

TourismMarketing Today

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David Whitaker Takes the Helm at Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau

Destinations Florida joins the Greater Miami CVB in welcoming its new president & CEO, David Whitaker. This



David Whitaker

is a homecoming for David, who served as a member of the GMCVB team for 17 years (1990-2007), most recently as executive vice president and chief marketing officer.

David left Miami in 2007 when he was appointed president & CEO of Tourism Toronto (now Destination Toronto), where he led the organization for eight years. During his tenure in Toronto, the organization was voted North America's top CVB and convention center in a poll of 650+ meeting planners. He led successful bids

to host an NBA All-Star Game and a Pan American/Parapan American Game.

Over the past five years, David has served as president & CEO of Choose Chicago, where he had the responsibility of promoting and selling the largest convention center in the United States, McCormick Place. Under his leadership, the DMO successfully bid on and hosted an NBA All-Star Game, an MLS All-Star Game, North America's first Laver Cup international tennis tournament, an NCAA Frozen Four, and numerous international soccer and rugby events. Under David's leadership, Chicago was named a Best Big City to Visit in the *Condé Nast Traveler Readers' Choice*

DAVID WHITAKER ... continues on pg. 3

Thinking Out Loud

by Robert Skrob, CAE



Thank you for participating in Destinations Florida's strategic planning process. Your engagement

in the survey and focus groups has been very helpful.

And a big thank you to Bill Geist and Terri White, who have been tireless in their efforts to help Destinations Florida level up what we deliver.

An interesting question has arisen, and I'd like your input:

What if Destinations Florida created an "Introduction to Florida Destination Marketing" course?

OUT LOUD ... continues on pg. 3

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Awards for an unprecedented four consecutive years (2017-2020).

Now David will use his knowledge of the community, along with his experiences with two major convention and event destinations, to help Greater Miami and Miami Beach's industry partners take the destination to the next level.

"It is a real privilege and blessing to be able to return home to Miami," David says. "Florida is also home in that I am a proud graduate of the University of South Florida. During my first tenure here at the GMCVB, I have incredibly fond memories of partnering with VISIT

FLORIDA, especially collaborating on international sales missions, trade shows, and big event activations. While Greater Miami and Miami Beach enjoy a strong

international brand, what all destinations benefit from is our incredibly valuable Florida brand."

DAVID WHITAKER ... continues on pg. 6

OUT LOUD ... continued from pg. 1



Representative Susan L. Valdes joins the Destinations Florida strategic planning discussion and contributes her experience on opportunities for diversity, equity, and inclusion.



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On the Cover
The Resort Metropolis of Greater Miami and Miami Beach
A sophisticated global playground, a tapestry of cultures, lively arts and nightlife, yet its greatest attractions are its natural charms—from world-renowned beaches to the unique ecosystems of its great outdoors—offering a variety of experiences for everyone. Now, after more than three decades, the Great Miami CVB will promote the area under the leadership of a new CEO. See the story on page one.

The goal is to create an onboarding course for new members of your team. At this stage we are thinking it would be three hours long, perhaps nine 20-minute segments. It would introduce concepts focused on what DMOs do, how to work together within the industry, what is VISIT FLORIDA and why it's important, key media markets, niche marketing, and maybe even welcome centers.

Possible outcomes from this course:

- When you get a new team member, it would save you at least three hours of one-on-one instruction.
- It may be appropriate to share with new TDC members.
- New hotel sales managers could take the course to better understand how to market their hotel property.

- It may be useful in diversity, equity, and inclusion outreach efforts.
- It could include quizzes after each module to build a certificate program.

We are at the idea stage now. What are your thoughts? Would this be helpful to your DMO? What if Destinations Florida offers this course at \$197 with a 50% discount to \$99 for members?

Let us know if you like this idea and if you'd be interested in helping with curriculum and course development.

Thank you again for your membership, support, and engagement in Destinations Florida. It is an honor to serve you.

Florida DMOs Well Represented in USTA Destiny & Mercury Awards

Florida DMOs once again are well represented when it comes to accolades for their outstanding tourism marketing. This year three of the 12 Florida campaigns named as finalists won in their category of the U.S. Travel Association's annual Destiny Awards program, and Florida had one finalist in the Mercury Awards program.

Congratulations to these Florida DMO winners and finalists:

DESTINY AWARD

Advocacy & Grassroots Campaign

Finalist: Visit Lauderdale – Future in Focus
Visit Lauderdale held two "virtual summits" focused on the future of area tourism. Prerecorded content was streamed "live" on YouTube to an actively participating audience that voiced their feedback in the comment section. The summits exceeded more than 1,000 views, and a survey issued after the first summit received 117 partner responses, with 90% rating the summit as good, very good, or excellent.

Destination & Product Development



Martin County's Arts & Cultural Trail Launch is presented the Destiny Award.

WINNER: Martin County Office of Tourism & Marketing – Arts & Cultural Trail Launch

The Martin County Arts & Culture Trail is a free, mobile-exclusive program that includes information about more than 20 arts and cultural attractions throughout Martin County. According to Google Analytics, 887 users visited the Arts & Culture Trail landing page, and Bandwango analytics showed that 516+ people signed up to receive the Martin County Arts & Culture Trail, with the majority of downloads leading up to ArtsFest, an annual celebration of the arts.

Finalist: Destin-Fort Walton Beach – Venture Out
Venture Out let families "get a little out there" in the destination in a way that was safe, clean, gave them control, and most

importantly, had lots of space. The campaigns generated an estimated 430MM impressions in just three months. The digital campaign alone generated 34M ad impressions, 71K clicks to the website, and 4.5M completed video views at a very efficient \$0.03 cost per completed view.

Integrated Marketing & Messaging Campaign: \$5 Million+

Finalist: Visit Orlando – The Wonder Remains
The Wonder Remains campaign was born to inspire consumers to dream again and to find comfort in the joyful, imaginative, and adventurous place Orlando has always been, where visitor safety has always come first, and new memories await. The campaign delivered 671 million impressions and 2.3 million+ website visits while influencing 831,111 Orlando hotel searches, and resulting in 193,000 room nights and \$25.5 million estimated hotel revenue.

Finalist: Visit St. Pete/Clearwater – Rise to Shine
Rise to Shine was a positive, vibrant, and informative campaign aimed at building consumer confidence and giving travelers the peace of mind they needed to pack their bags and venture out. Consumer engagement exceeded expectations with 80,031 total paid page views to the promoted COVID page, 2,177 Snapchat page views, and 33,775+ unique visitors who took the Rise to Shine Pledge and entered the sweepstakes (with 320,686 total entries).

Printed Collateral Materials

Finalist: Visit St. Pete/Clearwater – Gulf to Bay Magazine
More than 543,000 print magazines that fueled the dreams of people anxious to travel again were inserted in the Sunday edition of *The New York Times* and local newspapers in key feeder markets reaching a highly affluent audience. A social media campaign to promote the digital magazine used data aggregated through past requests for visitor guides. The social campaign reached 168,613+ people with 7,000+ clicks resulting in a \$0.13 cost per click.

Public Relations Campaign

Finalist: Visit Tampa Bay – PR Playbook for Hosting a Super Bowl During a Pandemic
Visit Tampa Bay created the Super Bowl LV Media Center, a dedicated destination-inspired space that included a satellite studio where interview opportunities could take place not only in person, but also remotely worldwide. Despite the pandemic and having more hotel inventory than ever before, hotel occupancy reached 92% over Super Bowl weekend, beating out the last time the destination hosted the big game, in 2009.

Finalist: Visit Orlando – Making Orlando Safer, Stronger, Together
Orange County Government, Visit Orlando, and Orlando Economic Partnership developed and implemented this integrated plan to unify the community in supporting safety compliance measures and minimizing the spread of COVID-19. In-kind ad spots aired by seven TV stations ran 550+ times per week and extended into print ads and donated billboards. Some 135 positive media stories ran in local and national publications, and 21k page views on the campaign website showed audiences heavily skewed to new visitors.

“The Road Less Traveled”

Finalist: Greater Miami CVB – Miamiland

The Miamiland campaign objective was to publicize the resumption of outdoor and park activities in Greater Miami and Miami Beach and communicate the steps taken to ensure a safe experience due to the public health emergency. The campaign reached 3 million+ people eager for outdoor experiences and generated nearly 160,000 hotel bookings, resulting in over \$100 million in hotel revenue. From October to December 2020, the effort achieved over 357% more bookings than the previous year and 201,572 website views.

Video, Film, or Podcast Series



Visit Panama City Beach wins a Destiny Award and a People's Choice Award.

WINNER: Visit Panama City Beach – Chasin' The Sun

To promote its world-class fishery and support the local charter fishing industry, Visit PCB produced *Chasin' The Sun*, a fishing, diving, and coastal lifestyle TV series. The series was seen by 3.7 million viewers as reported by Discovery Channel, Amazon Prime delivered 1,550 hours of on-demand *Chasin' The Sun* content, sponsorship sales of \$229,000 in cash/product offset 47% of the program cost, and Facebook followers increased 112.78% (11,608 likes in 2019). The show also won the highly competitive, inaugural People's Choice Award. These awards recognize excellence and creative accomplishment in destination marketing and promotion at the local and regional level.

Finalist: Discover The Palm Beaches & Palm Beach County

Environmental Resources Management – Hidden Wild
Hidden Wild is a 30-minute film showcasing eco-adventures in The Palm Beaches. It premiered on local PBS stations, moved to the national film festival circuit, and then into Palm Beach County schools. *Hidden Wild* received nearly 17K views in four months on the NRS YouTube page. It's an official selection for five film festivals, and the film is broadcasting on TVs in 4,500 local hotel rooms through Palm Beaches TV. Footage of the film will live on forever through the DTPB and ERM websites, videos, and social media channels.

Virtual Programming



Kerry Sutsko, destination stewardship manager, Destin-Fort Walton Beach; Jennifer Adams, director, Destin-Fort Walton Beach; and Claire Oakley, owner, Boone Oakley (agency of record), accept the Destiny Award.

WINNER: Destin-Fort Walton Beach

– Adventure Anywhere

Adventure Anywhere launched on April 13, 2020, as a collection of indoor/outdoor itineraries. These itineraries connected parents, teachers, businesses, and children with the wonders of the destination, all without leaving the house. Results included: 6.1% engagements per impression, a 201% increase vs. pre-campaign; 2:59 average time on Adventure Anywhere page, a 40% increase over the site average; 23.8K video engagements, a 100% increase; and 32.2K page views of partner listing, an 80% increase.

MERCURY AWARD

Industry & Strategic Partnerships

Finalist: Visit St. Pete/Clearwater and VISIT FLORIDA

– Life's Rewards Series

The eight-episode *Life's Rewards* video series features real locations in St. Pete/Clearwater and follows the adventures of an executive who was fired from his job, had his accounts frozen, and is stranded at his hotel. In the first three weeks after launch, with only earned and organic media in place, the series had 553,340 minutes watched on Prime Video across 57,380 unique streams. On YouTube, the series earned 22,019 minutes watched across 3,938 views. This nets to about a \$4,900,000 content engagement valuation.

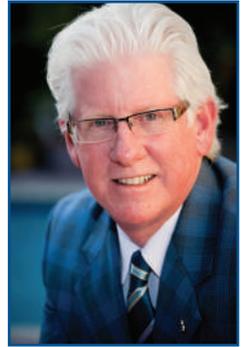
"Increasingly, international travelers are seeking multiple city and multiple experience itineraries," David continues. "The diversity of these experiences is best amplified under our state umbrella and Florida's diversity and brands that simply extend our message further and farther. I look forward to building upon our great relationships."

David takes the reins from William (Bill) D. Talbert III, CDME, who led GMCVB for more than three decades.

"A sustainable visitor industry promotes our destination to visitors and residents alike, while contributing to our quality of life and economic prosperity," Bills says. "It's been my honor to serve Florida tourism's industry as chair of both FADMO (now DF) and VISIT FLORIDA. I'm especially proud of the broad coalition of stakeholders we galvanized—tourism, government, cultural and business leaders—to protect and grow our state's primary economic generator, travel and tourism."

David Whitaker assumed the role of president & CEO on August 16 and will be formally introduced to the community at large at the GMCVB's annual meeting in October. Bill Talbert will remain with GMCVB in a consultancy capacity until October 2022 to assist with the transition.

"You all know my mantra," Bill says. "Jobs. Jobs. Jobs. Every day we work to build consensus locally, statewide, and federally on behalf of the visitor industry. My work's not done. I have every intention of continuing to emphasize the critical role it plays in creating jobs and our state's economic health. A sustainable visitor industry promotes our destination to visitors and residents alike, while contributing to our quality of life and economic prosperity."



William D. Talbert III, CDME



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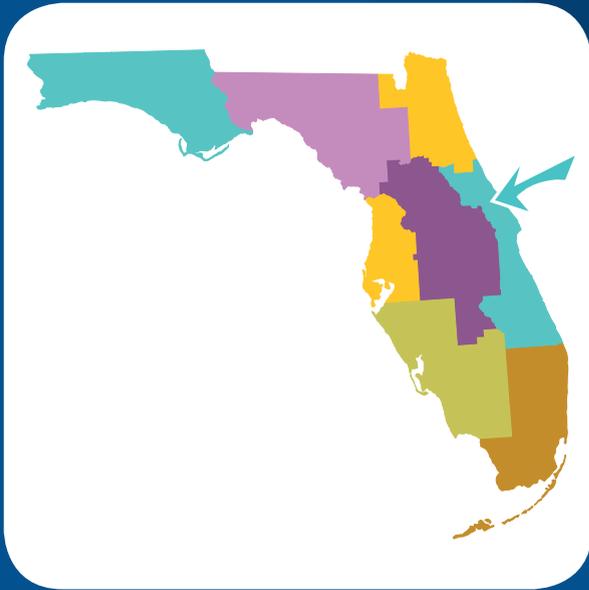


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- Daytona Beach Area CVB
- Discover Indian River
- Florida's Space Coast Office of Tourism
- Martin County Office of Tourism & Marketing
- New Smyrna Beach Area Visitor Bureau
- Okeechobee County TDC
- Visit St. Lucie
- West Volusia Tourism Advertising Authority

Better Together in Daytona Beach

We are better together. The Daytona Beach Area CVB, its tourism industry partners, and community leaders continue to work together through challenging times to provide positive economic impact to local businesses and the people they employ.

"In 2020, we welcomed an estimated 7.2 million visitors who spent \$3.4 billion and generated more than 31,000 jobs in Volusia County," says CVB Executive Director Lori Campbell Baker. "Visitors are vital to economic recovery."

This year, from a record low TDT collection in April 2020 to now record-high monthly collections starting in March 2021, the CVB is:

- Showcasing the area's wide beach, abundant open, green spaces, and family-fun places;

- Inspiring travelers to make plans, travel safely when they are ready, and to "Visit Responsibly";
- Positioning the destination with families looking to book travel closer to home within drivable distances;
- Finding creative, new ways to entice consumers and meeting planners to add the Daytona Beach area to their future meetings, conventions, and sporting events;
- Retaining over 70% of existing group business postponed due to COVID-19 and other constraints; and
- Inspiring visitors to explore more with the launch of the Ultimate Daytona Beach Trail Guide—a collection of the area's most beloved car-, craft-, and culture-themed attractions, historical treasures, and iconic spots.



Two stops along trails featured in the Ultimate Daytona Beach Trail Guide—Tomoka State Park and the iconic Jantzen Girl sculpture at ONE DAYTONA



Discover Indian River Campaign Increases Room Bookings

Indian River County is not your typical “in the news” destination; however, through the pandemic, the county has actually seen a 10% to 12% increase in total occupancy rates compared to 2019. Why? Visitors believe that Indian River County offers peace of mind while traveling to their destination. While visiting, you don’t have to deal with traffic, long waits, or crowded beaches. It is a beach town that offers everything you need while having “room to roam.”

“Indian River offers something for everyone without getting lost in the crowd,” says Kirk Funnell, tourism director for Visit Indian River.



Indian River’s uncrowded beaches gives visitors “room to roam.”



Indian River offers peace and tranquility in a quiet beach town.

In efforts to keep this trend going, Visit Indian River has launched the Discover Indian River campaign. This campaign includes a landing page where potential visitors can browse local deals and various attractions around the county. In any campaign, it is no secret that a DMO strives to find the return on investment, with the main focus of getting room nights booked. So, by using the new landing page, *DiscoverIndianRiver.com*, they have already generated great engagement and have increased their room bookings by 22.3% compared to 2019 numbers.

Visit Indian River has this to say to potential visitors: “So, what are you waiting for? Come see what Indian River County has to offer!”

Space Coast Returns to Record TDT Revenue in Spring and Summer

The Space Coast Office of Tourism has witnessed a return to record TDT revenue during spring and summer to date. The March to June period in 2021 was the best in history at \$7.17 million, beating the record of \$6.38 million in 2019.

“For us to be 12.4% ahead of pre-COVID numbers is incredible, especially after being down more than 17% from October to February,” says Executive Director Peter Cranis. “It speaks to the pent-up demand within the leisure travel segment.”

TDT revenue has totaled \$12.05 million since the fiscal year began in October, which is just 2% off from 2019. If TDT remains on track, the office will exceed \$16.3 million, beating the previous 2019 high of \$16.023 million.



The summer campaign features rocket launches in recognizable locations with a call out of [City Name] on the Space Coast.

“Both the spring and summer marketing campaigns with a \$2.65 million budget can be credited with some of this improvement,” adds Cranis. “Our new campaign has been able to show our outdoor experiences such as beaches and nature juxtaposed with rocket launches, which truly differentiate us.”



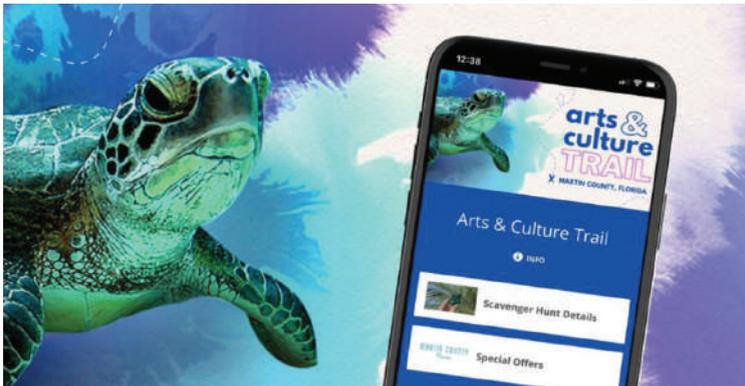
The summer campaign launched a Pandora station with songs chosen by staff, partners, and fans on July 2. At time of writing, it has attracted 15K total listeners and 109K total spins, with an average time spent listening of 24 minutes.



Martin County Deploys Award-Winning Marketing Strategies

“Throughout the pandemic, DMO teams around the world were tasked with completely rethinking their marketing strategies and acting more nimbly than ever before—and the Martin County Office of Tourism & Marketing was no exception,” says Nerissa Okiye, tourism director. “While the pandemic posed countless challenges, it also offered an opportunity for us to get creative and develop award-winning work along the way.”

In order to inspire post-pandemic travel to Martin County, the team launched an innovative hotel partnership program dubbed Missed Milestones. The campaign won the top prize in the Best Tactical



The award-winning Martin County Arts & Culture Trail was unveiled ahead of the annual ArtsFest celebration to drive buzz for the festival and support the arts.

Pivot category of the 2021 Bronze Anvil Awards, presented by the Public Relations Society of America.

Utilizing emerging data and research, the team also developed specialized marketing campaigns targeted to visitor segments comfortable with traveling. The successful Fish Like a Local campaign was geared toward fishing fanatics and will be recognized in the Niche Marketing category of the upcoming Flagler Awards.



The Martin County Office of Tourism & Marketing was recognized in the 2021 Bronze Anvil Awards along with companies such as The Home Depot, Tabasco, Chase Bank, and Southwest Airlines.

Lastly, the Martin County Arts & Culture Trail was launched to promote the area’s rich arts and cultural attractions. This immersive mobile-exclusive program was just announced the winner in the 2021 Destiny Awards, organized by the U.S. Travel Association.

New Smyrna Beach Implements Sustainability Measures, Earns One Planet Designation

New Smyrna Beach was the first city in the state to become a designated member of One Planet, an international organization that promotes long-term sustainability. To be part of the One Planet ecosystem, NSB aligned with 10 specific sustainable development goals outlined by the organization. Each goal is designed to be easily implemented and maintained, creating a practical and clear roadmap.

In addition to the bureau’s accreditation, Marine Discovery Center, Springhill Suites Marriott, and Third Wave Café have also earned designations by One Planet.



Visitors enjoy Indian River kayaking and birding.



A family heads to the water via the Smyrna Dunes beach access.

The city has instituted a few practices to adhere to the goals of One Planet including a ban on the sale and use Styrofoam and plastic straws. The ban applies to vendors and contractors on city property. And the bureau’s offices are lit with energy-efficient bulbs, and staff use refillable water bottles and metal straws.

“We are proud to lead the way in sustainability and appreciate the participation of local partners,” says Debbie Meihls, president & CEO of New Smyrna Beach Area Visitors Bureau.

NSB is also proud of Debbie for receiving the GSTC Professional Certificate in Sustainable Tourism from the Global Sustainable Tourism Council, which establishes and manages global standards for sustainable travel and tourism.



The TDC and Chamber of Commerce Celebrate Okeechobee's First Visitor Center!

On June 11, the Okeechobee Chamber of Commerce celebrated 10 years of service to the businesses of Okeechobee County.



Mariah Parriott, office manager, Okeechobee Chamber of Commerce; Sharie Turgeon, tourism coordinator, Okeechobee County TDC; and Paulette Wise, executive director, Okeechobee Chamber of Commerce, celebrate the grand opening of the Visitor Center.

Included in the celebration was the grand opening of the first Visitor Center for Okeechobee County.

The TDC recently relocated to the building that has housed the Chamber of Commerce for a number of years, and with this relocation came the idea of a true collaboration between these community partners to rebrand the building as the Visitor Center. This rebranding included special handmade brochure racks, a bench, and picture frames for the lobby made by volunteers and business owners Jeff Jones, Jerry Jones, and Aaron and Mariah Parriott, as well as beautiful local photography by Paulette Wise, Sharon Cannon, and Sharie Turgeon.



Aaron Parriott, business owner/volunteer, joins Mariah Parriott, office manager, Okeechobee Chamber of Commerce, at the Chamber's 10-year celebration.

"We hope the Visitor Center will be seen as a valuable resource for guests and residents alike," says Sharie Turgeon, tourism coordinator.

Visit St. Lucie Bounces Back With a New Campaign and Record-Breaking Performance

It's been a long road for much of the travel and tourism industry on a global and national level, and fortunately, in 2021, Visit St. Lucie has bounced back from the dark months when the pandemic was negatively impacting corporate travel bookings as well international and out-of-state leisure travel. A pause in activity allowed Visit St. Lucie to reassess and refine its partner relationships, its creative strategies, and messaging.

Emerging from the "pause" resulted in a new and much needed Treasure Coast chapter of the Florida Restaurant & Lodging Association, a new Treasure Coast chapter of the Vacation Rental Management Association, renewed interest from travel media, and fresh creative for the new Deep Roots campaign. The



An outdoor billboard promotes the Visit St. Lucie new Deep Roots campaign creative.



The new 84-room Courtyard Marriott Port St. Lucie Tradition opened July 8.

evergreen campaign, developed by Madden Media, promotes the appeal of today's St. Lucie (flourishing ecosystems, uncrowded natural beaches, a diverse cultural heritage, and traditional sports entertainment) while honoring its deep roots.

An "always on" digital marketing strategy that launched targeted campaigns drove destination awareness and hotel demand and resulted in several months with record-breaking TDT collections, ADR, and occupancy levels. The burst of economic activity in the destination hasn't slowed down in St. Lucie, with new hotels opening and others in the pipeline, new or expanded attractions, and small hospitality business start-ups open or under way.



Visitors Quench Their Thirst Along West Volusia County's CoolCraft Beverage Trail

It's time to hit the trail and find beverages as "cool" as the destination. West Volusia County's eclectic mix of attractions, dining, and boutiques makes it a spectacular spot to visit ... and now it's even cooler, with the CoolCraft Beverage Trail (CoolCraftTrail.com).



A patron samples the brews along West Volusia County's CoolCraft Beverage Trail.



Participants of the CoolCraft Beverage Trail in West Volusia County can win this pint glass koozie.

West Volusia Tourism was proud to kick off the beverage trail on November 27, 2020. Visitors are now able to hit the trail for the best "crafts" around ... and not just beer, though there is plenty. With meads, smoothies, teas, coffees, and, of course, some of the best brews, visitors can tour and taste all the CoolCrafters offer.

Features of the trail include four nationally recognized breweries; two coffee roasting companies, including one founded by Fred Schneider, front man of the iconic B-52s; wineries with U-pick opportunities; Odd Elixir Meadworks; and even key lime juice at the factory where most of Kermit's Key West Key Lime Shoppe's delicacies are produced.

Participants can also win on the trail by tasting and posting their favorites on Instagram using #CoolCraftTrail and follow @VisitWestVolusia to win a free pint glass koozie. Next up? A CoolCraft Trail electronic passport!

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TDT on Migrant Worker Accommodations?

by Steven M. Hogan

Over the years, we have gotten all sorts of questions from Destinations Florida members on how the Tourist Development Tax (TDT) applies to various circumstances. Despite looking at the TDT statute from numerous angles, sometimes a question comes through that is unique, in that we haven't considered it before.

We recently received such a question, which asked whether the TDT applies to accommodations for migrant workers. After looking into the issue, we determined the TDT does not apply to such accommodations.

Section 125.0104(3)(a), Florida Statutes, provides that the TDT does not apply to living quarters or accommodations made exempt from tax under Chapter 212, Florida Statutes.

Section 212.03(7)(d), Florida Statutes, includes the following exemption:

The rental of living accommodations in migrant labor camps is not taxable under this section. "Migrant labor camps" are defined as one or more buildings or structures, tents, trailers, or vehicles, or any portion thereof, together with the land appertaining thereto, established, operated or used as living quarters for seasonal, temporary, or migrant workers. § 212.03(7)(d), Fla. Stat.

Further, rule 12A-1.061(2)(a), Florida Administrative Code, provides that "owners or operators of migrant labor camps ... are not exercising a taxable privilege when in the business of renting, leasing, letting, or granting licenses to others to use, occupy, or enter upon such facilities and are not required to register with the Department [of Revenue]." *Id.*

Based on this, accommodations for migrant workers are not subject to the TDT. As always, legal counsel should be sought on specific questions, as particular facts can change the analysis.

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



The TDT does not apply to accommodations for migrant workers.

Florida Welcomed 31.4 Million Travelers in Q2 2021

VISIT FLORIDA announced that preliminary visitation estimates show Florida welcomed a total of 31.7 million travelers from April through June 2021, representing an increase of more than 220% over the prior year. Approximately 30.6 million domestic visitors traveled to Florida in Q2, reflecting a 216% increase from 2020, and a 6% increase from 2019.

Over the past year, VISIT FLORIDA had several marketing successes that accelerated tourism's recovery and positioned Florida as a leading destination for travelers across the U.S.



MotoSurf and MotoSkate Return to U.S. With Debut Event in Sebring

The MotoSurf Games brought motorized surfboards and the world's first-ever MotoSkate event to Sebring and turned the sidewalks around Lake Jackson and the Sebring Civic Center into a skating raceway. The July 17-18 event brought 70 competitors from nine countries battling for the first U.S. championship in almost two years. A 30-minute recap show on CBS Sports Network will air to showcase the destination. Visit Sebring, Airstream Ventures, and the Sebring CRA worked together to bring this event to Sebring. VisitSebring.com



MotoSurfing comes to Sebring.

Award-Winning Culinary Marketing Strategy Promotes Dining on Florida's Historic Coast

The St. Augustine, Ponte Vedra & The Beaches VCB recently created a culinary heritage dining video that won the prestigious Silver Telly Award in the Social Video – Food & Beverage category. This is one more step the VCB is taking to successfully market the unique dining experiences found on Florida's Historic Coast. FloridasHistoricCoast.com



To view the award-winning video and learn about St. Augustine's impressive culinary heritage, visit youtu.be/JWRueboBNgo.

New Campaign Drives Tourism to Daytona Beach

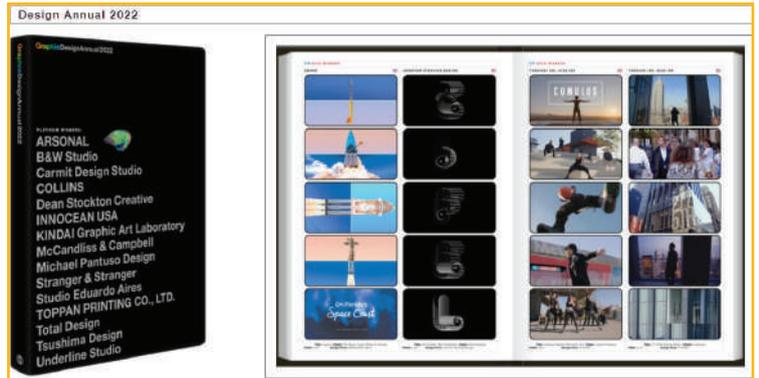
The Daytona Beach Area CVB launched a Start Your Engines consumer campaign in April and has been experiencing record-setting TDT collections through the spring and summer. The creative is a playful nod to the area's car racing history and showcases the authenticity of the destination. The multilayered campaign ran in key drive markets. The TV spot opens with the most famous words heard in racing, "... start your engines!" while a family starts their car. The "finish line" is the iconic World's Most Famous Beach sign. DaytonaBeach.com



A new Start Your Engines consumer campaign is driving visitors to the finish line in Daytona Beach.

Graphis Design Award Winner Showcases the Space Coast

The spring campaign split-screen TV ad showcasing recognizable icons of the Space Coast paired with rockets created by the marketing team from &Barr won Gold in the 2022 Graphis Design Competition under the category of video animation. Graphis is committed to presenting and promoting the work of exceptional global talent in design, advertising, photography, and art/illustration. Fellow design Platinum and Gold winners include FX Network, DC Comics, Fox Broadcasting, PepsiCo, KitchenAid, NBC Sports, Samsung, HBO Max, and more. VisitSpaceCoast.com



Platinum and Gold winners receive full-page exposure in the Graphis hardcover Annuals, and Platinum winners are listed on the cover.



Greater Miami CVB Hosts Annual Partner Planning Workshop

The 2021 GMCVB Annual Partner Planning Workshop was held July 30 at the Hotel InterContinental in Downtown Miami. Attended by more than 200 registered guests, the event provided partners with an opportunity to share input and ideas as part of the GMCVB's annual planning process. The event featured a variety of presentations, a DEI guest speaker, breakout sessions by GMCVB department leaders, and great networking at the Business Expo. Event sponsors were Ntara, Miles Partnership, and American Airlines. MiamiAndBeaches.com



Miami tourism partners gather at the InterContinental in Downtown Miami for the GMCVB Annual Partner Planning Workshop.

RESTORE Grant Funds Visitor Info Kiosk in Levy County

Thanks to a RESTORE Grant from the U.S. Treasury through Levy County, the Withlacoochee Gulf Area Chamber of Commerce can now provide visitors with information 24/7. The grant provided funding for an outdoor electronic touch-screen information kiosk. The WGA Chamber of Commerce purchased the life-size statue of Elvis for visitor photo ops. This is particularly appropriate now because this is the 60th anniversary of the movie *Follow That Dream*, which was mostly filmed in the Inglis/Yankeetown area. VisitLevy.com



Superintendent Chris Cowart of Levy County School District, chair of the Restore Act Committee; Levy County Commissioner Lilly Rooks; Executive Director Tisha Neufeld Whitehurst of Levy Visitors Bureau; and Dr. Richard B. Streeter, WGACC president, pose with a statue of Elvis Presley.

Bay County Deploys Two Artificial Reefs

In partnership with multiple organizations and volunteers, Bay County deployed two new artificial reefs approximately 11 to 12 nautical miles southwest of St. Andrew's Bay Pass off Panama City Beach using spools donated by Oceaneering International. Panama City Beach is known as the Wreck Diving Capital of the South, and these new artificial reefs will soon be brimming with living marine organisms, creating an ecosystem and habitat for fish, crabs, and more for divers and fishermen to enjoy.

VisitPanamaCityBeach.com



Panama City Beach's premier fishing show, *Chasin' the Sun*, captured the sinking of the spools for the artificial reefs, which will air in January 2022 on the Discovery Channel!

Orlando North Goes Live With the Central Florida Zoo!

Orlando North, Seminole County has launched a social media live stream series with the Central Florida Zoo & Botanical Gardens in Sanford to feature different animals and their handlers. The zoo has had to limit its animal encounter experiences, and this series brings the animal experiences home to those who are unable to visit them in person. A different animal is featured each month and allows viewers to submit questions to the handlers during the live presentations. DoOrlandoNorth.com



Karen Aplin, tourism marketing manager for Orlando North, Seminole County, visits with PJ, the Central Florida Zoo's white rhino.



Volunteer Beach Ambassadors Play Valuable Role in South Walton

Volunteer Beach Ambassadors in South Walton are known for offering visitors helpful information at the beach. VBA Delanne Bernier recently went above and beyond her duties when she helped rescue a struggling swimmer from a rip current in June. She used a whistle to get the swimmer's attention and was able to pantomime how he should swim parallel to the shore and break free. He was eventually able to swim back. Her effort might have saved the life of the swimmer and serves as a reminder of the valuable role our VBAs serve in the community. VisitSouthWalton.com



South Walton Beach VBA Delanne Bernier is a life saver!

World Cornhole Day Proclaimed in the Bradenton Area

In celebration of the culmination of the American Cornhole Organization World Championships, which recently took place at the Bradenton Area Convention Center and drew 450+ players and their supporters to the destination, Palmetto Mayor Shirley Groover-Bryant officially proclaimed July 31 ACO World Cornhole Day. Mayor Bryant then faced off with neighboring Bradenton Mayor Gene Brown in a cornhole duel featuring their guests Miss Florida, Leah Roddenberry, and the Bradenton Marauder's mascot, Marty. BradentonGulfIslands.com



A cornhole duel in Bradenton pits Palmetto Mayor Shirley Goover-Bryant against Bradenton Mayor Gene Brown.

Florida's Paradise Coast Hosts Nationally Syndicated *Kidd Kraddick Morning Show* for Week-Long Broadcast

Naples, Marco Island, and the Everglades were the stars of the show during a week-long radio broadcast by the nationally syndicated *Kidd Kraddick Morning Show*, reaching 70+ markets. The five cast members explored the destination each day after their morning broadcast, showcasing a wave runner tour, the Domes of Cape Romano, the Everglades by airboat, dolphin watching on the Gulf, and amazing culinary experiences along the way. The show boasts 98,000+ You Tube subscribers and 1 million+ Instagram followers. ParadiseCoast.com



Recaps of the weeklong radio broadcast from Florida's Paradise Coast can be seen at KiddNation.com, @KiddNation and @KiddKraddick.

Accessible Travel Guru Speaks to Lee County Industry Partners

Travel writer and accessibility advocate John Morris of wheelchairtravel.org was the guest speaker at a workshop designed to help industry partners provide a positive guest experience for people with disabilities. About 20% of Americans have some form of disability, and 63% are connected to someone who does. The Lee County VCB workshop included key concepts of hotel accessibility, how to market accessible travel to disabled people, what disabled people need to travel confidently, and more. FortMyers-Sanibel.com



Lee County VCB recently hosted The Business of Accessible Travel, Opportunities & Benefits. Pictured here are Simone Behr, visitor services director; John Morris, guest speaker; Tamara Pigott, executive director; and Brian Ososky, marketing director.



VISIT Florida and Visit Sarasota County Host an Adventurous Group Throughout the Gulf Coast

VISIT Florida and Visit Sarasota recently hosted a group of media influencers that got a chance to soak up the fun and off-the-beaten-path activities throughout the breathtaking Sarasota County. Activities included kayaking down Peace River, learning to Dragonboat race at Nathan Benderson Park, and shark tooth hunting at Brohard Beach and Park. The group found the area to be filled with various outdoor activities that people can enjoy anytime of year. VisitSarasota.com



Members of the ECO FAM group show off their paddles and smiling faces after completing their first Dragonboat racing lesson. Photo: Jacob Fu of the Local Adventurer

Gulf County Encourages Connection Between Visitors and Locals

Gulf County, Florida is encouraging visitors to become Locals By Association. A Local By Association takes care of a place no matter the length of time in the destination while also feeling welcomed, just like they are a local themselves. By showcasing the natural beauty of Gulf County, and encouraging the connection between visitors and locals, the Gulf County TDC is creating a community. See videos, tips, and take the promise at VisitGulf.com/LBA.



Prospect Wire Baseball Championships Held in Punta Gorda/Englewood Beach

More than 1,700 of the country's top athletes descended upon the Punta Gorda/Englewood Beach area as Prospect Wire Baseball held its National Championship and Florida State Championship Tournaments July 23-28 at Charlotte Sports Park in Port Charlotte—spring training home of the Tampa Bay Rays. Athletes aged 13-18 traveled from across the county to showcase their talents after qualifying throughout the year. Together, both events generated 3,000+ room nights during the summer season. PureFlorida.com



Video Series Promotes Family Adventures in the Florida Keys

The Florida Keys & Key West commissioned puppet personality and special correspondent Matty Meltzer for an *All-American Road Adventures* mini-video series promoting family travel experiences along the famed Florida Keys Overseas Highway. Witty, wisecracking Matty showcased five individual Keys districts in the five-part series, part of a summer-long social media campaign highlighting family adventures, activities, and attractions. Matty's posts reached more than 965,000 people. Fla-Keys.com



Puppet correspondent Matty Meltzer "drives" the Florida Keys Overseas Highway in a social media series highlighting family fun. Photo: Florida Keys News Bureau



Amelia Island CVB Works to Connect Industry Partners With Hosted Groups

As meeting and convention business returns, the Amelia Island CVB is working to better connect local industry partners with every group hosted in the destination. Since restaurants and lodging are always top of mind during the event planning stage, special retail and activity gift packages were sent to resort conference sale teams that showcased the island's many options for gifting and off-site team-building opportunities. In addition, planners and event professionals are welcome to apply to Flights for Sites to visit and experience Amelia Island for themselves. AmeliaIsland.com



Visitors to Amelia Island are treated to quaint shops and local restaurants along Centre Street in Fernandina Beach.

Crystal River Wins Awards for Main Street, Town Square Improvements

Crystal River Main Street was recently recognized at the annual Florida Main Street's Secretary of State Awards, receiving an Honor in Outstanding Public Improvement for the Crystal River Town Square Project and a Merit in Outstanding Sign/Display Project for the Crystal River Town Square Mural Project. Discover Crystal River Florida congratulates them on the awards and applauds the efforts of everyone involved for improving the destination experience for residents and travelers alike. DiscoverCrystalRiverFL.com



The twin manatees sculpture was recently installed at Crystal River Town Square.

Visit Pensacola Celebrates Florida's Territorial Bicentennial Celebration

Escambia County celebrated 200 years after the exchange of Spanish and American flags on July 17. Created on the same date in 1821, Escambia and St. Johns counties were Florida's two original counties, covering the entire territory within modern state boundaries. The community celebrated with a formal program and performances. The Santa Rosa County Creek Indian Tribe performed a sunrise blessing, followed by a historic marker dedication, day-long reenactments, a Navy flyover, storing of a time capsule, and a free museum day throughout Historic Village that attracted more than 1,000 visitors. VisitPensacola.com



Exchange of flags during Florida's Territorial Bicentennial Celebration on July 17, commemorating the 200th anniversary of the transition of Florida from being a colony of a foreign European country to a territory of the United States.

Martin County Arts & Culture Trail Is Award-Winning Success

To promote ArtsFest 2021 and highlight Martin County's diverse collection of arts and cultural attractions, the Martin County Office of Tourism & Marketing developed the free, mobile-exclusive Martin County Arts & Culture Trail. The program was a huge success, with more than 400 sign-ups in the first 10 days and generating over \$30,000 in earned media coverage, and the trail was just named a winner in the 2021 Destiny Awards in the Destination and Product Development category, organized by the U.S. Travel Association. DiscoverMartin.com



A young visitor following the Martin County Arts & Culture Trail finds a small glass turtle at the Children's Museum of the Treasure Coast.



Orlando Featured in High-Profile Travel Guides

Orlando has been highlighted in more than one high-profile travel guide recently, including a Travel + Leisure piece that generated nearly 6 million impressions. TIME also recently named Orlando one of The World's Greatest Places of 2021. This annual list, chosen by TIME editors and global experts, recognizes 100 destinations (countries, cities, towns, and national parks) that offer extraordinary experiences unlike any other—a fitting description of the destination. VisitOrlando.com



Orlando is included in TIME The World's Greatest Places of 2021.

VCF Flies High at World's Largest Aviation Event

Visit Central Florida (VCF) represented Polk County at the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) AirVenture 2021 in Oshkosh, Wisc., and promoted Lakeland's SUN 'n FUN Aerospace Expo/Fly-in (Florida's largest annual convention). VCF produced and distributed an accommodations brochure and area guide targeted to potential attendees of SUN 'n FUN 2022. EAA AirVenture (the world's largest annual aviation event) reported more than 600,000 attended this year—coming to within 5% of 2019's attendance record. Despite travel restrictions, visitors from 66 countries and 567 media representatives (from four continents) attended. VisitCentralFlorida.org



VCF staff greeting attendees at EAA AirVenture 2021.

Discover The Palm Beaches Hosts Pop-UP Event

Discover The Palm Beaches hosted an official community Pop-UP event on August 17 at the Palm Beach County Convention Center as part of the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) Annual Meeting. The event featured a panel discussion with local business leaders showcasing the community-centric wellness approach that The Palm Beaches incorporates into meetings and events consisting of health and safety, physical and mental wellness, sustainability and environmental protection, arts and culture, and more. ThePalmBeaches.com



The event brought together association professionals and community partners to exchange knowledge, resources, strategies, solutions, and more, allowing The Palm Beaches to highlight the destination as the best way to meet in Florida and for participants to experience first-hand the distinct features and offerings that set the destination apart.

Foodies and Sports Fans in Alachua County Celebrate Opening of Florida's 9th Largest Restaurant and Sports Memorabilia Museum

The much anticipated Spurrier's Gridiron Grille (SpurriersGridironGrille.com) restaurant, bar, and sports memorabilia museum, located at Celebration Pointe, opened for business in August. At full capacity, the 18,600 sq. ft. restaurant and rooftop bar holds 525 customers, making it the ninth largest in the state and a major hospitality employer with 375 staff members. Visit Gainesville, Alachua County supports the enterprise with promotion to meeting planners and event producers, and with funding support for billboard advertising via the new Cooperative Billboard Advertising Program. VisitGainesville.com



Spurrier's Gridiron Grille in Gainesville is the ninth largest restaurant in Florida. Photo: Scott + Cormia – Architecture + Interiors



St. Pete/Clearwater Wraps Another Romantic Comedy Film

The destinations' latest movie produced by *Hallmark* producers, *A Taste of Love*, wrapped three weeks of filming in late July. The production filmed primarily in Dunedin and is a direct result of work from the St. Pete/Clearwater Film Commission. It stars Erin Cahill, a Hallmark Channel favorite, Jesse Kove, and Martin Kove of *Karate Kid* and *Cobra Kai* fame. VisitStPeteClearwater.com



The three-week production yielded more than \$3 million in ad value from PR coverage.

Visit Tampa Bay Launches 3D Interactive Map of Downtown

Visit Tampa Bay launched a brand-new interactive map with customized 3D models of downtown designed by the Tampa Bay-based Imerza platform. This program allows visitors to navigate through almost 1,700 buildings, landmarks, and popular attractions in downtown Tampa. As the first partnership between Imerza and a DMO, this tool will not only be able to show meeting and convention planners the scale of Tampa, but will give visitors an immersive experience to see what treasure awaits in Tampa Bay. VisitTampaBay.com



Visit Tampa Bay's new interactive map provides an immersive experience for planners and visitors.



In the News

Visit St. Pete/Clearwater Welcomes New Meetings Sales Manager

Visit St. Pete/Clearwater is excited to welcome Brian Hilterbrandt as its new sales manager for the Florida market as part of the Meetings & Conventions team. Hilterbrandt brings more than 25 years of experience in the tourism and hospitality industry and extensive knowledge and relationships to VSPC's team of sales experts. Hilterbrandt's decades-long tenure in the tourism and hospitality industry includes dedicating 28 years to Marriott International, spanning positions from director of sales and marketing to area sales manager managing six hotel sales teams. VisitStPeteClearwater.com



Brian Hilterbrandt

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*Datanami, 2020. Data Prep Still Dominates Data Scientists' Time, Survey Finds.



2021 ANNUAL MEETING

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2021

2:00 pm – 5:00 pm Board of Directors Meeting
4:00 pm – 6:00 pm Registration Desk Open
5:30 pm – 6:30 pm Reception

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2021

8:00 am Registration Desk Open
8:00 am – 9:00 am Networking Breakfast
9:00 am – 11:30 am Educational Programming
11:30 am - 1:00 pm Networking Luncheon
1:00 pm – 4:30 pm Educational Programming
5:30 pm – 9:30 pm Miles Evening Extravaganza



HILTON GARDEN INN TAMPA- WESLEY CHAPEL

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Wesley Chapel, FL 33544
(813) 591-6900

The Hilton Garden Inn Tampa-Wesley Chapel is offering special rates for Destinations Florida meeting participants at \$119 per night. You may call the hotel directly at (813) 591-6900 and reference the group name Destinations Florida 21 Annual Meeting. Reservations must be made by Tuesday, September 21, 2021.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2021

8:00 am – 9:00 am Networking Breakfast
9:00 am – 11:30 am 2022 Legislative Session Outlook

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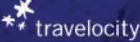


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Bill Talbert
September 21

Julie White
September 24



DESTINATION PROMOTION: EMPOWERING FLORIDA'S GROWTH

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.

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.

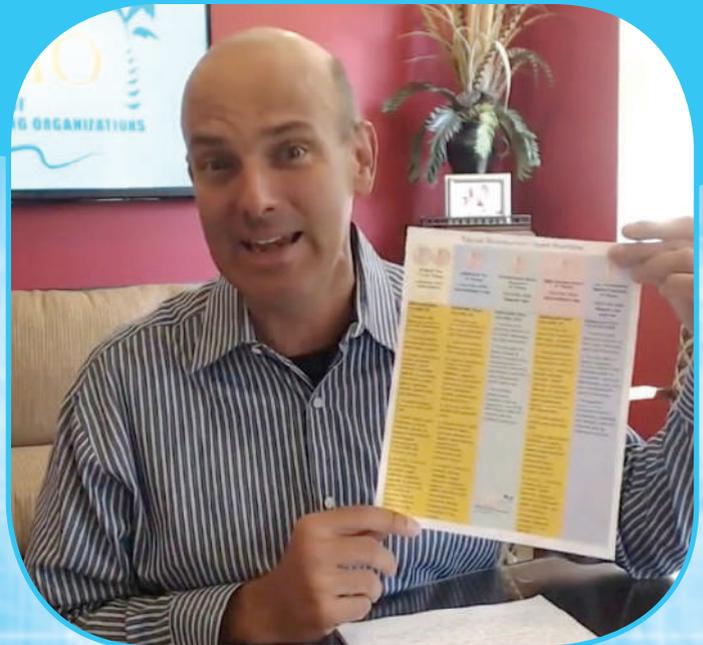


TOURIST DEVELOPMENT TAX LAWS EXPLAINED

Robert Skrob, executive director of Destinations Florida, has created a 27-minute video explaining Florida Tourist Development Tax laws for Destinations Florida members so you can understand the law and explain it to individuals within your community. Destinations Florida members can access the video here:

DestinationsFlorida.org/tdt-laws

Email Suzanne@DestinationsFlorida.org if you need assistance with a log-in.



DESTINATIONS
FLORIDA



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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Enclosed is your copy of Tourism Marketing Today
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INSIDE: Celebrate the winners and finalists of the USTA Destiny & Mercury Awards!

Destinations Florida
Executive Director Robert Skrob, CAE | Lobbyists Brian Ballard and Mat Forrest, 850/577-0444
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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. Tourism promotion activities help to attract 131.4 million visitors to Florida, adding \$96.5 billion to Florida's economy and supporting more than 1.6 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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