

# TourismMarketing Today

The Official Newsletter of Destinations Florida | [www.DestinationsFlorida.org](http://www.DestinationsFlorida.org) | December 2022



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## ***Destinations Florida Annual Meeting:*** **Fresh Lessons on Leadership, a Communications Plan, and Vital Information for Promoting Tourism**

The 2022 Destinations Florida Annual Meeting took place in Tallahassee November 15-17, with more than 80 DMO members and partners in attendance. In addition to conducting its annual business meeting, the association hosted an educational program that provided attendees with new insights they can use to promote tourism to their destinations.



Robert Skrob and Richard Goldman present the chairman's plaque to Kerri Post.

The program began with a state of the state report from DMO attendees followed by two panels of DMO leaders sharing fresh lessons on successful leadership and lessons learned through building long-term community involvement in promoting tourism. Jennifer Fennell with CoreMessage shared a communications plan that places a special emphasis on engaging with statewide elected officials at local delegation meetings. Attorney Steve Hogan discussed common questions and emerging issues related to Florida's Tourist Development Tax. Following an informative day of meetings, Miles Partnership sponsored a fantastic

*ANNUAL MEETING continues on pg. 4*

## **Educating Lawmakers**

*by Robert Skrob*



The 2023 Legislative Session begins on March 7, and lawmakers have already begun filing bills and

meeting during the committee weeks leading up to session.

There also will be local legislative delegation meetings within your county. That's where you can play an important role.

Destinations Florida has created resources to empower your industry to engage with your lawmakers.

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

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# HAPPY Birthday

**Nerissa Okiye**  
**December 7**

**Steve Hayes**  
**December 13**

**Richard Goldman**  
**December 14**

**Darien Schaefer**  
**December 17**

**Nicole Stacey**  
**December 28**

**Gil Langley**  
**January 22**

## DESTINATIONS FLORIDA TourismMarketing Today

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Robert Skrob,  
Executive Director

Suzanne Hurst, CAE,  
Deputy Executive Director

MaryLu Winchester,  
Member Database

### On the Cover

Visitors to North Florida are invited to experience the wonders of Wakulla County. St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge is home to the historic St. Marks Lighthouse (pictured). In St. Marks, there are miles of protected natural Florida woods and wildlife, which can be biked, hiked, or paddled. Learn more at [VisitWakulla.com](http://VisitWakulla.com).

## BEST PRACTICES

3

### Tampa Bay, St. Pete/Clearwater Celebrate Virgin Atlantic's New London to Tampa Route

The inaugural Virgin Atlantic flight from London Heathrow to Tampa International Airport (TPA) on November 3 was marked by major fanfare, including attendance by Sir Richard Branson, celebrating the essential route in true style.

After a press conference at TPA to kick off the occasion, Visit Tampa Bay gave the more than 70 Virgin Atlantic team members and top UK media a tour of Tampa Bay. They participated in dazzling waterfront activities, took a trip through time in Ybor City, and got a VIP tour around Raymond James Stadium, home to the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. The festivities concluded with a lavish party celebrating the connection of two magnificent destinations.

"Virgin Atlantic is the perfect partner to provide passengers with a luxury travel experience and who demonstrate the importance of diversity and inclusion in the travel industry," said Santiago C. Corrada, president & CEO of Visit Tampa Bay. "This new direct flight will not only bring leisure-based travelers but business travelers as well to experience our world-class attractions, exceptional culinary scene, and unforgettable waterfront views."

As part of the Virgin Atlantic/UK media visit, Visit St. Pete/Clearwater hosted a beach day on Clearwater Beach at the Sandpearl Resort. The VIP guests were able to see why the St. Pete/Clearwater beaches are consistently known as America's best beaches as they enjoyed a beach BBQ, cocktails, beach games, and water sports played on the white sands and in the warm gulf waters.



Santiago C. Corrada, president & CEO of Visit Tampa Bay, speaks at the Virgin Atlantic press conference at Tampa International Airport.



Visit St. Pete/Clearwater hosts Virgin Atlantic and UK media representatives for a day of fun at the beach.

"The new Virgin Atlantic route is very exciting for our destination, and we're so pleased that Brits now have even greater accessibility to the region," said Steve Hayes, president/CEO of Visit St. Pete/Clearwater. "Visitors from the UK love St. Pete/Clearwater's award-winning beaches, sunshine, and warm hospitality, and we look forward to seeing Virgin Atlantic's regular appearance in our skies as we welcome our UK friends to our area."

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

Let us know how to facilitate these interactions.

We can be certain there will be a lot of other individuals speaking with your local lawmakers. Some of them may not appreciate the value you generate for their community.

With fully one-third of lawmakers new to their positions, it's more

important than ever that we prepare for the Legislative Session by educating lawmakers from your community on the importance of tourism marketing as a key driver of Florida's economic growth.

Let us know how we can support your efforts.



evening event at the Tallahassee Museum, where attendees relaxed and enjoyed the opportunity to connect in-person with their colleagues in the tourism promotion industry.

The program concluded with Mat Forrest's forecast of the 2023 Legislative Session, followed by the Destinations Florida annual business meeting where the membership approved the slate of new board directors including Gui Cunha with Orlando North, Seminole County Tourism, David Whitaker from the Greater Miami CVB, Amy Boek with Amelia Island CVB, and Jayna Leach from Visit Panama City Beach. Chairman Kerri Post of Visit Tallahassee passed the gavel to incoming Chairman Richard Goldman from St. Augustine, Ponte Vedra & The Beaches.



Robert Skrob and Kerri Post recognize Erin Duggan from Visit Sarasota County with a plaque for her service on the board of directors.



Steve Hayes with Visit St. Pete/Clearwater updates attendees during the state of the state report.

**Mark Your Calendar**  
**Tourism Day in Tallahassee**  
**March 21-22, 2023**

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THIS IS  
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HERE

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Jen Carlisle | Destination Strategy Director | 727-492-0027 | jcarlisle@maddenmedia.com



## Visit Panama City Beach Hires Public Relations Manager

Visit Panama City Beach is pleased to announce the appointment of Rachel Banks as public relations manager. A native to the area, Banks most recently worked as executive producer for Panama City's NBC affiliate, WJHG-TV News Channel 7. In 2019, Banks graduated from Florida State University, where she earned her bachelor's degree in professional communication. In her role as public relations manager, Banks joins the award-winning destination marketing team to spearhead public relations efforts for Visit Panama City Beach and the RealFun.Beach brand. [VisitPanamaCityBeach.com](http://VisitPanamaCityBeach.com)



Rachel Banks

## Discover The Palm Beaches Announces New Executive Team

Discover The Palm Beaches (DTPB) announces a new executive team. **Milton Segarra, CDME**, has been appointed chief marketing officer and will spearhead all aspects of destination marketing including brand and digital marketing, social media, and public relations. Segarra most recently led the Coastal Mississippi Tourism Board, where he led a strategic master plan and led successful statewide efforts to secure federal COVID funds for tourism. He was also previously president & CEO at Meet Puerto Rico, implementing significant branding, digital marketing, sales, and social media initiatives to attract visitors. **Kelly Cavers** has been promoted to chief sales officer, providing overall leadership and guidance to both Group Sales and Leisure Trade Industry Sales departments, as well as Destination Services. Cavers has spent over 25 years in various roles within the hospitality industry. For the past six years, she has led the strategic group sales efforts and destination services for Discover The Palm Beaches. **Evan Lomrantz** has been promoted to chief finance officer, responsible for financial operations, human resources, community engagement, and strategic guidance. Lomrantz has overseen the financial, human resources, and community engagement functions for Discover The Palm Beaches for the past four years. Lomrantz has modernized the agency's financial reporting and processes and applied technologies that have resulted in the effective and timely use of the organization's \$21 million budget.



Milton Segarra, CDME



Kelly Cavers



Evan Lomrantz

## Rita Irwin to Continue Leading Florida Keys Tourism Board

The Monroe County TDC has reelected Rita Irwin, a Marathon resident as well as president and CEO of Dolphin Research Center, as chairperson leading the volunteer board that administers tourism marketing for the Florida Keys & Key West. Irwin was unanimously chosen Tuesday, October 18, during the board's scheduled meeting at the Murray Nelson Government Center in Key Largo. [Fla-Keys.com](http://Fla-Keys.com)



Rita Irwin

## Greater Miami CVB Names New Director of Black Hospitality Initiative

Graylyn Swilley-Woods, PhD, has been named director of the GMCVB's Black Hospitality Initiative (BHI). In her new role within the DMO's Multicultural and Tourism & Development Department, she'll spearhead BHI's mission of advancing opportunities and increasing workforce participation for African Americans and Black people of African descent in Greater Miami and Miami Beach's visitor industry through scholarships, talent development, and job referral programs. [MiamiAndBeaches.com](http://MiamiAndBeaches.com)



Graylyn Swilley-Woods, PhD

## Visit Central Florida Announces Staff Updates

Visit Central Florida welcomes **Paul Smiley** as its new senior tourism sales representative, covering meetings, conventions, and special events. Most recently, Smiley was an event services manager at Walt Disney World, and prior to that he served as a group services manager with Disney's Magical Express. **Christopher Follenus**, senior internet & e-marketing supervisor, is moving into a new role as senior tourism industry sales and events representative with the upcoming retirement of Joni Allen. Originally from Ireland, Follenus previously was the marketing and business development manager at Balmoral Resort Florida. Visit Central Florida congratulates **Joni Allen**, senior tourism industry sales and events representative, on her retirement in January. Allen has been a dedicated employee with VCF/Polk County Tourism for more than 35 years and will be missed greatly. She plans to travel with her husband and looks forward to spending more time with family and friends. [VisitCentralFlorida.org](http://VisitCentralFlorida.org)



Paul Smiley



Christopher Follenus



Joni Allen

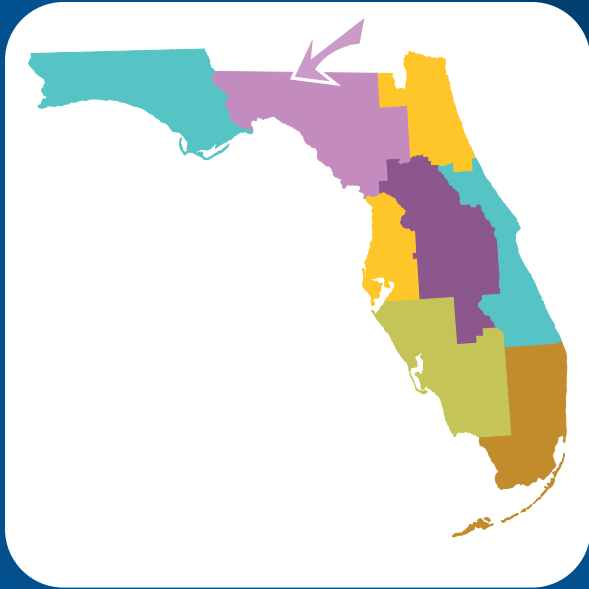
## Visit Sebring Hires Tourism Coordinator

Visit Sebring is happy to announce the hiring of Reagan Fultz as the organization's tourism coordinator. Fultz is a native of Sebring and graduated from Sebring High School. She obtained her bachelor's degree from the University of Florida in recreation, parks, and tourism with a specialization in event management. Fultz is responsible for coordinating all the tourist development duties, including administrative responsibilities, working with marketing personnel, providing support to and interacting with the public and tourism partners, and overseeing and administering Tourism Development grants. [VisitSebring.com](http://VisitSebring.com)



Reagan Fultz





- Columbia County Tourist Development Council
- Levy County Visitors Bureau
- Suwannee County Tourist Development
- Visit Gainesville, Alachua County
- Visit Tallahassee
- Wakulla County Tourist Development Council

## Alachua County Reaches Florida's Top One-Third in TDT Collections

Alachua County now ranks 22<sup>nd</sup> in the state of Florida in Tourist Development Tax collections, for the first time placing the county among the top third of counties with the highest tourism impacts.

Visitors spent a record-setting \$155.7M on overnight lodging in Alachua County in 2022, resulting in \$7.7M in TDT collections. This is a 30% increase from the prior best year, which was \$5.5M in 2019 (pre-pandemic).

Key market drivers included the return of the AMALIE Motor Oil NHRA Gatornationals, as well as University of Florida in-person graduations and a Gators football season boasting record-setting

attendance—with an estimated 90,000 fans cheering from The Swamp during the first game of the season. The destination also saw the return of multiday live music events financially supported by Visit Gainesville, Alachua County. Sponsored events included the Tom Petty Festival drawing fans from around the country and the Tom Petty Nation for a three-day event; the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of The FEST, which proved to be the largest FEST to date with the return of international travel; The BASH, a new music festival in the heart of Downtown Gainesville's Depot Park featuring national recording acts; the Downtown Gainesville Festival and Art Show; and more.



Spectacular views from the University of Florida's TDT (Touch Down Terrace) at Ben Hill Griffin Stadium. The 90,000 fans estimated to be in attendance per home game are a great indicator of tourism market health in 2022.

Photo: University of Florida Athletic Association, Ali Darvish



GRAMMY-nominated American roots/rock sister act Larkin Poe rocks the crowd at The BASH Music Festival at Depot Park. The event drew an estimated attendance of 10,000+ music lovers, adding to Alachua County's record-breaking TDT collections for FY22.

Photo: Visit Gainesville, Alachua County, E. Reyes





## BEST of Festivals in Levy County

Levy County invites visitors to find their next ADVENTURE in a world of natural wonders far beyond the hustle and noise of man-made attractions. Outdoor enthusiasts and sportsmen have long found a wealth of opportunities within the boundaries of Levy County. This diverse, unspoiled region is known as "Florida's Natural Paradise," where the human population is dwarfed by the multitude of birds and wildlife that call the area home.

Levy County offers the BEST of dining, hiking, biking, fresh and saltwater fishing, boating, snorkeling, diving, and special events

all year long. Throughout the year, events are held all over Levy County, celebrating the rich and unique culture of the area. Whether it's the sweet twang of the bluegrass that visitors crave, discovering local artistic talent at the arts and crafts festivals, or perhaps tasting the harvests—such as peanuts, watermelons, and the freshest seafood in Florida including clams provided by one of the nation's leading farm-raised clam producers—Levy County has it all. Visit the website ([VisitLevy.com](http://VisitLevy.com)) for the latest schedule of seasonal and annual events.



Airboating along the Gulf Coast in Levy County  
Photo: Pat Bonish



Beach chillaxing in Levy County  
Photo: Pat Bonish

## Columbia County Unveils New Tourism Branding

Columbia County recently unveiled its new tourism branding: Lake City, Florida's Springlands, which showcases the outdoor adventure and crystal-clear springs found in Columbia County. Branding includes a new website, [LakeCityFL.com](http://LakeCityFL.com), designed to align with the brand and to grow as the destination grows.

"Columbia County is one of those rare locations in Florida that is still reminiscent of what it was hundreds of years ago—a destination steeped in the quiet magic of nature and the joy that can be found when exploring it," said Paula Vann, executive director of the Columbia County TDC. "Following a year of extensive research including consumer surveys and creative ideation, we crafted a profile of Columbia County as a tourism

destination, landing on the identity of our new brand, Lake City, Florida's Springlands. We are thrilled to launch the latest phase of our brand refresh, our destination website."

Content on the website caters to the destination's leisure audience, as well as press, DMO business operations, and group sales.

Additionally, the county has received its first round of approvals from the TDC to move forward with the development of the Columbia County Regional Park, a 467-acre large-scale sports and recreation complex.



The Lake City, Florida's Springlands logo, with a kayak at its center, expresses the connection to the springs, and the lively font aligns with the plethora of activities Lake City has to offer visitors.



The updated Columbia County tourism website highlights the refreshing springs that make Lake City, Florida's Springlands such a unique destination.



# BEST of NORTH FLORIDA!

## Tallahassee Celebrates Another Record-Breaking Year

With another year of double-digit growth across visitation, occupancy, and TDT collections and a record-breaking \$1.2 billion in economic impact, Visit Tallahassee has plenty to celebrate this year.

In July, Tallahassee solidified itself as the Capital of Cross-Country after being awarded the 2026 World Athletics Cross-Country Championships. The most prestigious event in the sport, the event will take place at the renowned cross-country course at Apalachee Regional Park. Held since 1973 in cities across the globe, the World Athletics Cross Country Championships has only been hosted in the U.S. twice, in New Jersey (1984) and in Massachusetts (1992).

In early 2023, Visit Tallahassee will relocate its offices and main Visitor Information Center and Gift Shop into the 150-year-old renovated historic Amtrak train station.



A rendering of the Visit Tallahassee headquarters and Visitor Information Center and Gift Shop being relocated to the 150-year-old renovated historic Amtrak train station in early 2023

"Strategically located between FSU and FAMU campuses and within walking distance to downtown, the state-of-the-art visitor center expands our ability to serve visitors in-market," said Kerri L. Post, Visit Tallahassee's executive director.

Showcasing that not all of Florida is flat, Visit Tallahassee recently launched a new mountain bike website ([MBTallahassee.com](http://MBTallahassee.com)) designed to provide information and inspire visitors to discover Tallahassee's mountain bike trails. The new site provides another asset as Tallahassee continues working with the International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA) to obtain its IMBA Ride Center™ designation.



Apalachee Regional Park will host the 2026 World Athletics Cross-Country Championships.

## Wakulla County TDC Promotes Events in New Ways

The Wakulla County TDC is working closely with local organizations to strategically plan and fund marketing campaigns to promote events in new ways.

"Wakulla is home to some of Florida's most unique events, like the Monarch Butterfly Festival (October), Panacea Beer and Oyster Festival (March), and the Sopchoppy Worm Gruntin' Festival (April)," said Kinsey Miller, public information officer and TDC coordinator for Wakulla County. "The hands-on nature of our event marketing sponsorships introduces event organizers to new industry trends and tech that can be game-changers to their marketing efforts."

The TDC also recently relaunched its monthly video series, *Wakulla Wonders*, highlighting different things to do, places to stay and eat, and most importantly, locals.

"The series has made a significant impact on our tourism by connecting visitors with local friendly faces who are ready to help them navigate the wonders of Wakulla," said Miller. "Each video introduces visitors to a local business owner, tour guide, or expert that they may meet during a stay in Wakulla County."

You can watch the videos by visiting the Visit Wakulla YouTube page.



A photo from a recent *Wakulla Wonders* videography session



The Visit Wakulla sponsorship banner displayed at the Sopchoppy Oyster & Mullet Festival in November 2022





## TDC Membership

by Steven M. Hogan

If you are reading this column, your county almost certainly has a Tourist Development Council (TDC) in place. Today we'll review the statutory requirements for creating a TDC and designating its members.



Six members of the TDC are to be involved in the tourist industry, of which not less than three (but not more than four) must be owners or operators of motels, hotels, RV parks, or other tourist accommodations within the county and subject to the TDC.



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



Steven M. Hogan

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

These nine members must include the following: (i) the chair of the county's governing board or another member of the governing board designated by the chair; (ii) two elected municipal officials, at least one of whom must be from the "most populous municipality" in the county or in the subcounty special taxing district in which the tax is levied; and (iii) six members who are involved in the tourist industry, of which not less than three (but not more than four) must be owners or operators of motels, hotels, RV parks, or other tourist accommodations within the county and subject to the tax.

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

TDC members serve staggered four-year terms. When a county is starting a new TDC, the county is required by section 125.0104(4)(b) to pass a resolution prescribing the terms of office for the original TDC members.

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

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

**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.





## Visit Sebring Hosts Agritourism Forum

Visit Sebring recently hosted the area's first Agritourism Forum with attendees from all over Florida who are interested in starting or expanding an agritourism business. The two-day program included farm tours, a farm-to-table dinner, and guest speakers/panelists discussing a variety of agritourism topics including trends and opportunities for Florida agritourism, such as marketing, rules and liability, business planning, agritourism perceptions, and funding sources. Post-event surveys showed a strong satisfaction with the program and a desire for additional agritourism education. [VisitSebring.com](http://VisitSebring.com)



Agritourism Forum attendees visit and sample product at Sugar Sand Distillery with owner Don Davies.

## Visit Tampa Bay Invites Stakeholders to 'Relax Boldly' at 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting

Visit Tampa Bay celebrated with community stakeholders and partners at a sold-out 37<sup>th</sup> annual meeting at Armature Works. Guests celebrated an incredibly successful year in Tampa Bay tourism all while experiencing the perfect union of relaxation and exhilaration—known as the Tampa Bay Effect. Visit Tampa Bay's partners elected new Board Chair Raul Aguilera, complex general manager of Hilton Tampa Downtown, and welcomed a new slate of board officers including Chair-Elect Ray Mathews of State Farm and Secretary/Treasurer Evette Torres of the Aloft & Element Midtown Tampa. [VisitTampaBay.com](http://VisitTampaBay.com)



Visit Tampa Bay's Santiago Corrada, president & CEO; Raul Aguilera, board chair; and Ken Lucas, immediate past chair

## Florida's First Coast of Golf Represents NE Florida at Int'l. Golf Travel Market

FFCG recently attended the International Golf Travel Market, representing Northeast Florida Golf as the best-in-class destination—home of THE PLAYERS Championship, five unique destinations, 71 accessible golf courses, and 100 miles of Atlantic coastline. More than 60 prescheduled meetings were executed, which provided Northeast Florida with the opportunity to connect with leading golf travel agents, tour operators, and media outlets that help grow the world's outbound tourism market. [Florida-Golf.org](http://Florida-Golf.org)



FFCG's David Reese, president; Jenna Craven, director of partnership; and Russ Libby, chairman

## Bradenton Area CVB Partners With Keep Manatee County Beautiful for Beach Cleanup

The Bradenton Area CVB partnered with Keep Manatee County Beautiful to clean up 400 pounds of trash along the beaches of Anna Maria Island in October. Nearly 200 local volunteers gathered as part of the BACVB's Love it Like a Local campaign, which helps bring awareness to the importance of keeping the area's beaches and waterways clean, protecting wildlife, and supporting local businesses. "This was an outstanding partnership from start to finish and we were so proud to have been a part of it," said BACVB Marketing and Communications Director Kolby Gayson. [BradentonGulfIslands.com](http://BradentonGulfIslands.com).







## The Palm Beaches Lands in Chicago for Pop-Up Event

The Palm Beaches recently landed in Chicago for a Golden Age of Travel pop-up event at Union Station, where commuters, media, meeting planners, and travel industry representatives experienced a nostalgic travel ambiance on a recreated life-size vintage jet plane. Discover The Palm Beaches hosted the event that showcased the destination as an easily accessible warm-weather getaway, and commuters passing by could take photos with the vintage jet plane and enter to win roundtrip airfares to The Palm Beaches. *ThePalmBeaches.com*



Discover The Palm Beaches team members and partners Jennifer Sullivan, Peggy Hagaman, Milton Segarra, Kelly Cavers, Erika Constantine, Lindsey Wiegmann, Erick Garnica, Michael Reinhardt, and Beril Gutierrez

## Key West International Airport Begins \$100 Million Expansion

Key West International Airport has begun a \$100 million, 2.5-year expansion that includes a second-level Concourse A terminal with 50,000 sq. ft., including a contemporary departure, additional baggage areas, and an upgraded security checkpoint with up to four lanes. In addition, seven passenger boarding jet bridges are to provide all-weather access linking the terminal and aircraft. Currently six carriers—Allegiant, American, Delta, Jet Blue, Silver, and United—serve the airport with daily nonstop flights. *Fla-Keys.com*



Rendering of the planned expansion of the Key West International Airport  
Photo: Key West International Airport

## Lee County Hotel Recovery Video Series Targets Meeting Planners

To keep meeting planners up-to-date on hotel recovery efforts, the Lee County VCB took a creative approach with a video series featuring Fort Myers-area properties. The highly successful videos, hosted by VCB Sales Director Jill Vance, remind planners that meetings contribute to the success of the local economy. In one video, Vance says, "Although our landscape may look a bit different ... the way our nature makes you feel has not changed." *VisitFortMyers.com*



Watch Lee County VCB Sales Director Jill Vance promote the Fort Myers area at [youtu.be/BSX1Kl0sqmQ](https://youtu.be/BSX1Kl0sqmQ) and [youtube.com/watch?v=cyZ5HsydsQw](https://youtube.com/watch?v=cyZ5HsydsQw).

## Palm Coast and the Flagler Beaches Collaborates With Arts/Culture Organizations

A collaboration between Palm Coast and the Flagler Beaches and local arts and culture organizations, the Flagler County Cultural Council (FC3) recently received its formal designation as a Local Arts Agency. Flagler County commissioners passed the resolution in October, with unanimous approval. FC3 will serve as an umbrella organization for all Flagler County arts, culture, and history interests. *VisitFlagler.com*



The Flagler County Cultural Council is designated a Local Arts Agency by the Flagler County Commission.





## Visit Sarasota County Team Members Attends TBEX North America

A Visit Sarasota County (VSC) team member was one of just 10 people nationwide to earn a full scholarship from the Black Travel Alliance to attend TBEX North America in Lafayette, Louisiana, the premiere gathering of travel bloggers, content creators, travel writers, and tourism industry professionals. Shantel Norman, VSC meeting sales manager, recently returned from the conference where she heard from top industry speakers, participated in workshops, and met with leading creators, travel marketers, and experts from around the world. [VisitSarasota.com](https://www.VisitSarasota.com)



Shantel Norman (second from right) at the TBEX blogger convention

## Travel on Tap: Visit Gainesville, Alachua County Launches Sippin' Seven Alachua County Ale Trail Digital Pass

Alachua County is home to seven distinct award-winning breweries featuring friendly gathering spaces with live music and events. Just in time for the holiday season, Visit Gainesville, Alachua County launched the Sippin' Seven Alachua County Ale Trail, with the goal of attracting the growing craft beer consumer base that travels for the experience of tasting authentic brews with a side of immersive local culture. Florida's craft beer industry generated \$4.1 billion in 2021, ranking fifth in the list of top economic contributors in this market sector. [VisitGainesville.com](https://www.VisitGainesville.com)



Visit Gainesville, Alachua County invites craft beer lovers to Sip All Seven with the launch of the Sippin' Seven Alachua County Ale Trail, a gamified digital passport that awards prizes for number of check-ins.

## Discover Miami's Countryside

South Dade's farmers have made an indelible impact on Greater Miami & Miami Beach—both as an economic engine and a resource for the destination's Michelin-recognized dining scene. Throughout November, the GMCVB celebrated the agricultural wonders of Miami's Countryside with the launch of Miami-Dade Farmers Month, featuring special offers and experiences for visitors and locals alike, hotel packages, dining and attraction discounts, and BOGO deals. [MiamiAndBeaches.com](https://www.MiamiAndBeaches.com)



Strawberry picking in Miami's Countryside

## Destin-Fort Walton Beach Celebrates Veterans

Destin-Fort Walton Beach marked the one-year anniversary of the Women Veterans Memorial this past Veterans Day. Featuring eight statues, the memorial honors women who made significant contributions in the U.S. Military throughout history, serving in the Revolutionary War through the War in Afghanistan. The monuments to these veterans are placed along a walking trail within Veterans Park, which also features ADA accessible paved sidewalks, wooden boardwalks, an honor wall, benches, landscaping, and lighting. [DestinFWB.com](https://www.DestinFWB.com)



A hero of the Civil War, Cathay Williams is the first documented African American woman who served as a soldier in the U.S. Army.





## Martin County Wins Two Gold Travel Weekly Magellan Awards

The Martin County Office of Tourism & Marketing was recently honored to win two prestigious Gold Magellan Awards, presented by *Travel Weekly*. The first award recognized the *Memory Makers of Martin County* video series in the Destination Marketing Promotional Video category. In the Eco-Friendly "Sustainable" Destination category, the team earned the top prize for their efforts promoting the recently opened Ocean EcoCenter on Hutchinson Island. [DiscoverMartin.com](http://DiscoverMartin.com)



Ian Centrone, host of the *Memory Makers of Martin County*, interviews Cetedra Frost, birthday coordinator and marketing assistant for the Children's Museum of the Treasure Coast.

## Visit Central Florida Celebrates the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Water Skiing While Hosting World Championship Event

Visit Central Florida invited the world to Polk County in October to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the sport of water skiing at the International Waterski & Wakeboard Federation 2022 World Water Ski Show Tournament. VCF recruited, hosted, and managed this world championship as the capstone to a year of skiing events designed to salute the sport that gained its popularity in Central Florida and led Polk County to earn the title of Water Ski Capital of the World. [VisitCentralFlorida.org](http://VisitCentralFlorida.org)



The World Champion, Team U.S.A., dazzles the crowd with a four-tier pyramid.

## Introducing Discover Lake County, Florida

Visit Lake recently rebranded to Discover Lake County, Florida – "Florida's Lakeside Escape." Lake County staff and Madden Media worked closely to create the new name, tagline, logo, and more. Lake County is home to more than 1,000 lakes. Among a plethora of oceanside destinations, it was important for Lake County to stay true to the name. Lake County is both relaxing and active. The area offers countless captivating waterways and nature trails through inland Florida with untold experiences in downtown cities waiting to be discovered. [VisitLakeFL.com](http://VisitLakeFL.com)



## Visit Orlando's 'Unbelievably Real' Rollout to Meetings and Conventions Audiences

Visit Orlando unveiled the Central Florida region's new global brand, Unbelievably Real, at IMEX America 2022, the largest trade show in the U.S. for the global meetings, events, and incentive travel industry. Through the campaign, meetings-focused advertising will run across digital and social channels and highlight Orlando's unique meeting venues, outdoor teambuilding adventures, world-class dining, and more. The campaign is one of several meeting-focused initiatives that show why Orlando is the perfect location to host any meeting, convention, and trade show. [VisitOrlando.com](http://VisitOrlando.com)



Visit Orlando's team is pictured at the Visit Orlando booth at IMEX America 2022.





## St. Augustine to Build Awareness of the City's Spanish Heritage

St. Augustine is an attraction to Hispanic travelers with a desire to learn about their American roots dating to the city's 1565 Spanish founding. In order to better target this audience, the St. Augustine, Ponte Vedra & The Beaches VCB has contracted the services of ENroute Communications Hispanic PR Agency to build awareness about the city's Spanish heritage, experiences, and Spanish heritage events like Nights of Lights, Spanish Food & Wine Festival, and Unidos En La Música. [FloridasHistoricCoast.com](http://FloridasHistoricCoast.com)



On a recent site visit, the ENroute Communications Hispanic Agency's PR team learned about the Hispanic heritage found in the nation's oldest city.

## Meeting planners Enjoy a Taste of South Walton

The Walton County Tourism Department took a taste of South Walton to meeting planners based in Birmingham, Alabama, on October 27, in conjunction with Hoffman Media. Chef Fleetwood Covington from Seagar's and Executive Chef Dan Tederous with Hilton Sandestin Beach Golf Resort and Spa created a delightful culinary experience while artist Justin Gaffrey created a one-of-a-kind piece of art live during the event. One lucky planner won Gaffrey's unique piece in a drawing. [VisitSouthWalton.com](http://VisitSouthWalton.com)



Twenty-one qualified media planners are fully engaged in a South Walton destination experience complete with tasty culinary dishes from renowned top chefs along with a live creative presentation from local artist Justin Gaffrey.

## Jacksonville Hosts Events Ranging From Football to Surfing to Musical Performances

Jacksonville hosted a wide variety of events over the last month, each having their best year yet! The annual Florida vs. Georgia rivalry weekend filled the city for football fun. Super Girl Surf Pro, the world's largest women's surf event and music festival, returned to Jacksonville Beach. PorchFest featured dozens of musical performances on front porches throughout historic Springfield. Kids Free November brought families in for big savings for the seventh year in a row. [VisitJacksonville.com](http://VisitJacksonville.com)



Musicians perform on front porches of homes throughout the Springfield neighborhood during PorchFest.

Photo: Visit Jacksonville

## Punta Gorda/Englewood Beach Collaborates With Lee and Collier Counties to Promote Southwest Florida Sports

The Punta Gorda/Englewood Beach VCB's Sports Division partnered with its Lee County and Collier County counterparts to showcase Southwest Florida Sports during Northstar Publications' TEAMS sports conference held in Oklahoma City. Representatives from Charlotte, Collier, and Lee counties met with more than 50 new and current sports rights holders to highlight each sport's assets within their respective county while also presenting the potential of hosting a large regional tournament working with all three counties. [PureFlorida.com](http://PureFlorida.com)



Jeff Mielke of Lee County, Marissa Baker of Collier County, and Sean Walter of PGBE (Charlotte County) showcase Southwest Florida Sports at the TEAMS sport conference in Oklahoma City.





## Quick Trips!

### Orlando Air and Space Show Soars Into Orlando North, Seminole County

The Orlando Air and Space Show returned to the Sanford International Airport October 29-30. Visitors were able to view a few of the elite planes and pilots serving in the U.S. Military. This included the F-22 Raptor Demo Team, F-18 Rhino Demo Team, and the U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds. Crowds were also able to experience the inside of large military aircraft. Orlando North looks forward to the 2023 show. [DoOrlandoNorth.com](http://DoOrlandoNorth.com)



An Air Force member poses for a picture at the Orlando Air show.



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## CALL FOR PRESENTATIONS Destination Marketing Summit May 31-June 2, 2023 Margaritaville Resort Orlando Kissimmee, Florida

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

**Submit your presentation online at:**  
[DestinationsFlorida.org/2023SummitSpeakers](https://DestinationsFlorida.org/2023SummitSpeakers)  
**Deadline: January 18, 2023**





## 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*



Enclosed is your copy of Tourism Marketing Today  
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Destinations Florida



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