

# TourismMarketing Today

The Official Newsletter of Destinations Florida, Inc. | [www.DestinationsFlorida.org](http://www.DestinationsFlorida.org) | March 2020

## HSMAI Adrian Awards Recognize Excellence Florida DMOs Claim 34 Adrians

### Over Soon

by Robert Skrob, CAE



Winter in Tallahassee is crazy. One day it's 80 degrees. The next morning it's raining and 35 degrees

outside. I have no idea what the weather will be like next week. But I know spring is right around the corner.

At this point, there's no way to know what the Florida Legislature will do. But the end of Legislative Session is quickly approaching.

I've had the honor of working with this industry for going on 20 years, and I've never been more proud of the contribution

*OVER SOON continues on pg. 3*

The Hospitality Sales & Marketing Association International (HSMAI) presented the 2019 Adrian Awards on January 21 at the New York Marriott Marquis, recognizing excellence in travel advertising, public relations, digital marketing, and the leaders behind the work.



Patrick Harrison, chief marketing officer with Visit Tampa Bay, Jayna Leach, vice president of marketing with Visit Panama City Beach, and Derek Price, director of business development, North America, with Expedia Group Media Solutions, are among the 2019 HSMAI Top 25 Extraordinary Minds.

HSMAI also recognized the 2019 Top 25: Extraordinary Minds in Hospitality Sales, Marketing, and Revenue Optimization, which included Patrick Harrison, chief marketing officer with Visit Tampa Bay, and Jayna Leach, vice president of marketing with Visit Panama City Beach.

Congratulations to our Florida award winners!

### Gold Digital Marketing

#### Amelia Island CVB

**ENTRY:** Amelia Island Augmented Reality Mobile App

**CATEGORY:** Digital Marketing Innovation

**AGENCY:** Miles Partnership

#### Bradenton Area CVB

**ENTRY:** Cure Campaign Videos

**CATEGORY:** Multimedia (Video,

Flash, Animation) Series  
**AGENCY:** Aqua Marketing & Communications, Inc.

#### VISIT FLORIDA

**ENTRY:** VISIT FLORIDA Travel Pro

**CATEGORY:** Digital Marketing Innovation

**AGENCY:** TravPRO mobile

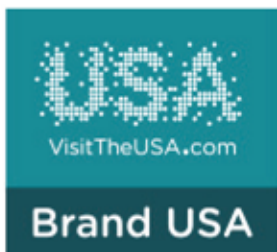
*HSMAI ADRIAN AWARDS continues on pg. 3*

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you make to your community. I appreciate the opportunity to be part of your advocacy team this session.

We've done a lot of great work together. We will continue. When the lawmakers go home, there will still be 1.4 million Floridians depending on the work you do so they can buy groceries, put gas in the car, and raise their families. For them, we will persevere—together.



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#### On the Cover

Visit Tampa Bay added eight new awards to its trophy case at this year's Adrian Awards—the Oscars of tourism marketing—in a competition that involved some of the world's largest and best-known destinations, travel brands, and advertising agencies. Read more about Florida's DMO winners on page one.

#### Visit St. Pete/Clearwater

ENTRY: The Central Ave.  
Experience  
CATEGORY: New: Experiential  
AGENCY: Miles Partnership

#### Visit Tampa Bay

ENTRY: The 1st TMD in Florida -  
Tampa's Treasure Collection  
CATEGORY: Integrated Market  
Campaign for Consumers (B2C)

### Silver Digital Marketing

#### Bradenton Area CVB

ENTRY: The Cure Campaign Online  
Diagnosis Survey  
CATEGORY: Contest/Sweepstakes  
AGENCY: Aqua Marketing &  
Communications, Inc.

#### The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel

ENTRY: National Geographic Brand  
Partnership  
CATEGORY: Integrated Market  
Campaign for Consumers (B2C)  
AGENCY: MMGY Global

#### The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel

ENTRY: Weather Triggered  
Campaign  
CATEGORY: Geo-Targeted  
Campaign  
AGENCY: MMGY Global

#### Visit Jacksonville

ENTRY: Visit Jacksonville Website  
Design & Development  
CATEGORY: Website  
AGENCY: Tempest Interactive  
Media

#### Visit South Walton

ENTRY: South Walton, Florida  
Website  
CATEGORY: Website  
AGENCY: Zehnder  
Communications

#### Visit Tampa Bay

ENTRY: Tampa Memory Makers  
CATEGORY: Webcast Series

### Bronze Digital Marketing

#### Amelia Island CVB

ENTRY: Amelia Island Integrated  
Marketing Campaign

CATEGORY: Integrated Market  
Campaign for Consumers (B2C)  
AGENCY: Miles Partnership

#### Naples, Marco Island and the Everglades

ENTRY: "Love Paradise" - Leisure  
Brand Video  
CATEGORY: Video  
AGENCY: Paradise Advertising &  
Marketing

#### The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel

ENTRY: Shore the Love  
CATEGORY: Social Media  
Campaign  
AGENCY: MMGY Global

### Gold Advertising

#### Amelia Island CVB

ENTRY: Amelia Island's New Visitor  
Guide Complete With Augmented  
Reality Technology  
CATEGORY: Brochure - Consumer  
AGENCY: Miles Partnership

#### Emerald Coast CVB

ENTRY: 2019 Visitor Guide  
CATEGORY: Brochure - Consumer  
AGENCY: Aqua Marketing &  
Communications, Inc.

#### Visit Tampa Bay

ENTRY: Visit Tampa Bay Pioneers  
Regional London Campaign  
CATEGORY: Global

### Silver Advertising

#### Naples, Marco Island and the Everglades

ENTRY: "Love Paradise" Winter  
Campaign  
CATEGORY: Complete Campaign  
(to include Positioning) -  
Consumer/Group Sales/Travel  
Trade  
AGENCY: Paradise Advertising &  
Marketing

#### Punta Gorda/Englewood Beach VCB

ENTRY: 2019 Adventure Guide  
CATEGORY: Brochure - Consumer  
AGENCY: Aqua Marketing &  
Communications, Inc.



**The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel**

**ENTRY:** Groups/Meetings Campaign  
**CATEGORY:** Print Media - Group Sales/Meetings  
**AGENCY:** MMGY Global

**Visit Panama City Beach**

**ENTRY:** Make it Your Real. Fun. Beach.  
**CATEGORY:** Complete Campaign (to include Positioning) - Consumer/Group Sales/Travel Trade

**Visit Tampa Bay**

**ENTRY:** Daydream to Tampa Bay - Make It Tampa Bay  
**CATEGORY:** Radio - Consumer

**Visit Tampa Bay**

**ENTRY:** Tampa Bay's Multicultural Guide  
**CATEGORY:** Brochure - Group Sales/Meetings

**Visit Tampa Bay**

**ENTRY:** Tampa's Treasure Collection - Florida's First Tourism Marketing District  
**CATEGORY:** Brochure - Group Sales/Meetings

**Bronze Advertising****Visit Panama City Beach**

**ENTRY:** Decor By The Shore  
**CATEGORY:** Brochure - Consumer

**Visit Tampa Bay**

**ENTRY:** Norwich City Soccer Takeover  
**CATEGORY:** New: Experiential

**Gold Public Relations****The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel**

**ENTRY:** Red Tide Crisis  
**CATEGORY:** Crisis Communication/Recovery Communication  
**AGENCY:** MMGY Global

**Visit South Walton**

**ENTRY:** South Walton, Florida, Makes a Splash With America's First Underwater Art Museum  
**CATEGORY:** New Opening/Launch  
**AGENCY:** Turner

**Silver Public Relations****Discover The Palm Beaches**

**ENTRY:** Jamaque PARADIS Feature  
**CATEGORY:** Feature Placement Print - Consumer Magazine or Newspaper  
**AGENCY:** The Zimmerman Agency

**Naples, Marco Island and the Everglades**

**ENTRY:** Sean and Catherine Lowe Influencer Campaign  
**CATEGORY:** Influencer Marketing  
**AGENCY:** Paradise Advertising & Marketing

**The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel**

**ENTRY:** #OneLee  
**CATEGORY:** Community Service/Social Responsibility  
**AGENCY:** MMGY Global

**Visit Tampa Bay**

**ENTRY:** Tampa's Table: A Culinary Journey Through Tampa Bay  
**CATEGORY:** Public Relations Innovation

**Silver Integrated Marketing****Bradenton Area CVB**

**ENTRY:** We've Got the Cure Campaign  
**CATEGORY:** Integrated Marketing Campaign  
**AGENCY:** Aqua Marketing & Communications, Inc.

**Bronze Integrated Marketing****Punta Gorda/Englewood Beach VCB**

**ENTRY:** "Outsiders Welcome" Campaign  
**CATEGORY:** Integrated Marketing Campaign  
**AGENCY:** Aqua Marketing & Communications, Inc.

## Meet Two of HSMIA's Top 25: Extraordinary Minds in Hospitality Sales, Marketing, and Revenue Optimization



Jayna Leach

"It's such an honor to receive this recognition for my role with Visit Panama City Beach following Hurricane Michael's devastating impact on the surrounding area," says Jayna Leach, vice president of marketing with Visit Panama City Beach. "Looking back on the past 14 months, I'm inspired by the community's resiliency and its belief that our best days are yet to come."



Patrick Harrison

"It's an honor to be recognized by HSMIA for this prestigious award," says Patrick Harrison, chief marketing officer of Visit Tampa Bay. "I've experienced many opportunities in my 25+ year career, but one of the bigger highlights has been being part of the Tampa Bay community and its unprecedented growth, all the while working with one of the most talented teams in the industry."

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- Interactive discussion with VISIT FLORIDA on the direction of the destination marketing industry



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## TDT Plans and Specific Funding Allocations

When a county first decides to impose a Tourist Development Tax, it must enact, via ordinance, a plan for how TDT funds are to be spent. § 125.0104(4)(a), (c), Fla. Stat. (ordinance enacting the plan; required plan contents).

The statute allows two methods for a TDT plan to specify the approximate cost or expense of each project listed therein: 1) approximate cost; or 2) expense allocation. § 125.0401(4)(c), Fla. Stat.



A county must honor specific percentage allocations of the TDT to particular projects, such as beach renourishment, in its TDT spending plan.

A problem may arise if a county's plan provides specific percentage allocations of the TDT to particular projects. Specifically, what happens down the line when a county wants to shift TDT revenues to other projects?

The Florida attorney general has advised that in such circumstances, the county must amend

the plan itself in order to use funds for other purposes. Op. Att'y Gen. Fla. 2000-29 (2000). The attorney general explained that because a county's ordinance was specific as to the percentage of TDT funds allocated to beach nourishment and erosion control, those percentages must be honored.

The attorney general also explained, however, that the county can amend the plan without a new referendum by following the procedures set forth in section 125.0401(4)(d). *Id.* (citing *Rowe v. Pinellas Sports Authority*, 461 So.2d 72 (Fla. 1984)).

A county with a TDT plan that is specific as to the percentage of funds allocated to particular projects should take heed of Opinion 2000-29 if changes in the allocation formula are to be made.

**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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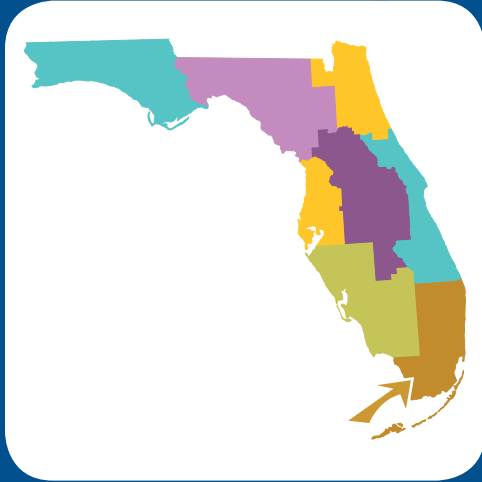
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## SOUTHEAST FLORIDA



- Discover The Palm Beaches
- Florida Keys & Key West TDC
- Greater Fort Lauderdale CVB
- Greater Miami CVB
- Martin County Office of Tourism & Marketing

## Discover The Palm Beaches

Discover The Palm Beaches, the official marketing organization for Palm Beach County, teamed up with iconic resort lifestyle brand Lilly Pulitzer and high-speed rail service provider Brightline in advance of the "big game" to capitalize on Super Bowl LIV while the eyes of the world were on South Florida to build awareness for the destination (The Palm Beaches). The partnership included a co-branded *Lilly Pulitzer Brightline Train to The Palm Beaches* on Wednesday, January 29, and celebrated 200+ women connected with professional sports, including executives, wives, girlfriends, and partners affiliated with a variety of sports teams, prominent corporations, and community organizations.

"With Super Bowl LIV in our backyard, we expanded our celebrations to offer everyone in South Florida a taste of our



Local historian, Rick Rose, walks along the Lilly Pulitzer Brightline Train during Discover The Palm Beaches' co-branded "Super" event.

Photo: Jesus Aranguren/AP Images



Local visitors enjoy brunch at The Colony Hotel during Discover The Palm Beaches' co-branded "Super" event.

Photo: Jesus Aranguren/AP Images

storied past, culture, and wellness-driven spirit, while inspiring them to discover more by taking the one-hour train ride up from Miami," said Jorge Pesquera, president and CEO of Discover The Palm Beaches.

Designed to inspire residents and visitors to seek respite in The Palm Beaches, the multi-disciplined event resulted in 95 million+ impressions in less than 24 hours—driving maximum impact and awareness to the destination.

"The co-branded event was a testament to the strength of our community partnerships and showcased the collective investments the CVB, the Palm Beach County Sports Commission, and the TDC put forth to increase visitation in the destination during one of the world's biggest sporting events," praised Pesquera.



## Florida Keys & Key West TDC

A new digital tool created and launched by the Monroe County TDC encourages safe driving and sightseeing along the famed Florida Keys Overseas Highway, or U.S. Highway 1. The Florida Keys & Key West Travel App ([Fla-Keys.com/app](http://Fla-Keys.com/app)) offers two driving tours, southbound from Key Largo to Key West and northbound from Key West to Key Largo.



The new Florida Keys & Key West Travel App provides visitors driving tours along the Florida Keys Overseas Highway.

"We want our visitors to experience the highway that goes to sea, but do it in a way that makes it safer for them," said the tourism council's director, Stacey Mitchell. "By giving travelers advance notice and narration of upcoming places, they can plan stops accordingly."

The app is triggered by geographic location, giving drivers advance notice of upcoming scenic, iconic, or historical points throughout the Keys such as the Florida Keys Wild Bird Center, Robbie's Marina, National Key Deer Refuge, and Bahia Honda and John Pennekamp Coral Reef state parks. To raise awareness of the destination's "Connect & Protect" initiative, the app highlights Keys sustainability to encourage low-



Visitors traveling the famed Overseas Highway may spot Key deer, a subspecies of deer found only in the Lower Florida Keys.

impact exploration of voluntourism, ecotourism, and green travel experiences.

Visitors can download the free app at the Apple Store and Google Play.

## Greater Fort Lauderdale CVB

The Greater Fort Lauderdale CVB recently held two major events highlighting growth and expansion initiatives in the destination.

In January, the CVB celebrated the \$1 billion expansion of the Greater Fort Lauderdale/Broward County Convention Center with an event prior to the center's closing in mid-February for major construction. The center will double in size to 1.2 million sq. ft., add a new 800-room headquarters hotel, and bring over \$200 million in annual economic impact and more than 1,000 new local jobs. The expanded center opens in phases between late 2021 and 2023.



At both the convention center expansion celebration and the 2020 Growth Plan events, Greater Fort Lauderdale CVB President & CEO Stacy Ritter introduced audience members to a new technology tool accessed on phones via Facebook or Instagram that allows users to step through an augmented reality portal into the Greater Fort Lauderdale/Broward County Convention Center of the future.

In February, more than 450 tourism, hospitality, and local government leaders gathered for the reveal of the destination's 2020 Growth Plan to elevate and celebrate the future of tourism.

"The event opened with a nostalgic look at the history of Greater Fort Lauderdale followed by the presentation of initiatives that will carry the destination forward through the next decade with a focus on local residents as key stakeholders," said Greater Fort Lauderdale CVB President & CEO Stacy Ritter.

Central to the plan is a community outreach initiative to the destination's 31 municipalities to educate and communicate about sustainable strategies to bring the economic benefits of tourism beyond the beaches and into their communities.



A panel of industry leaders provides insight into the Greater Fort Lauderdale 2020 Growth Plan: Von Freeman, Entercom Communications; Greg Cook, The Ritz-Carlton Fort Lauderdale; Mayor Dale V. C. Holness, Broward County; Ina Lee, Travelhost Magazine; Bob Swindell, Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance; Dr. Kitty Oliver, historian; and moderator Kara Franker, GFLCVB senior VP marketing & communications.





## Greater Miami CVB

The biggest game of the year lived up to the hype, and viewers around the world took notice as Super Bowl LIV drew an estimated global TV audience of 193.8 million adults and was the 10th most-watched Super Bowl in history!

"Greater Miami and the Beaches is a world-class event town hosting more Super Bowl games than any other destination in the country. As visitors arrived in Greater Miami for Super Bowl LIV, they were welcomed by authentic and diverse neighborhoods that have been transformed since the last time the destination



Pictured at the Super Bowl Host Committee press conference are William D. Talbert III, CDME, GMCVB president & CEO; Peter O'Reilly, executive vice president, Club Business & League Events, National Football League; Rodney Barreto, chairman, Miami Super Bowl Host Committee; Mayor Dan Gelber, City of Miami Beach; Mayor Carlos A. Giménez, Miami-Dade County; Mayor Oliver G. Gilbert III, Miami Gardens; Tom Garfinkel, president & CEO, Miami Dolphins and Hard Rock Stadium; and Mayor Francis X. Suarez, City of Miami.



Hard Rock Stadium is home to the Miami Dolphins, the University of Miami Hurricanes, and this year to Super Bowl LIV.

hosted the big game 10 years ago," said William D. Talbert III, CDME, president and CEO for the Greater Miami CVB.

The game culminated a week of events across South Florida that drew more than 200,000 visitors to the area, delivering an estimated \$500 million economic impact to the local community, providing priceless global media coverage, and breaking tourism records with the three highest RevPar days in the history in Miami-Dade County.

The GMCVB was front and center, showcasing the destination to 6,000 journalists at the Miami Beach Convention Center, providing media with information about the destination, conducting media interviews, and providing culinary delights daily to showcase the area's diverse neighborhoods.

## Martin County Office of Tourism & Marketing

To maximize exposure for several of the area's long-standing events, the Martin County Office of Tourism and Marketing partnered with event owners to submit for the Southeast Tourism Society's Top 20 Events.

Martin County events competed with top events from across the southeastern United States for the chance of receiving this



Attendees of 2020 ArtsFest enjoy a sunny day in downtown Stuart during this annual outdoor art event.

prestigious designation. Five Martin County events were selected over the months of January through March as Top 20 Festival and Events.

Those events include the Annual Stuart Boat Show, the Port Salerno Seafood Festival, Artsfest, Classics at the Beach Car Show, and the Ohana Single Fin Surf Contest.



The Elliott Museum Classics at the Beach Car Show is in its 24<sup>th</sup> year.

"Taking the time to work with our event owners and go through the award process is incredibly beneficial and valuable for not only the events but for Martin County as a destination," said Nerissa Okiye, tourism director with the Martin County Office of Tourism and Marketing.

For 35 years, STS has been spotlighting the best festivals and events in the Southeast with the Top 20 Festival and Events program. Events considered for the STS Top 20 recognition must be at least three years old and have attendance of at least 1,000. Established in 1983, STS is an engaged network of 1,000+ members from 13 states and the District of Columbia including Alabama, Arkansas, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia.



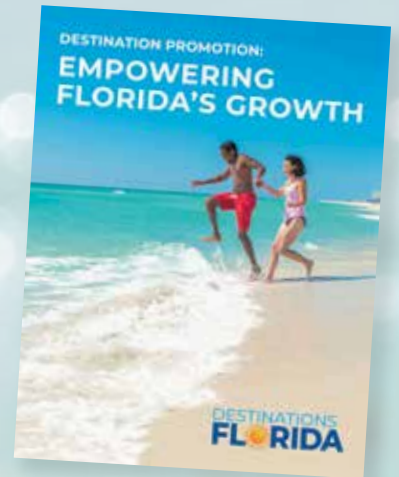
# Communicate the Value of Your Destination Promotion Efforts

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](http://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](mailto:Suzanne@DestinationsFlorida.org).**

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## Rebranded Destin-Fort Walton Beach Engages Visitors in Adventure

Inspired by a recent global study that showed 56% of children spend less time outdoors than maximum security prison inmates, the destination announced a commitment to getting kids out on the water, giving their adventurous side room to grow. Formerly known as the Emerald Coast, the destination has rebranded to heighten its recognition in the travel industry and to attract families from near and far. Director Jennifer Adams says, "This is only the beginning of introducing visitors to the adventures that await in Destin-Fort Walton Beach." *DestinFWB.com*



More than a new logo and website, Destin-Fort Walton's rebranding extends an invitation to families to experience activities that foster self-confidence and self-reliance and that nurture the imaginations of children and parents alike.

## 'Travel INTRAnationally' Resonating With Today's Travelers for Florida's Historic Coast

The St. Augustine, Ponte Vedra & The Beaches VCB launched a new advertising campaign in November promoting the destination with a "Travel INTRAnationally" theme. And it seems to be just the thing travelers are looking for: a way to enjoy international culture, arts, cuisine, and history, without the headaches of international travel. Created with the PETERMAYER agency, the multimedia campaign touts the many ways visitors can enjoy authentic international experiences without the hassle of passports, long security lines, and even longer flights. *FloridasHistoricCoast.com*



One of four billboards featuring the "Travel INTRAnationally" guy as spokesman for Florida's Historic Coast

## Seminole County Celebrates Record-Setting Year

2019 was another record-setting year in Seminole County, with the highest TDT collected, the third highest hotel occupancy percentage, and the highest ADR in the history of the county. These historical achievements have allowed the county to invest in multimillion-dollar sports facilities, feature this beautiful community on national and international TV shows, broadcast on the Good Morning America Times Square digital board, and explore marketing ventures in Toronto. *DoOrlandoNorth.com*



The Seminole County government tourism team at the holiday luncheon with keynote speaker Stan Van Gundy

## Space Coast Office of Tourism Launches Major Campaigns in Miami, Toronto

The Space Coast Office of Tourism has launched major campaigns that target the key source markets of Miami and Toronto. The Miami campaign began right before the Super Bowl and runs through March, encouraging travel during the spring. It includes TV, digital ads, and billboards, reaching more than 100 million impressions. In Toronto, the TDO is doing a "takeover" of the underground tunnels and Union Station train station with digital signs and video. The takeover will reach 75 million impressions and there will be digital advertising as well. *VisitSpaceCoast.com*



A digital sign in Toronto invites visitors to head to the warm beaches along the Space Coast.



## Bradenton Area Hosts River Regatta

More than 120,000 people descended upon the Bradenton Area for one of the destination's top signature events: the sixth annual Bradenton Area River Regatta—which transformed the calm shores of the Manatee River into a full-throttle racing scene on February 8. The all-day event featured competing F-2 tunnel powerboats reaching 100 mph and free family fun including concerts, fireworks, and more. It was estimated to have generated \$9 million in economic impact. [BradentonGulfIslands.com](http://BradentonGulfIslands.com)



The Bradenton Area celebrated the return of the Bradenton Area River Regatta this February. The weekend-long event drew 120,000 spectators and generated an estimated \$9 million in economic impact.

## Visit Orlando Named 'Best Tourist Board' in the World

Visit Orlando was recognized by *Travel Weekly UK*, a leading travel industry publication, as the "Best Tourist Board" in the world. The magazine's Globe Travel Awards are acknowledged as the pinnacle of the United Kingdom travel industry, honoring companies and individuals across the globe. Voted on by UK travel agents, this award recognizes Visit Orlando's marketing campaigns, productive partnerships, and strategic focus in driving visitation from its top overseas market. [VisitOrlando.com](http://VisitOrlando.com)



Visit Orlando was honored at Travel Weekly UK's Globe Travel Awards ceremony in London on January 13.

## Visit Sarasota County's Knoxville Campaign Delivers Strong ROI

In conjunction with Asolo Repertory Theatre and Visit Knoxville, Visit Sarasota County executed a social media contest offering a chance to win a trip for two to watch the opening performance of the musical *Knoxville* in April. The real win is how the contest allowed VSC to effectively resonate with a new market full of arts enthusiasts while promoting a new SRQ Airport nonstop flight. The sweepstakes reached 30,000 people in Knoxville and received 600+ entries, and VSC spent only \$500. [VisitSarasota.com](http://VisitSarasota.com)



Over the course of just two weeks, 600+ Knoxville residents entered to win a trip to Sarasota and to see the musical *Knoxville* at Asolo Rep!

## Road to 2020 Olympics Runs Through Polk County

USA Softball's National Women's Team started its "Stand Beside Her" tour at Florida Southern College in Lakeland, capping off days of practice with a public skills demonstration. The National Women's Team will compete in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. Polk County Tourism and Sports Marketing partnered with Florida Southern College to recruit the training event to Polk County. Fans from throughout the state attended the free Saturday skills demonstration, the only appearance of the team in Central Florida. [VisitCentralFlorida.org](http://VisitCentralFlorida.org)



The USA Softball National Women's Team gives the customary wave to the crowd after its demonstration.





## Visit St. Pete/Clearwater Hosts IITA Summit

VSPC's Leisure Travel team welcomed nearly 200 tour operators and suppliers to the destination in early February as part of the 2020 International Inbound Travel Association Summit. The four-day event hosted at the Sirata Beach Resort included one-on-one appointments, networking events, and educational seminars. The week also included educational tours showcasing St. Pete/Clearwater beyond the beach and co-sponsored evening events with VISIT FLORIDA and Visit Tampa Bay, leading to a successful summit. [VisitStPeteClearwater.com](http://VisitStPeteClearwater.com)



IITA attendees do the St. Pete shuffle at the St. Pete Shuffleboard Club.

## UK Tour Operators Experience Pensacola

Following a successful Florida Huddle, Visit Pensacola hosted five UK tour operators, arranging the ultimate Pensacola experience themed around walkability. The group enjoyed exploring America's first settlement, which included a walking tour of downtown Pensacola, visiting its beautiful beaches, and even a trip to the Naval Aviation Museum. America As You Like It UK operator shared, "I have truly fallen in love with this beautiful part of the world and can't wait to spread the word to all of our clients." [VisitPensacola.com](http://VisitPensacola.com)



UK tour operators and Lori Coppels, sales manager with Visit Pensacola, enjoy historic Fort Pickens on Pensacola Beach.

## Mardi Gras Comes to Panama City Beach

Laissez les bons temps rouler! The good times did roll during the Panama City Beach Mardi Gras and Music Festival, held February 21-22 at Pier Park. Situated just steps away from the sugar-white sand beaches and emerald-green waters of the Gulf of Mexico, this authentic two-day Mardi Gras celebration featured the Krewe of Dominique Youx's Mardi Gras at the Beach Parade, live music, a costume contest, fireworks, and more. Music headliner Blood, Sweat & Tears joined Victor Wainwright & the Train and other notable groups at the festival. [VisitPanamaCityBeach.com](http://VisitPanamaCityBeach.com)



PCB Mardi Gras float riders toss beads out to the crowd.

## GMCVB Launches MIAMILAND Outdoor Adventures Campaign

The Greater Miami CVB expanded its Found In Miami messaging to include a new MIAMILAND outdoor adventures campaign, highlighting Miami's unexpected nature experiences through high-impact videos, imagery, and digital experiences. The creative execution for MIAMILAND is designed to create intrigue and increase excitement for an action-adventure "theme park" filled with natural wonders and to showcase Greater Miami's immense footprint, home to these natural assets organically situated to provide access for authentic action adventures. [MiamiAndBeaches.com](http://MiamiAndBeaches.com)



Digital creative from MIAMILAND outdoor adventures campaign



## Lee VCB Workshop Helps Partners Create Experiential Tourism

Today's travelers are experience junkies and want unique, authentic, and local experiences that connect them to destinations and attractions. In an effort to maintain the destination's competitive edge, the Lee County VCB held an Experiential Tourism Workshop in February. Led by industry expert Joe Veneto of the Veneto Collaboratory, the workshop was an opportunity for more than 60 industry partners to learn how to design and develop UFEs, UnForgettable Experiential tourism products. *FortMyersSanibel.com*



Joe Veneto of the Veneto Collaboratory discusses strategies to connect with visitors to keep them coming back to Lee County.

## Cal Ripken Rookie World Series Coming to Ocala in 2020

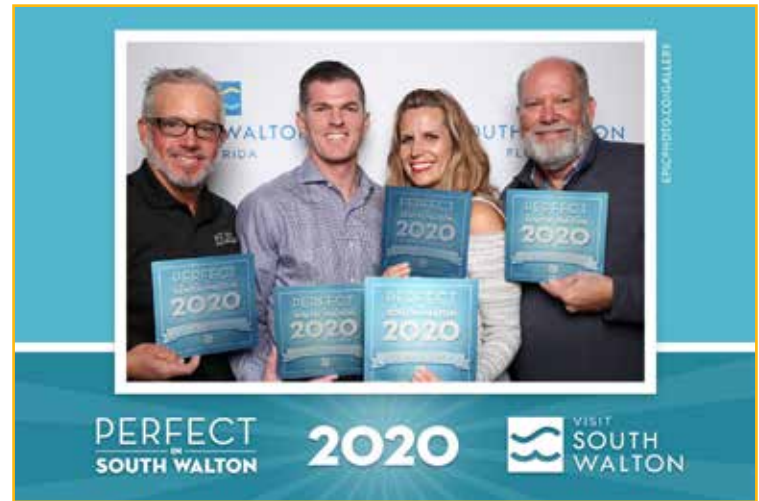
Ocala/Marion County is excited to host the 2020 Cal Ripken Rookie World Series in partnership with the Babe Ruth League, Inc. The August tournament is expected to bring 15 to 20 teams from across the country. A similar tournament in 2016, the Cal Ripken 12U World Series, brought a total of \$1.2 million in estimated economic impact to Marion County. The selection of Marion County as host is a collaborative achievement thanks to the Marion County Parks and Recreation Department, the Ocala/Marion County VCB, and the Rotary Sportsplex Board of Directors. *OcalaMarion.com*



Babe Ruth League representatives, the Rotary baseball teams in uniform, team members from Ocala/Marion County VCB, and Marion County leadership join the community for the announcement of the tournament at the Rotary Sportsplex. Photo: GlossyFinish.com

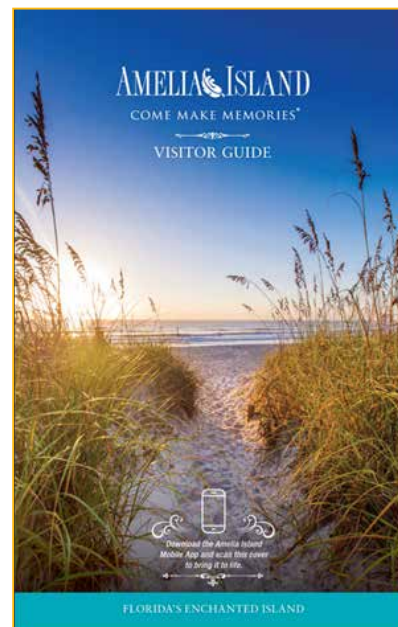
## Another Perfect Year in South Walton

The 2020 Perfect in South Walton Awards, hosted by Visit South Walton, celebrated its sixth year of highlighting businesses, restaurants, and events across 30 different categories, all with a significant impact on the area's tourism economy. These businesses were nominated and voted on by residents and visitors for their uniqueness to the destination. In addition, Visit South Walton announced Doug Foltz, local coastal landscape artist, as its 2020 Artist. *VisitSouthWalton.com*



Accommodation partners from ResortQuest pose with their 2020 Perfect Awards.

## Amelia Island Scores Platinum for Third Time



At the 63rd annual Adrian Awards Gala in New York, the Hospitality Sales & Marketing Association International (HSMIA) honored the Amelia Island CVB with one Platinum, one Gold, and one Bronze award in what is the world's largest and most prestigious travel marketing competition. The destination's innovative use of cutting-edge augmented reality (AR) technology figured prominently in each winning entry. This is the third Platinum award for the CVB in the past five years. *AmeliaIsland.com*

Amelia Island's official 2019 Visitor Guide, along with an innovative AR mobile app, enables visitors to activate a variety of custom-designed digital content.





## Experience Kissimmee Sponsors Connect's Opening Presentation

Experience Kissimmee sponsored Connect Travel Marketplace's opening event at Gaylord Palms Resort & Convention Center. While this is Kissimmee's second year as the trade show's host city, EK has a long-term relationship with Connect. This show brings together international tour operators with key suppliers for one-on-one appointments, and this year EK brought along 17 of its industry partners. Every year the show features a guest speaker; Connect Travel Marketplace's 2020 guest speaker was President Barack Obama. *ExperienceKissimmee.com*



Rafael Villanueva, Las Vegas Convention; DT Minich, Experience Kissimmee; Roger Dow, U.S. Travel Association; Dana Young, VISIT FLORIDA; Will Seccombe, Connect Travel; and Tom Garzilli, Brand USA

## Travelocity's Roaming Gnome Explores Greater Fort Lauderdale

The Greater Fort Lauderdale CVB recently partnered with Travelocity to feature the destination's hot spots throughout the 31 municipalities. In February, the Travelocity Roaming Gnome explored the mural arts district, the beach, a mermaid bar, paddle boarding, local hotels, breweries, restaurants, the Everglades, boating, and more. The campaign shows potential visitors how to follow in the footsteps of the world's wisest wanderer and features special offers for flight and hotel package bookings.

*Sunny.org*



The Travelocity Roaming Gnome enjoys Jaxson's Ice Cream Parlour's ice cream kitchen sink in Dania Beach.



## People in the News

### GMCVB Names Sonia Fong VP of Convention Sales

The Greater Miami CVB has appointed Sonia Fong its vice president of convention sales after 20 years with the organization, most recently working as associate vice president of convention sales. Fong is chair of the Miami Beach Hotels Task Force and the GMCVB medical tourism liaison. Her main focus continues on selling the Miami Beach Convention Center for citywide bookings. Sonia is fluent in Mandarin and Spanish and earned the MBA at Florida International University in 2013. She oversees the GMCVB Washington, D.C. Regional Office and provides strategic planning and coaching to a team of sales professionals. *MiamiAndBeaches.com*



Sonia Fong



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## NOW ACCEPTING DONATIONS FOR THE 2020 Dave Warren Silent Auction



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

To raise funds for the Dave Warren Scholarship, we are requesting donations from Destinations Florida members to the Silent Auction that will be held during the Destination Marketing Industry Summit. Contributions of all kinds will be gladly accepted, such as weekend packages in your destination or gift baskets with items that showcase your unique location. Media agencies often contribute ad space in their publications for our DMOs to bid on. Our past auctions have raised over \$52,000 for this fund.

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

**Donations Deadline: April 15, 2020**

**[DestinationsFlorida.org/20SilentAuction](https://DestinationsFlorida.org/20SilentAuction)**





## Legal Resource for Your DMO

As a member benefit for you, Destinations Florida has retained Steven M. Hogan with the Ausley McMullen law firm to provide insight into the operation of the TDT and related issues to Destinations Florida.

There are several situations where it would be helpful for you to have a legal opinion for your community. As a member benefit, you can speak with Mr. Hogan about the facts and laws at a general level.

To take advantage of this program, feel free to reach out to Steve Hogan at the information below:



**Steven M. Hogan**  
Ausley McMullen  
850/224-9115  
[shogan@ausley.com](mailto:shogan@ausley.com)

If you require specific advice on decisions that your DMO will make under the TDT or other law, you can hire Mr. Hogan to advise you separately as your lawyer.

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

Destinations Florida represents the 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

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