

TourismMarketing Today

The Official Newsletter of Destinations Florida, Inc. | www.DestinationsFlorida.org | July 2020

Reopening Stories Demonstrate Florida Tourism Industry's Resilience

While Florida's residents and visitors sheltered at home, the state's DMOs and their tourism industry partners were hard at work, developing and implementing plans to welcome everyone back to the many world-class beaches, restaurants, attractions, and recreational activities our state has to offer. Here is a sampling of the ways our tourism development professionals are encouraging visitors to come back and enjoy some time in the sun.

Florida Keys: Pack Facial Coverings

The Florida Keys & Key West is mandating that visitors and residents wear facial coverings or masks in businesses and other public venues with an overhead roof.

"We are embracing personal protective practices: mandating

facial coverings and urging social distancing and frequent hand washing," says Stacey Mitchell, director of the Monroe County TDC.



A boater enjoys the Lower Florida Keys Backcountry.

The 125-mile-long island chain—with scenic outdoor places and wide-open spaces—is an ideal getaway for social distancing in parks such as Fort Zachary Taylor Historic State Park in Key West, with snorkeling off the remote Fort Jefferson in Dry Tortugas National Park, or in the Lower Keys backcountry.

REOPENING continues on pg. 3

Florida Is Depending on You!

by Robert Skrob, CAE



Seeing guests return to hotels, attractions, and vacation rentals has been encouraging.

Meanwhile, surveys on visitor sentiment demonstrate we'll have to work hard to make visitors comfortable enough to travel again.

You and I both know you are up to the task. You can help visitors feel comfortable about traveling again. And, you can encourage them to travel now.

Thank you for your hard work. Florida is depending on you!

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

DIAMOND PARTNERS

miles **Connect**
PARTNERSHIP

PLATINUM PARTNERS

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution
REACH ATLANTA NOW
CoxNext

USA
VisitTheUSA.com
Brand USA

DS **downs & st. germain**
RESEARCH

SOJERN

expedia group
media solutions

MADDEN
Connect People to Places

CONVERSANT

GOLD PARTNERS

AAALIVING

KEYDATA

meredith
travel marketing

Tripadvisor

ARRIVALIST

SILVER PARTNERS

Aqua

NORTHSTAR
TRAVEL GROUP

INNTØPIA

CrowdRiff

ADARA

MEDIAONE

HAPPY Birthday

Jack Wert
July 1

Tammy Heon
July 2

Virginia Haley
July 17

DESTINATIONS
FLORIDA

TourismMarketing
Today

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

Robert Skrob, CAE,
Executive Director

Suzanne Hurst, CAE,
Deputy Executive Director

MaryLu Winchester,
Member Database

On the Cover

Traffic flows on the famed Florida Keys Overseas Highway toward Key West on June 1 as the Florida Keys & Key West reopens to visitors. The highway, an All-American Road, is known as the Highway That Goes to Sea.

Read more about reopenings in Florida on page 1.

Photo: Andy Newman/Florida Keys News Bureau

The Keys' five regions of Key Largo, Islamorada, Marathon, Big Pine and the Lower Keys, and Key West each have unique attractions and visitor experiences.

Protective health practices for the Keys, which reopened to visitors June 1, are updated frequently on *Fla-Keys.com*. A video, *Florida Keys Coronavirus Travel Tips*, features Dr. Mark Whiteside, Monroe County's medical director, with visitor safety tips.

Signage was also created for Keys lodging.

Florida's Sports Coast Invites Visitors to Get Back to Adventure

On March 15, Experience Florida's Sports Coast launched its #GetBacktoAdventure re-marketing campaign, starting with promotion of the bay scallop season in July. The campaign is aimed to promote outdoor adventure travel to couples, solo



Hunting for scallops along Florida's Sports Coast provides fun for all ages.

travelers, and families including but not limited to the following activities: camping, hiking, biking/cycling, water sports, and bucket-list adventures. The campaign is

being delivered through digital banners, SEM, pre-roll, and social media, and will continue into the fall following the conclusion of scalloping season.

Tampa Bay's Reopening Includes al Fresco Dining, World-Class Attractions, Outdoor Activities

With summer now in full swing, Tampa Bay's tourism industry begins to safely and responsibly reopen following guidelines set out by the Centers for Disease Control and the Florida Department of Public Health.



The nationally recognized Lift up Local program has allowed for expanded outdoor seating in some of Tampa Bay's most iconic neighborhoods.

The City of Tampa has been nationally recognized for its measures to transform public spaces into al fresco dining areas for restaurants. Visitors and residents alike can enjoy expanded patio and outdoor seating in some of Tampa Bay's most iconic neighborhoods, including historic Seventh Avenue in Ybor City and the upscale Hyde Park Village.

Tampa Bay's world-class attractions, including Busch Gardens® Tampa Bay, The Florida Aquarium, ZooTampa at Lowry Park, the Glazer Children's Museum, the Tampa Museum of Art, Topgolf,

REOPENING continues on pg. 4

and more return with updated guidelines to ensure the safety and well-being of staff and visitors.

The stunning Tampa Riverwalk, state and local parks, and water activities along the Hillsborough River continue to make Tampa Bay the home of Florida's Most Open-Air Adventures and the centerpiece of Visit Tampa Bay's recovery campaign.

Discover The Palm Beaches Pursues STAR Accreditation, Raising the Bar for Safety

Continuing to follow its beacon of building trust and confidence among residents and visitors alike, Discover The Palm Beaches (DTPB) is raising the bar for safety—leading the destination to



Palm Beach County Convention Center and attached Hilton hotel
Photo: Discover The Palm Beaches

become the first and only in the state to pursue the Global Biorisk Advisory Council's (GBAC) STAR Accreditation. GBAC is a division of ISSA, the worldwide cleaning industry association, representing one of the industry's highest and most coveted standards of cleaning, disinfection, and infectious disease prevention.

In order to earn accreditation, facilities including the Palm Beach International Airport, Palm Beach County Convention Center, more

than 150 hotels, cultural institutions, and the county's two MLB Spring Training parks need to comply with all facets of the program's rigorous training and implementation program, as well as undergo annual audits by the council.

DTPB encourages other destinations to consider rallying this movement in their own communities.

Keeping Visitors to South Walton Informed and Connected

As part of Visit South Walton's response to the current health crisis, staff created a special Travel Updates page. Here, potential visitors and locals can



With visitors choosing travel destinations with health and safety in mind, Visit South Walton's occupation numbers have rebounded to above 2019 levels.

find up-to-date information about safety measures being enacted, the status of local accommodations, changes in restaurant operations, event updates, and ways to support the community. Executive orders from the Governor's Office, as well as local ordinances and resolutions from county leadership are summarized into easy-to-understand briefs.

As the central hub for current travel-related information in South Walton, these pages have been updated daily, providing the most timely and accurate information possible, helping visitors feel informed, empowered, and cared for. Since launching on March 18, these pages have had more than 200,000 page views, and the average time spent on these pages is almost three minutes.

Since short-term rental restrictions were lifted, current and projected occupancy rates in South Walton have rebounded to levels slightly above 2019 figures.

Flagler County Pledge Demonstrates Commitment to Safety

Palm Coast and the Flagler Beaches Tourism Development Office is rolling out a program that will allow tourism businesses to demonstrate their commitment to keeping their customers safe.



Adopted by the Tourism Development Office as a priority initiative, Pledge to Prevent is a voluntary program in which Flagler County tourism businesses commit to clean and healthy standards for their guests and employees to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Take the pledge by emailing your interest to tourism@visitflagler.com and a staff member will contact you. By taking the Pledge to Prevent you're committing to:

- Proper Use of Personal Protective Equipment
- Routine Cleaning and Disinfecting of Surfaces and Equipment
- Practicing Social Distancing and Minimized Contact
- Enforcing Any Sick Employees to Stay Home

www.visitflagler.com/pledgetoprevent

After taking the Pledge to Prevent, tourism businesses will receive these free items:
*While Supplies Last

- Face Masks For All Employees
- Disposable Paper Placemats For Restaurants
- Certificate of Commitment to Display
- Window Cling

Participating tourism businesses will receive free additional exposure and advertising through the Pledge to Prevent program.

By taking the Pledge to Prevent, businesses are committing to the following: proper use of

personal protective equipment; routine cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces and equipment; practicing social distancing and minimized contact; and enforcing sick employees to stay home.

Businesses that take the pledge will receive free assets such as facemasks for their employees with the Pledge to Prevent seal, disposable paper placemats for restaurants, a certificate of commitment, and a window cling of the seal to display.

"We want visitors to have confidence when they patronize a business in Flagler County," Tourism Director Amy Lukasik says. "This is a voluntary program in which Flagler County tourism businesses commit to clean and healthy standards for their guests and employees."

Crystal River Welcomes Return of Scalloping Season

Discover Crystal River is welcoming the return of Scalloping Season (July 1 to Sept. 24) to boost its reopening tourism economy. Shrimp boats operating in the Gulf of Mexico off Citrus County are reporting huge numbers of scallops in the sea grass beds offshore, meaning it should be an abundant season.



Scalloping is a fun and family-friendly activity for swimmers of all ages in Crystal River, Florida.
Photo: Romona Robbins Photography

"Scallop season is dominated by the drive market here in Florida," says John Pricher, director of Discover Crystal River Florida, "so it's a great boon for us having this particular season start just as we're reopening. It's perfect timing for our industry partners and community."

Scalloping is described by many local guides as an underwater Easter egg hunt. Swimmers of every age dive in the warm, shallow waters of this part of the Gulf to pluck scallops from the swaying sea grass.

"It's really unique to this region of Florida," says Pritcher. "It's a family-friendly adventure that becomes a tradition. Families come back year after year and tend to book lodging a year in advance."

Summer Sundays—Free on Florida's Historic Coast

In an effort to kick-start recovery efforts on Florida's Historic Coast, the St. Augustine and Ponte Vedra VCB launched a Summer



Summer Sundays are making a splash on Florida's Historic Coast.
Photo: FloridasHistoricCoast.com

Sundays promotion to run from June through September. The goal of the campaign is to promote mid-week trips to the destination by offering a free Sunday night stay with a Wednesday check-in or Thursday check-out. Along

with lodging, the area's local restaurants, attractions, and tours are also offering free promotions on Sundays ranging from complimentary appetizers to BOGO admissions.

"Research indicated there was already pent-up demand for travel and that drive destinations were likely going to be the first to recover. Summer Sundays gives travelers an added incentive to include us in their road trip travel plans," says Richard Goldman, president & CEO of the St. Johns County VCB.

As the campaign rolls out and continues to add free offers to its webpage, the destination has seen an uptick in visitors.

Florida's Space Coast Says Welcome Back

The Space Coast Office of Tourism is launching a new summer campaign to welcome back tourists via billboards, TV, radio, and digital/social media ads encouraging families across Florida to enjoy the



A billboard promotes the Space Coast Office of Tourism's summer campaign.

waves, whether it's in the ocean or from the friendly staff at hotels, restaurants, and attractions. Visitors looking for safe destinations to enjoy with their families will notice use of facemasks, gloves, hand sanitizer stations, and social distancing signage across the campaign and in locations on the Space Coast.

The Space Coast Office of Tourism encourages visitors and residents to seek out their favorite local spots this summer and to discover new ones as tourists in their backyards. There are many hidden gems just waiting to be found. There's Space for You Here.

Bradenton, Anna Maria Island, Longboat Key Invites Travelers to Make a Break for It

With signs of reopening and an increase in intent to travel, the Bradenton Area CVB recently launched a brand-consistent, integrated campaign designed to emphasize the beach, revive the restaurants, bring back the properties, visually prove the destination's visitability, and assure the health and safety of



its visitors—all to distinguish the destination as safe and the most desirable of its competitive set. Known as Make a Break for It, the campaign name (and initiatives) play on both the pent-up demand for travel and the many opportunities to escape from it all in the destination.

The campaign includes paid search, digital advertising, social media advertising and organic efforts, public relations, TV spots, and more, all concentrating on the top assets that set the destination apart (namely its beaches) as well as other specific aspects of the destination's economy most needing recovery and most necessary to the visitation experience (e.g., accommodations and restaurants).

Orlando Awaits: Welcome Back to Orlando

As many attractions, hotels, and restaurants are now open, with more added daily, Visit Orlando has launched a new webpage to showcase what is open/coming soon and new safety measures



Many of the region's attractions are now open with enhanced safety measures.

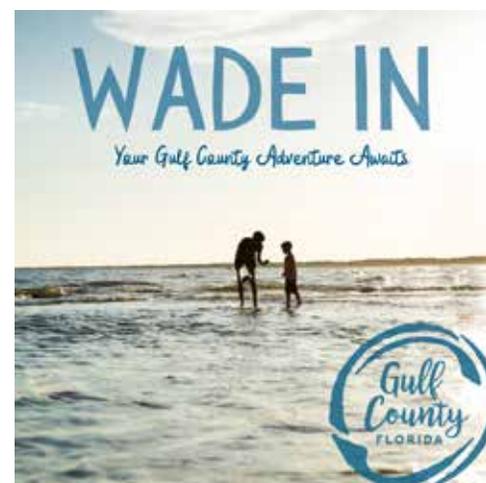
throughout the destination. In addition to healthy travel and reopening information, the page also includes special Welcome Back offers to help visitors make the most of their vacations.

Visit Orlando's publicity team is also communicating proactively to national media to secure positive stories on the destination's reopening and enhanced safety efforts. Just recently, Visit Orlando President & CEO George Aguel was interviewed by the *Miami Herald* as the National Basketball

Association and Major League Soccer will resume play this summer in Orlando. The return of professional sports to Orlando is incredible testament to the trust these organizations place in the safety and capabilities of the destination.

Gulf County Invites Visitors to Wade In to Travel

Gulf County launched its Wade In campaign as vacation rentals were opened on May 19. Messaging encourages visitors to feel confident in travel to Gulf County by highlighting new partner processes and social distancing activities.



Gulf County, Florida asks visitors to Wade In to travel again and utilize planning resources at VisitGulf.com/GetYourFeetWet.

"It also promotes respectful visitation to keep our residents safe," states TDC Executive Director Kelli Godwin.

The digital campaign targets drive markets, as many consumers are opting for road trips, and directs potential visitors to a custom landing page full of resources and information for planning their trip. The information is compiled and updated as guidelines change and helps travelers "get their feet wet" in this new travel environment. In

the first four weeks, the message served more than 2.2 million impressions via social and other targeted media outlets and is being delivered to incoming guests through lodging partners before their trip. The Welcome Center is also encouraging visitors to wear masks by providing reusable, logoed face coverings.

Know the Feeling Campaign Promotes Recovery on The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel

Know the Feeling is the new in-recovery marketing campaign of The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel. It aims to provide vacation inspiration, as well as invoke feelings of hope and positivity for travelers looking

to get away as the effects of the health crisis begin to subside. The messaging and creative are centered on communicating the relaxing and upbeat spirit of the area by showcasing the many ways the destination makes people feel.



The in-recovery campaign emphasizes the relaxing and upbeat spirit of the destination.

Target markets include resilient travelers within its drive and short-haul, primary domestic fly markets, with emphasis on locations within a 250- to 750-mile radius. Additional areas will be added as restrictions are lifted.

Based on recent media consumption data insights, this Know the Feeling in-recovery campaign shifts away from traditional TV to utilize streaming technologies, digital extensions, paid search, out-of-home video, and social media to maximize reach.

Panama City Beach Says Welcome Back

The community as a whole has faced much uncertainty over the last couple of months, but one thing has remained the same: Panama City Beach's loyal visitors.

Visit Panama City Beach launched four digital marketing campaigns designed to keep residents and visitors alike

REOPENING continues on pg. 8



Helping Marketers Reach Travelers from Dream to Destination

Sojern's digital marketing solutions for travel are built on more than a decade of expertise analyzing the complete traveler path to purchase. The company drives travelers from dream to destination by activating multi-channel branding and performance solutions on the Sojern Traveler Platform for more than 10,000 customers around the world.

www.sojern.com/contact



informed and engaged. Stay PCB Current is an informative campaign that provides residents with the most recent updates provided by the CDC and elected officials. In addition to Stay PCB Current, the DMO launched #MyPCB, PCB Through Our Eyes, Home at the Beach, and The Beach Always Brings Us Back. These campaigns provided followers with virtual experiences, opportunities to share their favorite PCB memories, and Real. FUN. Beach activities to try at home.

Currently, the Welcome Back campaign has driven more than 5,500 website sessions as it has resonated with visitors. Real. FUN. Beach at Home resulted in 250,000 video views and 5,000 ad engagements.



Visitors are happy to be back in Panama City Beach.

"As we move into our new normal, we are excited to welcome our visitors back to the World's Most Beautiful Beaches," says Visit Panama City Beach President & CEO Dan Rowe.

Visit Central Florida/ Polk County Focuses on Drive Market

Polk County Tourism and Sports Marketing (PCTSM) has been hard

at work over these trying past months, on a mission to reopen the destination with safety and data-driven research as top of mind. PCTSM has developed three extensive documents to guide reopening: 1) PCTSM Tourism Industry Research Summary, including a consumer sentiment study; 2) Destination Health & Safety Plan; and 3) Post COVID-19 Strategic Tourism Sales and Marketing Plan.

To support its tourism and sports industry partners, PCTSM has purchased and delivered floor and window clings to businesses and sanitation devices to sports and events venues.

The destination is well-known for its lakes and natural lands, with wide open spaces and plenty



downs & st. germain
RESEARCH

Excellence in
tourism market research.

www.dsg-research.com

joseph@dsg-research.com

1.800.564.3182



A family enjoys a pontoon boat cruise on one of Polk County's 554 lakes.

of outdoor activities for visitors to enjoy. PCTSM is continuing to market these treasures with heightened emphasis on the drive market demographic.

GMCVB Introduces Miami Spice Early in Phase 2 of Miami Shines Campaign

To coincide with the reopening of hotels and beaches, the GMCVB

launched Phase 2 of Miami Shines, its comprehensive travel and tourism recovery program to promote Greater Miami and the Beaches as a place for vacations and future meetings and conventions business. The program features promotional incentives at restaurants, hotels, spas, museums, and attractions to drive demand and stimulate business for the hard-hit tourism industry.

"Our number one priority at the GMCVB is to responsibly drive demand to our partners in Greater Miami's tourism industry," says William D. Talbert III, CDME, president & CEO of the GMCVB.

Under the Miami Shines platform, the GMCVB also launched the beloved Miami Spice Restaurant program two months early, and it will run through



September 30. Specially curated Spice and Stay packages offer guests special rates at participating hotels when paired with Miami Spice meals on property. A complete list of offers and program details are available at MiamiShines.com.

Experience Kissimmee Markets Reopened Industry

Experience Kissimmee is now marketing its reopened industry

REOPENING continues on pg. 10

Arrivalist

Measuring the way media moves us

www.arrivalist.com

New. Now. Meredith.

30+ iconic brands reaching 200+ million consumers

FOR ADVERTISING OPPORTUNITIES CONTACT:
 Stacey Rosseter, Integrated Account Manager, Navigate Media
 678.571.7445 | srosseter@navigate-media.com

partners. The team presented a five-phased recovery framework proposal to its board of directors and to Osceola's county commissioners. In late May, the Commission voted to give \$1M toward the organization's marketing recovery efforts.



A look at Experience Kissimmee's new materials shows one of the many match-ups being used to market the destination.

On June 9, Experience Kissimmee launched its digital marketing campaign. The focus is primarily on drive markets (within 800 miles), featuring new brand materials with a twist in messaging. The visual match-ups reflect the transition from staying at home to experiencing the outdoor adventures Kissimmee has to offer.

The call to action for Experience Kissimmee's new campaign is Let's Go, and drives consumers to the organization's newly designed homepage. Experience Kissimmee is working with its major media partners that deliver quick conversation rates, while the marketing and research team continuously works to identify core markets that meet the organization's consumer profile considerations.

Amelia Island Targets Likely Travelers

The Amelia Island CVB has launched an aggressive recovery marketing campaign. Building on its award-winning and highly effective Come Make Memories brand promise, the AICVB's new

Moments campaign focuses heavily on digital advertising to reach those audiences who are returning to travel.



After conducting a detailed analysis of the latest travel research, efforts are now underway to attract past guests who know and love Amelia and are likely to visit someplace familiar; families, couples, and singles within easy driving distance of the island; and millennial and GenX travelers, who are currently more responsive to travel messaging. The campaign relies heavily on digital advertising, which allows better audience targeting, real-time optimization based on performance, and higher cost efficiency. Creatively, the campaign leverages messaging and visuals from the destination's well-established, award-winning Ever So Slightly campaign.

Visit Pensacola Implements Marketing Campaigns in Phases

Visit Pensacola has taken a dynamic marketing approach to reopen the destination. In the first phase of reopening, Visit Pensacola switched from a Healthy Travel Updates page on the website to a While You Are Here page. The latter was a consumer-approached message that, while including destination reopening information, also included items such as lodging, beach safety, and topics more closely related to visitor experiences.

As the shelter-at-home order lifted, the Cabin Fever marketing campaign began in the local market, encouraging residents with pent-up demand to take a staycation. The campaign invited residents to take advantage of the destination in their backyard.



As Pensacola reopens, Visit Pensacola reminds residents and visitors in a variety of campaigns that they are welcome to experience the getaway they need.

Visit Pensacola is currently running a Wide Open Spaces campaign in a variety of drive markets. The campaign showcases beautiful, wide-open beaches and outdoor experiences, and informs travelers they can enjoy a vacation while practicing safe social distancing just a short drive away.

As reopening phases continue, marketing campaigns will widen in reach, all while keeping state and local safety advisories top of mind. The safety of the community and guests remains a top priority.

Destin-Fort Walton Beach Offers Personalized Adventures

This summer, Destin-Fort Walton Beach is launching Venture Out—a new travel product that introduces individual family adventures offered exclusively through select lodging partners. Each pack pairs a

unique water adventure with great local food, offering a personalized family experience.



Family adventure awaits in Destin-Fort Walton Beach.

With the help of an Adventure Guide—a local hospitality expert—guests can review several mom-approved packs via *DestinFWB.com* to select an adventure that suits their family’s interests and ages. The Venture Out packs offer a variety of options, including breakfast with dolphins, boat rentals, up-close animal encounters, and sandcastle lessons, all paired with menu offerings from some of the area’s restaurants, bringing Gulf-to-Table dining right to the visitor.

Ocala/Marion County Launches Reentry Campaign: Imagine

The Ocala/Marion County VCB launched a strategic reentry marketing/media campaign in



Start Imagining

Ocala/Marion County’s reentry campaign invites visitors to Imagine a place to make great memories.

mid-June. The campaign theme Imagine aims to inspire potential customers to imagine (re)discovering a place where experiential comforts, simple pleasures, and natural beauty meet. The VCB’s goal is to create a sense of place where people

can refresh and connect with family and friends in tandem with nature and the area’s outdoor playground. The brand story is reaching across multiple media channels, from social media and paid search to streaming and second screen targeting.

The VCB wants to share this beautiful destination, while ensuring customers’ confidence that Ocala/Marion County is a safe place to spend their vacation.

Tallahassee’s Open Spaces and Outdoor Recreation Make for a Perfect Florida Getaway

Visit Tallahassee is reentering the market with the Pretty.Unexpected campaign using a phased approach to its recovery marketing strategy. Utilizing a message of safety and a commitment to the health and well-being of visitors while highlighting the destination’s many outdoor activities, marketing efforts are initially focused on in-state drive markets and are anticipated to expand to the Southeast in August or September.



One of Tallahassee’s newest murals
Photo: Adieren Narro Photography

The destination’s strategic, full-funnel media strategy heavily utilizes digital display, search, native, video, and paid social. Visit Tallahassee is also taking advantage of the VISIT FLORIDA co-op match programs that include additional native, Pandora, and pre-roll video channels. Currently, the destination is beginning to reactivate PR

activities with media, social media influencers, and promotions.

LauderDeals: Irresistible Offers Draw Visitors Back

Visit Lauderdale is welcoming visitors with LauderDeals, a collection of irresistible offers on hotel stays, attractions, dining, and spas available through September throughout Greater Fort Lauderdale.

“Greater Fort Lauderdale’s 23 miles of beaches, parks, hotels, restaurants, attractions, and shops are open, all with our destination Safe + Clean protocols in place,” says Stacy Ritter, president and CEO of Visit Lauderdale.

Hotel Deals range from discounted room rates, offers for third or fourth nights free, and more. Things to Do Deals include 2-for-1 admission or discounted rates at attractions. Dine Out Lauderdale offers three-course prix fixe menus priced at \$35 and \$45. Spa Days specials include signature treatments with prices starting at \$99.

STR data continues to show positive improvement in hotel occupancy, ADR, and RevPAR. Restaurant reservation app OpenTable reported that Greater Fort Lauderdale restaurant reservations show the second highest signs of recovery out of the Florida markets it is tracking.



Visitors are invited to visit Lauderdale and save with LauderDeals on hotel stays, attractions, dining, and spa treatments through September.

WE INSPIRE TRAVEL

Miles Partnership markets destinations and hospitality businesses by creating innovative digital and print content marketing solutions.



STRATEGIC
CONSULTING



CONTENT
CREATION &
DISTRIBUTION



BRANDING
& CREATIVE



DIGITAL
DEVELOPMENT &
OPTIMIZATION



MEDIA
PLANNING
& BUYING



REVENUE
GENERATION &
COOP PROGRAMS

miles
PARTNERSHIP

milespartnership.com



Case Update: Airbnb & the TDT



Steven M. Hogan

In 2014, the Palm Beach County Tax Collector (Tax Collector) filed a lawsuit against Airbnb and other online short-term rental companies. The lawsuit sought a ruling that Airbnb and similar companies would be obligated to collect and remit tax on the rentals that they facilitated. (For the purpose of this article, we will use the term *Airbnb* to refer to all of the defendants.)



Is Airbnb obligated to collect or remit TDT on short-term rentals in Palm Beach County? The Fourth DCA has ruled no, but the County Tax Collector has until early July to seek a hearing before the Florida Supreme Court.

The trial court ruled against the Tax Collector in 2019, holding that Airbnb was not

obligated to collect or remit tax on the rentals that it facilitated in Palm Beach County. The Tax Collector then appealed to the Fourth District Court of Appeal (Fourth DCA).

The Fourth DCA ruled against the Tax Collector and upheld the trial court's decision. The parties filed post-opinion motions that were resolved on June 3, 2020, with no change in the opinion.

Practically this means that the Tax Collector has until early July

to attempt to bring the case before the Florida Supreme Court in an attempt to overturn the trial court's decision.

You can read the Fourth DCA's opinion here: <https://bit.ly/4thDCAairbnb>

The opinion was decided 2-1, with one judge authoring a dissenting opinion that would have found Airbnb liable for collecting and remitting tax on the rentals it facilitates.

The key legal issue as framed by the decision was whether Airbnb was the entity doing the renting in a way that would put it on the hook for the tax. The issue was decided in a way that placed the ultimate tax liability on the owner of the property rather than on Airbnb.

By the time you read this article, we may know whether or not the Tax Collector has decided to appeal to the Florida Supreme Court. Time will tell how this issue is ultimately resolved.

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.

expedia group
media solutions

EXPEDIA GROUP™
MEDIA SOLUTIONS

has revolutionized the way
brands reach and connect
with online travel consumers.

Learn about our solutions:
advertising.expedia.com





Visit Tampa Bay Works Toward Safe Reopening

In working toward a safe and responsible reopening, Visit Tampa Bay partnered with Tampa General Hospital to host free webinars where health experts answered questions. Topics ranged from individual safety and well-being to proper business protocol and guidelines. As part of Hillsborough County's economic recovery taskforce, Visit Tampa Bay partnered with the Tampa Bay Economic Development Council and Tampa Bay Chamber to create a Back to Business Toolkit, a resource to help safeguard local businesses. VisitTampaBay.com



Tampa General Hospital is a partner with Visit Tampa Bay in hosting free webinars with health professionals to help with Tampa Bay's safe reopening.

#LoveLevy Promotes Outdoor Recreation

While most of the area's business was being done virtually, Levy County Visitors Bureau and the Levy County BOCC asked local residents and visitors to share their favorite pictures and memories on social media. The BOCC agreed that citizens and visitors needed safe social distancing opportunities for families, and so Levy County boat ramps have not been closed during the shelter-at-home orders. The campaign #LoveLevy was a simple way to remind people of the importance of outdoor recreation to families. Levy County offered social distance activities before they were required! VisitLevy.com



A beautiful day at Cedar Key Beach
Photo: Joyce Stevenson, Cumming, Georgia

Florida's Sports Coast Wins Four Telly Awards

Florida's Sports Coast has won three Telly Awards for its video *Scalloping on FSC*, produced with local video production company JL Productions. The video won gold, silver, and bronze in the following categories: Gold Telly in Branded Content: Budget Under \$100,000; Silver Telly in Branded Content: Travel/Tourism; and Bronze Telly in Branded Content: Campaign: Promotional. This makes four total Telly Award wins for Florida's Sports Coast. FLSportsCoast.com



The award-winning video *Scalloping on FSC* invites families to experience a new adventure in Florida's Sports Coast.

Discover The Palm Beaches Hosts Association Forum on Face-to-Face Events

Hospitality and meetings experts from The Palm Beaches composed the panel of an Association Forum designed to prepare the industry for future face-to-face events. As part of the virtual event sponsored by Discover The Palm Beaches, panelists provided educational tips from the perspective of a DMO, resort, business development board, and venue, as well as examples of why it is vital for communities to work together. The webinar was free and open to the public. ThePalmBeaches.com



Boca Raton Resort & Club, whose president & managing director, John Tolbert, was among the panelists.
Photo: Discover The Palm Beaches



Virtual Beach Vibes in South Walton

While travel was restricted, the marketing team at Visit South Walton brought the experience of the area's 16 unique beach neighborhoods into visitors' homes through a #VirtualBeachVibes social media initiative. Fans had the opportunity to support local artists by tipping them during performances or purchasing gift cards to restaurants for future visits. The series garnered more than 19 million impressions on Facebook and 7 million impressions on Instagram, and a promoted video explaining beach closures was seen more than 1.3 million times across various platforms. VisitSouthWalton.com



Visit South Walton's weekly #VirtualBeachVibes concerts help support many of the area's talented musicians.

Human Spaceflight Returns to Florida's Space Coast

The Space Coast Office of Tourism celebrated #LaunchAmerica and the return to human spaceflight from Cape Canaveral and Kennedy Space Center. The attempt and subsequent launch at the end of May brought more than 200,000 people to Brevard County to view the historic moment, and generated an estimated \$2-3 million. In June, Governor DeSantis held a press conference in Viera announcing Brevard as the host of the 2020 Amateur Athletic Union Junior Olympic Games. VisitSpaceCoast.com



NASA astronauts Douglas Hurley and Robert Behnken are pictured with the SpaceX Falcon 9 and Dragon Capsule behind them. Photo: NASA

Englewood Beach Waterfest Named Top Event in Southeast

The Southeast Tourism Society has named Englewood Beach Waterfest an STS Top 20 Event in the Southeast for November 2020. This is the second consecutive year the event has earned an STS Top 20 Event honor. Englewood Beach Waterfest (EnglewoodBeachWaterfest.com) is Nov. 19-22 in Englewood and Manasota Key. The STS Top 20 Festival and Event Awards have highlighted programs around the Southeast since 1985. PureFlorida.com



The sixth annual Englewood Beach Waterfest, Nov. 19-22, is named an STS Top 20 Event in the Southeast for November 2020. Photo: Englewood Beach Waterfest

Turtles, Tacos & Tourism Community Block Party

Visit Flagler found many residents were unaware of the DMO and the impact that tourism has on the local economy. So the DMO created Turtles, Tacos & Tourism to inform and delight residents while unveiling the newest art installation on the Palm Coast Arts Foundation Turtle Trail. This community block party included free food, music, contests, and other activities aimed at increasing affinity and knowledge about welcoming visitors and the complex scope of what the organization does. VisitFlagler.com



Attendees participate in a Tacky Tourist Costume Contest for a chance to win a free two-night stay at Hammock Beach Resort.



Lee County VCB Curates Virtual Book Club Discussion

The Lee County VCB invited media to join a virtual book club celebrating the 65th anniversary of *Gift from the Sea*. The book, written by Anne Morrow Lindbergh and inspired by her visit to Captiva Island, remains relevant to readers today. Media from major outlets, including *The Boston Globe* and *U.S. News & World Report* participated in the hour-long discussion on May 28. As a result, the VCB has received significant media coverage. FortMyers-Sanibel.com



Writers from across the country discuss *Gift from the Sea* in a virtual book club.

Panama City Beach Celebrates the Fourth

Visit Panama City Beach is pleased to announce the return of its annual Real. Fun. Fourth. celebration—a red, white, and blue extravaganza with two nights of breathtaking firework displays on July 3 and July 4. Known as the largest Fourth of July fireworks show on the Gulf Coast and held on Panama City Beach's 27 miles of award-winning beaches and emerald-green waters, this All-American event invites visitors of all ages to celebrate Independence Day on its beautiful shores. VisitPanamaCityBeach.com



Visit Central Florida Unveils New Podcast

Expanding communication channels into the flourishing field of podcast, Visit Central Florida has launched *The Polk Experience*. The new podcast focuses on the people and stories behind the best experiences in Polk County. Topics will include local restaurants and sports events as well as tourist attractions and interesting people that make Polk County Florida's Sweetest Spot. The first podcast featured Drew Watson, the athletic director of Southeastern University. The second visited some of the "locals' Favorites" eateries. VisitCentralFlorida.org



Co-owners of Crazy Fish and Harry's Old Place talk about the two popular Polk dining establishments.

Florida Keys Launches Vacation Contest

The Florida Keys, prior to reopening to visitors on June 1, urged Instagram users to post videos recreating favorite Keys experiences to win a Keys vacation. The contest, #FLKeysAtHomeChallenge, attracted 200 participants. Safer at Home social media posts also featured virtual activities at Keys attractions and wildlife and nature centers, and with Keys musicians, chefs, and makers. A Safer@Home logo was created with artwork of a whimsical conch house by Keys artist Abigail White. Fla-Keys.com



This couple from California are the winners of the #FLKeysAtHomeChallenge ... and a vacation for two in the Florida Keys.



Miami Beach Hotel Task Force Addresses Florida's Phased Reopening

Hoteliers from across Miami Beach gathered at a Miami Beach Citywide Hotel Task Force meeting hosted by the Greater Miami CVB, in partnership with the Miami Beach Convention Center, on June 18 at the Royal Palm South Beach Miami. Practicing social distancing guidelines outlined by the Centers for Disease Control, the task force discussed new best practices for hotels to help Greater Miami & Beaches' hospitality industry manage reopening after the recent travel closures. *MiamiAndBeaches.com*



Guest speakers Rolando Aedo, CDME, GMCVB chief operating officer; Sonia Fong, GMCVB vice president of sales; Blake Crawford, Royal Palm South Beach Miami director of sales & marketing; Heather Shaw, Tourism & Culture Development Department of Miami Beach assistant director; and Freddie Peterson, Miami Beach Convention Center general manager

Destin-Fort Walton Beach Offers Virtual Adventures

With school out and summer camps temporarily on hold, Destin-Fort Walton Beach launched Adventure Anywhere as a virtual resource for parents, teachers, and kids. The platform continues to serve as an online bank of daily activities tied to water adventures, with virtual lessons that bring the spirit of the World's Luckiest Fishing Village to life through local experts. *DestinFWB.com*



Visit Pensacola Launches New App

The Visit Pensacola team is excited to launch the Experience Pensacola app (*VisitPensacola.com/app/*) designed with both locals and visitors in mind. "This app makes exploring the destination easier than ever," Visit Pensacola President Darien Schaefer says. "For our residents, I think they'll find themselves discovering activities and restaurants they never knew existed, and for visitors, they'll find an easy tool to organize and share their vacation with family and friends." *VisitPensacola.com*



Getting to Pensacola is easy, but leaving, that will be the hard part! Visit Pensacola launches the Experience Pensacola app.



Partner News

Connect Returns to Orlando This September

Connect brings together the most active planners, suppliers, and experts across multiple meetings and events industry markets. Attendees gain crucial experience to advance their careers and business through professional development and meetings excellence—all while having fun.



"We know Connect has an obligation to lead the way for our industry to get back to business," says Chris Collinson, president of Connect. "So we've put together our plan to showcase the most cutting-edge safety measures available right now and implement them at our show. We have enacted a new Safe + Clean Connect plan. We want to be a part of relaunching the meetings industry. Come join us in the reopening of meetings in America!"

FLORIDA TOURISM STRONG RECOVERY MARKETPLACE

Destinations Florida's Partners have put together the Florida Tourism Strong Recovery Marketplace booklet with resources that can help DMOs now and as we move forward into recovery. Our Partners will be updating their research, reports, and programs on an ongoing basis. Visit often for up-to-date support.



DestinationsFlorida.org/StrongRecoveryMarketplace

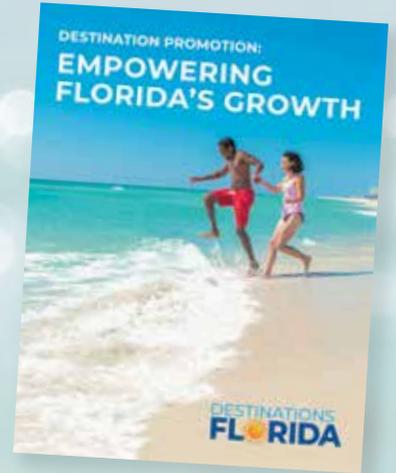
Communicate the Value of Your Destination Promotion Efforts

Empowering members of your industry with the facts and educating lawmakers is a weekly task. To help you, Destinations Florida and our members created the report *Destination Promotion: Empowering Florida's Growth*.

The report reveals the truth behind common misconceptions about Florida tourism and the unique role Florida's local destination marketing organizations play in attracting visitors.

You are welcome to download and distribute this report for:

- Members of your industry who are excited to advocate and need to understand what to say;
- Educating members of your TDC and elected officials about the impact of destination marketing in your community;
- Distributing at your community speaking engagements as a powerful leave behind for attendees who want more information;
- Onboarding new staff members at your DMO to accelerate their understanding of your organization; and
- Ideas for your own materials documenting the value of your tourism marketing efforts.



Download your copy of the report at EmpoweringFloridasGrowth.com. If you'd like to have the print files complete with trim marks for full bleeds, send an email request to Suzanne@DestinationsFlorida.org.

Download a PDF copy at EmpoweringFloridasGrowth.com

**A digital-first, full-service
Destination Marketing agency**

Digital • Print • Websites • Video • Creative

maddenmedia.com/florida/

 **MADDEN**
CONNECT PEOPLE TO PLACES

Enclosed is your copy of Tourism Marketing Today
a publication of

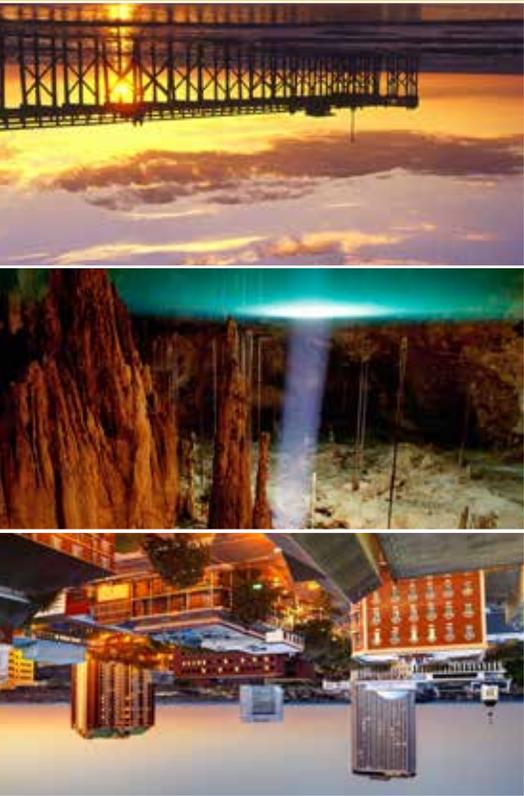
DESTINATIONS FLORIDA

1400 Village Sq. Blvd., Suite 3-250
Tallahassee, FL 32312

INSIDE: Florida is reopening— See what's happening around the state!

Executive Director Robert Skrob, CAE | Lobbyists Brian Ballard and Mat Forrest, 850/577-0444
1400 Village Sq. Blvd., Suite 3-250, Tallahassee, FL 32312, USA | Phone: 850/222-6000 | Fax: 850/222-6002 • www.DestinationsFlorida.org

Destinations Florida, Inc.



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 55 official county DMOs that promote their communities throughout the world. These tourism promotion activities help to attract 118.8 million visitors to Florida, generating \$112 billion in spending and 1.4 million jobs. These activities are made possible by Tourist Development Taxes provided by Florida Statutes Section 125.0104. Statistics: VISIT FLORIDA Research

DESTINATIONS FLORIDA