutions, Inc., in September, welcoming their tourism partners to join them. The Gulf views from the SpringHill Suites meeting space made for the perfect backdrop to hone their skills and strategies. The Visit Panama City Beach staff appreciated the opportunity to collaborate with Dynamic Sales Solutions and their industry partners to strengthen their collective sales efforts. [VisitPanamaCityBeach.com](http://VisitPanamaCityBeach.com)



Visit Panama City Beach staff and tourism partners at the Dynamic Sales Solutions training

## Pensacola Earns Double Recognition From *Condé Nast Traveler*

Visit Pensacola recently celebrated two national recognitions from *Condé Nast Traveler*. For the third year in a row, the destination ranked in the top 10 among the Best Small Cities in the U.S. and was featured in the publication's Bright Ideas in Travel 2025 list, honoring Bruce Beach among the players, places, and projects moving the travel industry into the future. These accolades highlight Pensacola's growing reputation as a dynamic destination where visitors can enjoy The Way to Beach™. [VisitPensacola.com](http://VisitPensacola.com)



Visit Pensacola is honored to be named to *Condé Nast Traveler's* Bright Ideas in Travel 2025 list for the destination's work reimagining Bruce Beach, a powerful recognition of community, history, and renewal.

## Paradise Coast Celebrates Stone Crab Season in Everglades City

The Blessing of the Stone Crab Fleet was held Sept. 27 in Everglades City—known as the "Stone Crab Capital of the World." This annual event, sponsored by the Florida Stone Crabbers Association, is a cherished coastal celebration of community spirit rooted in a centuries-old tradition of blessing the fleet for a safe and bountiful season. Stone crabs are a major draw for tourism in Florida, attracting residents and visitors from around the world eager to savor the freshest claws and support an industry built by generations of crabbers. [ParadiseCoast.com](http://ParadiseCoast.com)



Blessing of the Fleet ahead of Stone Crab Season, which opened Oct. 15



## Visit Lauderdale Wins Best of Meetings Today Award

Visit Lauderdale has been named a winner in the prestigious Best of Meetings Today Awards, as voted on by the meeting planner audience. This recognition highlights the team's hard work in making Greater Fort Lauderdale a top choice for meetings and conventions, showcasing their world-class venues, welcoming community, and unparalleled hospitality. Congratulations to the Convention & Group Sales team for helping Visit Lauderdale earn this industry honor! [VisitLauderdale.com](http://VisitLauderdale.com)



Fort Lauderdale Beach  
Photo: Visit Lauderdale

## Visit Tampa Bay Launches New Family-Friendly Products

Visit Tampa Bay has launched its first-ever coloring book, *My First Tampa Bay Coloring Book*, and the game *Kids Travel Talk*, both designed to spark curiosity and engagement among young travelers. In partnership with the 1905 Family of Restaurants, *My First Tampa Bay Coloring Book* is filled with amazing places, magical buildings, and even a pirate ship or two. *Kids Travel Talk*, in collaboration with Anna De Jesus, prompts kids to share thoughts, ease travel anxiety, and encourage cultural exploration. [VisitTampaBay.com](http://VisitTampaBay.com)



The game *Kids Travel Talk* is available exclusively at the Unlock Tampa Bay Visitors Center while *My First Tampa Bay Coloring Book* is also sold in retail locations across the region. Together, they've added fresh energy and revenue to a growing merchandise line.

## Coastal Flavors in the Windy City

Walton County Tourism brought the beach to Chicago Gourmet's Chefs Get Pickled and Rooftop events! Guests sampled flavorful coastal bites from Chefs David Cunningham and Jim Shirley, sipped craft cocktails, and took their best shot on the South Walton putting green. Many recognized the destination from past visits and ad campaigns—making it the perfect moment to inspire Chicagoans dreaming of sugar-white sand as winter approaches. [WCFLTourism.com](http://WCFLTourism.com)



The Walton County Tourism team, Chefs David Cunningham and Jim Shirley, and the Seaside team stand behind their South Walton setup at Chicago Gourmet, serving coastal bites and craft cocktails to Chicago guests ahead of winter.

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