

TourismMarketing Today

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

2020-21 Chair Dan Rowe: 'VISIT FLORIDA is the umbrella to help each of us tell our story'



Dan Rowe

For the first time in its 24-year history, VISIT FLORIDA has DMO executives serving in consecutive terms as board chair.

Destinations Florida congratulates Dan Rowe, president & CEO of Visit Panama City Beach, on his appointment to 2020-21 chair of the VISIT FLORIDA board. He succeeds Virginia Haley, CDME, president of Visit Sarasota County, who recently completed her 2019-20 term.

Rowe shares his thoughts on the ways VISIT FLORIDA benefits local communities:

"VISIT FLORIDA provides the umbrella to help each of us tell our story. Partnering with VISIT FLORIDA, and the alignment of the collective Florida brand, allows us to extend the reach and value of

our marketing messages," he says. "And from a practical standpoint, VISIT FLORIDA is actively engaged with the U.S. Economic Development Administration on CARES Act funding on a cooperative marketing campaign exclusively for the state's DMOs. This program will allow each of us to stretch marketing resources as other funding sources are contracting."

Having DMO executives lead the VISIT FLORIDA board in back-to-back terms is especially timely, given the unique challenges the tourism industry faces.

"Again, we are all experiencing these challenging times together. Commiserating with friends and sharing best practices helps demonstrate that we can get through the dark days until the sun shines again on

Meaningful Relief

by Robert Skrob, CAE



Your Destinations Florida board of directors and staff are dedicated to working for you and

with you as we navigate these unprecedented times.

Recognizing you've had a large budget reduction this year, Destinations Florida is discounting your membership dues for 2020-21. While we wish we could have a bigger impact to help close your budget deficit, it is important that we provide this meaningful relief.

DAN ROWE continues on pg. 3

*MEANINGFUL RELIEF
...continues on pg. 3*

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Julie White
September 24

George Aguel
September 28

**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

Panama City Beach is situated on 27 miles of sugar-white sand beaches bordering clear, emerald-green waters where the Gulf of Mexico and St. Andrew Bay converge. With 320 days of sunshine annually and attractions such as St. Andrews State Park and Pier Park, the region has long been favored by travelers seeking an affordable beach vacation. President & CEO Dan Rowe of Visit Panama City Beach is the new board chair of VISIT FLORIDA. Read more on page 1.

Photo: Visit Panama City Beach

all of our communities," Rowe says. "Collaboration between Destinations Florida and VISIT FLORIDA builds and strengthens these bonds while helping each of us maintain a sense of optimism that is uniquely Florida."

Other leaders who represented the DMO industry while chair of the VISIT FLORIDA board are Nicki E.

Grossman, Greater Fort Lauderdale CVB (2007-08); Glen Hastings, St. Johns County TDC (2012-13); and William D. Talbert III, CDME, Greater Miami CVB (2016-17). In addition, Richard Goldman, now president & CEO of St. Augustine, Ponte Vedra and The Beaches VCB, was a representative of the hotel industry when he served as VF board chair in 2008-09.

Virtual Cruisers Sail Away on Florida's Paradise Coast

Florida's Paradise Coast (Naples, Marco Island and the Everglades) is safely open for visitors. In an effort to showcase the destination's amenities and provide real-time updates to meeting and incentive planners, the CVB has hosted virtual events featuring different venues and hotel tours.

In June, they sailed away on Miss Naples Catamaran, broadcasting live and presenting an informative update on airport and hotel safety protocols. Via live video from the open deck, planners at home experienced (virtually) the fresh air and natural beauty around Naples Bay and Port Royal. They cruised past the multimillion-dollar homes of Port Royal and kept an eye out for playful dolphins, manatees,

and sea turtles. The Edgewater Beach Hotel and The Ritz-Carlton, Naples also presented quick

tours and updates directly from their properties. There were approximately 70 guests on the webinar, and everyone enjoyed being transported to a sunny and breezy afternoon on Naples Bay through their Zoom screens.

The CVB plans to showcase other venues and provide updates via future webinars. ParadiseCoast.com



Live broadcasts from Miss Naples Catamaran provide a virtual sail and updates to meeting and incentive planners.

MEANINGFUL RELIEF ... continued from pg. 1

As for Destinations Florida, we will maintain our core operations. Cuts are coming from many budget line items and events, and we will be tapping cash reserves. We remain committed to serving as an advocate and a conduit

to enable you to attract more customers to your destination to lead Florida's comeback.

Thank you for your years of support. If there's anything we can do to help you during these times, please let us know.



Jurisdictional Brief Filed in Airbnb Case

In the last two Legal Tips columns, I discussed the appeal to the Florida Supreme Court of a recent decision from the Fourth District Court of Appeal (Fourth DCA). The Fourth DCA's opinion held that Airbnb and similar companies were not obligated to collect or remit tax on the rentals they facilitated in Palm Beach County. The decision resulted from the 2014 lawsuit brought by the Palm Beach County Tax Collector against Airbnb and other online short-term rental companies. (For the purpose of this article, I will use the term *Airbnb* to refer to all of the defendants.)

On July 1, the Tax Collector filed an appeal to the Florida Supreme Court; however, it's not a given that the Supreme Court will actually accept the case for review.

The Florida Supreme Court is a court of limited jurisdiction. The Court can only review certain categories of cases. Even if a case is one that the Court can review under its "discretionary" jurisdiction, the Court can always decide not to review such a case for almost any reason.

This means that an appellant like the Tax Collector first has to convince the Court that the case *can* be heard (i.e., that jurisdiction exists), and then has to convince the Court that it *should* hear the case rather than let it pass without review. This "convincing" takes the form of a jurisdictional brief filed with the Court.

The Tax Collector filed its jurisdictional brief on July 23, 2020. The brief argues that the Court has jurisdiction because the Fourth

DCA's decision affects a class of constitutional officers, namely county tax collectors. The brief argues that the Court should take up review of the case because the decision affects all county tax collectors and greatly impacts TDT collections in Florida.

Airbnb will have an opportunity to file a brief that opposes the Court's jurisdiction. We can expect Airbnb to argue both that discretionary jurisdiction does not exist, and that even if it did, the Court should not take the case up for review.

Time will tell how this ultimately plays out.

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

You can read the Tax Collector's jurisdictional brief here: <https://bit.ly/TC-airbnb>

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.



Steven M. Hogan



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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.

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Fish Like a Local in Martin County

Martin County is home to the St. Lucie Inlet (the most biodiverse lagoon ecosystem in the Northern Hemisphere), and its extensive local waterways are home to more than 800 different species of fish. To tap into the promising fish-focused audience, the Martin County Office of Tourism just launched the Fish Like a Local campaign, where aspiring anglers can test their fishing knowledge, read fascinating blog posts, and learn more about local fishing charters for hire. DiscoverMartin.com



The new Fish Like a Local campaign aims to lure fishing fanatics from local drive markets to experience Martin County's world-class fishing opportunities this summer.

Bradenton Area CVB Joins County Leaders to Launch Mask Up Manatee Initiative

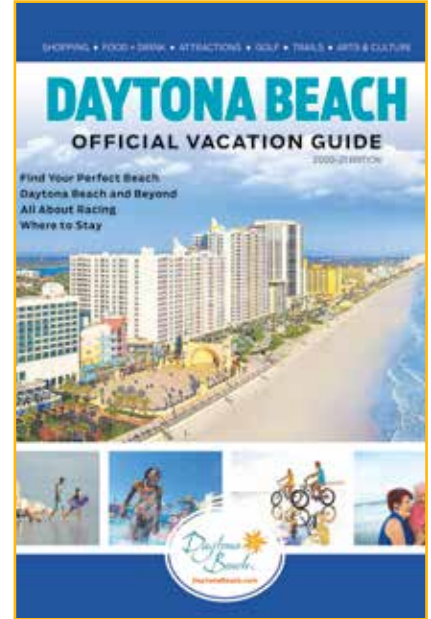
In a concerted effort to keep all who live in and visit the Bradenton Area safe this fall and beyond, the BACVB joined forces with the Department of Health in Manatee County, the School District of Manatee County, and other Manatee County government officials to launch a pivotal communitywide program. As part of the Mask Up Manatee initiative, the coalition will distribute 50,000 free masks (for children and adults) to help keep area visitors and residents healthy. BradentonGulfIslands.com



The Mask Up Manatee Coalition will distribute 50,000 free branded masks (for children and adults) to visitors and residents in Manatee County.

Daytona Beach Vacation Guide Inspires Off-the-Beaten-Path Exploration

The new *Daytona Beach Vacation Guide* was published in June. "We completely redesigned it this year," says Gay Galloway, marketing and design director for the Daytona Beach Area CVB. "It's filled with images and inspiration about our wide open spaces and fun places." Features include an insider's guide to Finding Your Perfect Beach and lots of off-the-beaten path ideas visitors can use to explore more of what the area offers. The 50-page guide is available in print or via digital download at DaytonaBeach.com.



Songs From the Sofa Keeps Island Hopper Top of Mind

Songs From the Sofa, a monthly Instagram Live event @IslandHopperFest, celebrates music from the annual Island Hopper Songwriter Fest on Captiva Island, Fort Myers, and Fort Myers Beach. Now that the 10-day festival is postponed until Sept. 17-22, 2021, the Lee County VCB continues to host Songs From the Sofa as a way to keep Island Hopper top of mind with potential visitors. Performers have included Sam James, Jay Allen, Maia Sharp, and Dave Pahanish. FortMyers-Sanibel.com





Residents and Visitors Enjoy The Palm Beaches' Ale Trail

Promoting more activities that allow for safe socializing while supporting small businesses was the thought behind Discover The Palm Beaches' latest partnership with local breweries. A mobile savings pass offers residents and visitors discounts like money off and BOGOs as well as a chance to win prizes, ranging from \$50 prize packs to an overnight package at a new Delray Beach hotel. The initiative further supports growing interest in day trips, staycations, and road trips. ThePalmBeaches.com



Visitors and residents enjoy the Outdoor Beer Garden at Saltwater Brewery in Delray Beach. Photo: Saltwater Brewery

A Busy Summer on Florida's Space Coast

The summer has continued to be busy for Florida's Space Coast. Approximately 3,800 athletes competed in the AAU Junior Olympic Games from July 25 to August 9, which also coincided with the Mars 2020 space launch. Brevard Zoo was voted fifth best zoo in North America in the *USA Today* 10Best Readers' Choice Awards. As tourism, the fourth largest employer in Brevard County, begins to recover, it assisted in dropping the unemployment rate from 11.6% to 8.5%. VisitSpaceCoast.com



The Brevard Zoo is the only zoo where you can take a kayak tour past animals for a one-of-a-kind encounter.

Visit St. Lucie Receives General Excellence Award for Best Visitor Publication

Visit St. Lucie received a General Excellence Bronze award from the Florida Magazine Association in the Best Visitor Publication category for its 2020 *St. Lucie Travel Guide* magazine, published in conjunction with Indian River Magazine, Inc. Judges for the annual awards program cited the publication as having "great local content and helpful features." This is the second consecutive year the St. Lucie County Tourism Office and Indian River Magazine were recognized for excellence in visitor publications by the Florida Magazine Association. VisitStLucieFla.com



Outsiders Welcome Back in Punta Gorda/Englewood Beach

"In Punta Gorda/Englewood Beach we say, Outsiders welcome back!" Charlotte County is home to the state's second-largest estuary, more than 60 public parks and recreation areas, and plenty of other safe, social-distancing outdoor adventures. The Punta Gorda/Englewood Beach VCB modified its award-winning Outsiders Welcome campaign featuring tourism leaders touting the destination's outdoor offerings and added "back." Over the summer, three Outsiders were added and digital ads were placed in drive markets, which will carry into the fall. PureFlorida.com



Punta Gorda/Englewood Beach is welcoming outsiders back.

Photo: PureFlorida.com



Tampa Bay Offers Open-Air Outdoor Adventures

How much do you really know about the beating heart of Florida's Gulf Coast? For visitors and residents looking for off-the-beaten path experiences, Visit Tampa Bay has compiled some of the greatest outdoor activities and open-air adventures to lift everyone's spirits in the latest blog, "Undiscovered Tampa Bay." In addition, Visit Tampa Bay continued its Memory Maker video series with Mike Conlee, owner and expert paddler at Urban Kai. Viewers paddle along as Mike explains how paddleboarding has become one of the fastest-growing water sports in the world, especially in Tampa Bay. VisitTampaBay.com



Mike Conlee, owner of Urban Kai Stand Up Paddleboarding located on the Tampa Riverwalk, enjoys a sunny day on the water.

Syndication Earns Experience Kissimmee 150 Media Mentions

Experience Kissimmee recently pitched to media a lead about Kissimmee's outdoor adventures that truly social distance by nature. While the story was picked up by media throughout the area, one travel writer received 150 syndications. The article reached nearly 5 million readers across the country—hitting most of EK's key drive market cities, including Jacksonville, West Palm Beach, Daytona, Tampa, New Orleans, Charleston, and Raleigh. EK's mentioned industry partners include Wild Florida, Gatorland, Revolution Adventures, and Orlando Tree Trek. ExperienceKissimmee.com



Guests of Kissimmee can social distance by nature with many of the area's outdoor attractions, like airboat rides.

Sarasota's Nathan Benderson Park to Host Back-to-Back Championship Regattas

With low occupancy Monday through Friday, (safe) group business is a must for 2021. The Visit Sarasota County sports team, in conjunction with Nathan Benderson Park, proudly announced they secured the largest-ever national championship regatta in the sport of dragon boat paddling for July 2021. VSC and NBP secured the International Championship for 2022 in 2019, which led to the 2021 booking (a real win-win!). There are 2,500 visitors anticipated for the 2021 event. VisitSarasota.com



Nathan Benderson Park is one of the world's premier paddling venues.

Practice Horse Yoga in Orlando North, Seminole County

Seminole County is drawing nature lovers with unique outdoor experiences. For example, visitors and residents alike can leave the chaos of life behind and escape into Orlando North's wilderness for a relaxing new practice that combines yoga with horses at CabaYoga. The half-day yoga retreat experience at this utopic horse farm is designed for all walks of life. No experience with horses or yoga is needed. CabaYoga leaves participants completely refreshed and reconnected to their wild spirit. DoOrlandoNorth.com



Caitlin Terry, founder of Caba Yoga, practices yoga with her Belgian draft horse, Jeffery.



Chasin' The Sun Returns for Sixth Season

Visit Panama City Beach is pleased to announce that its award-winning fishing and coastal lifestyle television series, *Chasin' The Sun*, will return for a sixth season on Discovery Channel. Premiering in January 2021 and airing on Saturdays through June, the upcoming season's all-new episodes will continue to showcase the diverse fishery and family-friendly experiences available in Panama City Beach. Professional guides Justin Leake, Ed Zyak, and Travis Holman will return as co-hosts of the popular series. VisitPanamaCityBeach.com



Chasin' The Sun airs on the Discovery Channel every Saturday morning, January through June.

Amelia Island Is a Best Island in the Continental United States

A coastal treasure of Northeast Florida, Amelia Island has once again found itself on *Travel + Leisure* magazine's Best Islands in the Continental United States list, moving up two spots from last year. The popular travel magazine's 25th annual World's Best Awards reader survey put Amelia Island at No. 6 on the list, topping other Florida islands. The World's Best Awards program is run by Travel + Leisure and based on an annual reader survey. AmeliaIsland.com



Amelia Island ranks #6 on Best Islands in Continental United States list.
Photo: Deremer Studios LLC

Keys Social Media Campaign Promotes Attractions and Safety

The Florida Keys & Key West launched a social media initiative with brief interviews of Keys personalities, wearing colorful protective facial masks, as a facet of the destination's Play It Safe! campaign. Posts with Kermit Carpenter, founder of Kermit's Key West Lime Shoppe, generated a reach on Facebook of 42,000 and Instagram of 25,200. Interviews with execs at other Keys attractions and participatory experiences also garnered positive awareness about mask mandates throughout the Keys. Fla-Keys.com



Kermit Carpenter displays the Kermit Key Lime Pie ... and his key lime-colored protective facial mask.

Visit Central Florida Unveils New Website

Visit Central Florida (VCF) launched a complete redesign of VisitCentralFlorida.org in August. Based on extensive research and in working closely with the creative and web development team at The Zimmerman Agency, the new site focuses on inspirational and authentic storytelling, with fresh content to inspire visitors and showcase Polk County's valuable tourism industry partners. The Mobile First website delivers shortened editorial content for clean and clear navigation, allowing visitors to quickly access information on mobile devices. VisitCentralFlorida.org



The new VCF website offers improved site loading speed, Visit Widget integration for map-based itinerary building, and a Live Chat feature.



GMCVB Hosts Successful Virtual Planning Partner Workshop for Greater Miami's Tourism Recovery

The GMCVB hosted its Partner Planning Workshop as a virtual three-day event on August 4-6. The Welcome Session by GMCVB President & CEO William D. Talbert III, CDME, and guests featured a performance by the Miami Music Project. Travel industry research and updates set the stage for what is ahead for the destination. Breakout sessions followed, led by GMCVB senior staff, focusing on sales and marketing initiatives and planning for the upcoming fiscal year. *MiamiAndBeaches.com*



Youth Sports Keep July Busy in Ocala/Marion County

The Ocala/Marion County VCB is excited to share its success in safely hosting four consecutive weekends of baseball tournaments in July. Bringing 57 out-of-town teams, with 69 participating teams total, the tournaments produced an overall estimated economic impact to the community of more than \$1.2 million. A huge thank you to Marion County Parks and Recreation staff and the Rotary Sportsplex board members for their hard work taking care of the fields and keeping the players, parents, and fans safe and healthy. *OcalaMarion.com*



The readerboard at Rotary Sportsplex in Marion County testifies to a busy summer.

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Visit St. Pete/Clearwater Launches Rise to Shine Campaign

In an effort to unify the destination and rebuild traveler confidence, Visit St. Pete/Clearwater has debuted an industrywide visiting safely and responsibly campaign called Rise to Shine. Developed to reach locals, in-market visitors, and prospective visitors, while inspiring the local tourism industry to do what's right, the campaign includes a host of on-site assets for local businesses and robust paid media efforts in Tampa Bay and Orlando. VisitStPeteClearwater.com



VSPC's Rise to Shine campaign encourages locals and visitors to visit responsibly and safely.

South Walton Launches Beach Shuttle Program

Known for its eclectic art galleries, beautiful beaches, and the world-famous Red Bar, South Walton's Grayton Beach is also home to a new golf cart shuttle service known as the Grayton Express. The program, which operates through Labor Day and is run by the Walton County TDC, has helped alleviate congestion during peak visitation times and provided visitors and locals in South Walton with convenient access to the beach, shops, and restaurants. To date, more than 12,000 riders have taken the Grayton Express. VisitSouthWalton.com



The Grayton Express takes visitors and locals to the beach, shops, and restaurants.





Visit Lauderdale Goes Beyond the Beach to Promote Wide Open Spaces for Adventure

There's plenty of room to spread out and enjoy the sandy shores in eight distinct beach communities in Greater Fort Lauderdale. Just west of the beaches, visitors and residents can explore nature in wide-open spaces perfect for naturally socially distant activities: Hop on a horse for a scenic trail ride at Bar-B Ranch in Davie. Glide across the Everglades in a small airboat at Sawgrass Recreation Park. Paddleboard or kayak on hundreds of miles of inland waterways, or explore endless miles of hiking and biking trails. Sunny.org



With masks required for horseback rides, it feels a bit like the Wild West at Bar-B Ranch on the west side of Greater Fort Lauderdale.

Pensacola's Chappie James Museum Featured in *Condé Nast Traveler*

Visit Pensacola is excited to share that Pensacola and the Chappie James Museum have been featured in the *Condé Nast Traveler* article "7 Black History Museums Across the U.S. Worth Visiting." Established travel writer Sheryl Nance-Nash visited Pensacola in November 2019 to experience Pensacola's culture, arts, and history. After experiencing the area's rich African-American heritage, she has been a dedicated advocate for Pensacola's rich history. VisitPensacola.com



Pictured above are the original steps from General Chappie James' home. Not only was this the childhood home of Chappie James, it also served as a place where African-American children went for tutoring services.

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Stacey Rosseter, Integrated Account Manager, Navigate Media
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**79% of domestic
hotel searches in
1H July '20 were for
July - August '20,
suggesting that
consumers are
looking to travel now**

Additionally, nearly 2 in 3 domestic hotel searches in 1H July '20 were made for the month of July '20.



Source: Tripadvisor Internal Data, 1H July '20 (June 29th - July 12th, 2020). Excludes Markets with less than 1,000 July - August '20 hotel searches

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



Visit Orlando's Magical Dining Returns With New Take-Out & Outdoor Dining Options

Visit Orlando's Magical Dining has returned—allowing diners to experience fine dining in Orlando at a great value while also showing support for local businesses and helping to feed others in need.

The \$35 three-course, prix-fixe dinner program runs through October 4 with new additions that encourage dining with confidence. Participating restaurants are going above and beyond with new safety measures; new takeout and delivery meal options for in-home dining; and *OrlandoMagicalDining.com* now designates venues that also offer open-air and outdoor dining. *VisitOrlando.com*



Through Visit Orlando, \$1 from each Magical Dining meal served will benefit Feed the Need Florida, which works to help feed people who have struggled with getting access to healthy food.

Emerald Coast Pre-Tournament Serves Up Flavorful Fish

While the Emerald Coast Open and Lionfish Removal and Awareness Day are postponed in Destin-Fort Walton Beach, the pre-tournament is still underway having brought in 4,294 fish to date. The annual event, which commenced in February, aims to reduce the invasive species from the Gulf of Mexico, where they pose a threat to native marine life. To conclude the tournament, local restaurants are serving up the flavorful fish with specialties ranging from tacos to sushi. *DestinFWB.com*



Fish that are donated during the Emerald Coast pre-tournament are being served at local restaurants.

FIND THE WAY TO RECOVERY

To get back on track in 2020, marketing efficiency will be critical. With Epsilon, you'll find and connect with the people most likely to visit your destination. And when they do, you'll measure exactly how your marketing efforts drive community impact and economic growth.

See how we achieved a \$195:1 ROI for a destination like yours. epsilon.com/visit

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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

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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

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

INSIDE: Read the latest on the Airbnb case regarding tax collection on rentals.

Destinations Florida, Inc.
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 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