

TourismMarketing Today

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Dan Rowe of Visit Panama City Beach Wins STS Beacon Award

Dan Rowe, president & CEO of Visit Panama City Beach, received the esteemed Beacon Award at Southeast Tourism Society's Shining Example Awards held on September 8. The Beacon Award recognizes Rowe's outstanding tourism leadership and achievements over his extensive career.



Dan Rowe speaks to the future of the tourism industry after receiving the STS Beacon Award.

"I am honored to receive this amazing recognition from the Southeast Tourism Society," says Dan Rowe. "I look forward to continue striving for tremendous success with the Visit Panama City Beach team and working to fuel the future of the tourism industry."

Rowe is an industry trailblazer who has transformed Panama City Beach in his past 13 years as president & CEO of the destination, and executive director of the Bay County TDC. Highlights of Rowe's accomplishments include rebranding the destination to REAL.FUN.BEACH. and changing the Spring Break narrative, leveraging tourism assets through community partnerships to pave the way for

DAN ROWE continues on pg. 3

Educate for Success

by Robert Skrob



Increased TDT revenue attracts expanded funding demands for lawmakers to consider.

Educating lawmakers on the value of the tourism industry and the critical role of tourism marketing is crucial before the next Legislative Session.

This will be even more challenging this year because many lawmakers will be new to their positions. These lawmakers chose to run for office for many reasons; preventing expanded uses of the TDT is rarely a primary motivation.

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

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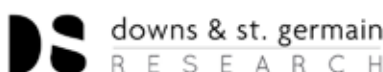
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Jorge Pesquera
October 3

Kimberly Shoaf
October 25

Sky Wheeler
October 27

new developments such as Publix Sports Park, and spearheading efforts to elevate the tourism workforce in Panama City Beach.

In addition to his leadership in Panama City Beach, Rowe is a past chair of both Destinations Florida and VISIT FLORIDA, and he is widely recognized as a leader who works to promote tourism statewide.

"It is terrific to see Dan recognized for his leadership and advocacy

on behalf of the entire state of Florida," says Robert Skrob, executive director of Destinations Florida. "During the largest economic turning point, Dan was a resolute advocate for opening Florida safely and getting Floridians back to work."

The Shining Example Awards Program, an industry fixture since 1985, recognizes outstanding contributions to travel and tourism within the Southeast United States.

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

Thus, we must rely on education to succeed.

After the elections in November, we are launching a renewed effort to provide resources that empower your tourism industry to engage with your local delegation. It's the most ambitious effort we've ever made in this area.

I look forward to announcing it at this month's Destinations Florida annual meeting. And you'll see the details as they are released throughout November and December.

Thank you for your help with this important effort.

**DESTINATIONS
FLORIDA**
**TourismMarketing
Today**

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On the Cover

Ocala/Marion County still feels like a hidden gem to those who aren't already insiders. And yet, when you're here, you're never an outsider. The charm, landscape, and natural wonders of the Horse Capital of the World® truly have to be seen to be believed.

Join us for the 2022 Annual Meeting October 5-7, 2022

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2022 Flagler Awards Recognize Outstanding Tourism Marketing in Florida

The tourism community came together in Boca Raton on August 31 to celebrate the accomplishments of Florida tourism industry leaders who were awarded the prestigious Flagler Awards. VISIT FLORIDA announced the recipients of the 2022 Flagler Awards and Florida Tourism Hall of Fame (see the story on page 6) during the annual Florida Governor's Conference on Tourism held at the newly renovated The Boca Raton.



The Amelia Island CVB won seven Flagler Awards, including Best of Show for the Amelia Island Meetings Brochure.

The Flagler Awards were established in 2000 to recognize outstanding tourism marketing in Florida. As in previous years, the 2022 Flagler Awards drew entries from Florida's tourism partners, large and small. This year DMOs claimed 44 Flagler Awards, 15 of them Henrys (the top award in each category), and two of the three Best of Show. Destinations Florida is proud to recognize the award-winning DMOs, highlighted below in blue text.



The Ocala/Marion County VCB won Best of Show for its marketing efforts through a video production project capturing the Ocala National Forest.

Creativity in Public Relations

Bronze: Green Gables at the Historic Riverview Village for "Wash Your Hands"

Silver: Discover The Palm Beaches for the Discover the Palm Beaches Brand Campaign Launch

Henry: Fort Myers – Islands, Beaches and Neighborhoods for "Sanibel Island Shines" on Southern Living's "The South's Best" Issue With Cover Feature and Placement

Henry: St. Pete-Clearwater International Airport for the St. Pete-Clearwater International Airport Super Bowl® LV Activation

Direct Marketing

Bronze: Visit Panama City Beach for the "Real. Fun. Beach." E-Newsletter

Silver: The Amelia Island CVB for the Amelia Island New York Times Great Getaways Emails

Henry: Fort Myers – Islands, Beaches and Neighborhoods for the Facebook Welcome Email Series

Internet Advertising

Bronze: Discover Crystal River Florida for the "Book Midweek & Save" Digital Campaign

Silver: Visit Panama City Beach for the Visit Panama City Beach Happy Thanks Beaching Holiday Campaign

Henry: The Florida Keys & Key West for The Florida Keys Destination Content Module

Mixed Media Campaign

Bronze: Visit Lauderdale for "Welcome"

Silver: The Franklin County TDC for the Florida's Forgotten Coast "The Florida You Remember" Campaign

Henry: Destin-Fort Walton Beach Tourism for "Little Adventures"

Mobile Marketing

Bronze: Visit Sarasota County for the Beach Pass Mobile App Program

Silver: Visit Tampa Bay for "Bay Crafted"

Henry: The Amelia Island CVB for the Amelia Island Instant Experience Travel Guides

Niche Marketing

Bronze: The Alligator & Wildlife Discovery Center for "Discover Where There Is More to Explore"

Silver: Visit Lauderdale for the LGBT+ Campaign

Henry: Visit Tampa Bay for "Florida's Most Accessible Destination"

Out-of-Home

Bronze: The Amelia Island CVB for the Amelia Island Welcome Center Displays

Silver: The Florida Keys & Key West for The Florida Keys Out-of-Home Campaign

Henry: Destin-Fort Walton Beach Tourism for "Little Adventures"

Print Advertising

Bronze: The Florida Keys & Key West for The Florida Keys Print Campaign

Silver: Destin-Fort Walton Beach Tourism for "Little Adventures"

Henry: Visit Lauderdale for "Welcome"

Radio Advertising

Silver: The Space Coast Office of Tourism for "On The Space Coast" Radio Advertising

Henry: The Florida Keys & Key West for The Florida Keys Radio Campaign

Resource/Promotional Material – Consumer

Bronze: Visit St. Pete/Clearwater for the Gulf to Bay Destination Magazine

Silver: The Cultural Council for Palm Beach County for the Art&Culture Magazine: A Story-Forward Resource for Cultural Tourists Visiting The Palm Beaches

Henry: Anna Maria Island Wedding Association for the Anna Maria Wedding Magazine

Resource/Promotional Material – Trade

Silver: Visit Panama City Beach for the "Real. Fun. Beach." Vacation Guide

Henry: The Amelia Island CVB for the Amelia Island Meetings Brochure

Rural County Marketing

Bronze: The Franklin County TDC for the "How to Forgotten Coast Like a Local" Series

Silver: The Gulf County TDC for "Creating Locals By Association" and "Local Legends"

Henry: Visit Sebring for the Marketing & Recruitment Campaign for Sporting Events

Social Media Marketing

Bronze: Visit Indian River for the Uncovering Indian River Video Series

Silver: Visit Panama City Beach for the Chicago Nonstop Flight Social Campaign

Henry: The Amelia Island CVB for the Amelia Island Event Ads

Special Event

Bronze: The Amelia Island CVB for the Amelia Island Dickens on Centre Enchanted Village

Silver: Visit Tampa Bay for "Unlock the Block"

Henry: Visit Lauderdale for the Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show

Sustainable Tourism Marketing

Bronze: The Monroe County TDC for "The Florida Keys & Key West: Lobster Mini-Season Campaign"

Silver: The Pier 60 Sugar Sand Festival & the City of Clearwater for "Allie-Gator Engages Pier 60 Sugar Sand Festivalgoers to Keep Clearwater Beach Clean"

Henry: The Clearwater Marine Aquarium for "Creating Eco-Rangers Through Partnership"

Television Advertising

Bronze: The Alligator & Wildlife Discovery Center for "Where there is always more to explore"

Silver: Discover The Palm Beaches for The Palm Beaches "The Original. The One. The Only."

Leisure Campaign TV Spots

Henry: Destin-Fort Walton Beach Tourism for "Little Adventures"

Tourism Advocacy

Bronze: The Martin County Office of Tourism & Marketing for the Digital Marketing Training Program

Silver: The Cultural Council for Palm Beach County & Discover The Palm Beaches for the Arts & Tourism Summit on Equity, Diversion & Inclusion

Henry: The Greater Miami CVB for the "Miami Eats" Program

Websites

Bronze: The Florida Keys & Key West for the Kiosk-Based Visitor Surveys and Commission Free Reservations System

Silver: Lion Country Safari for Website Redesign

Henry: Destin-Fort Walton Beach Tourism for "Little Adventures"

Best of Show

Annual marketing budget less than \$500,000:
The Anna Maria Island Wedding Association for Anna Maria Wedding Magazine

Annual marketing budget between \$500,000 and \$2 million: Ocala/Marion County VCB for "Ocala National Forest - Florida's Hidden Gem"

Annual marketing budget greater than \$2 million:
Amelia Island CVB for the Amelia Island Meetings Brochure

Florida Tourism Hall of Fame Names 2022 Inductee

Christopher Thompson, CEO of Brand USA

Christopher L. Thompson, CDME, was inducted into the Florida Tourism Hall of Fame during the annual Florida Governor's Conference on Tourism in Boca Raton. Destinations Florida is proud to have a past president of the association recognized among other contemporary and historic figures whose vision, creativity, and drive have had a positive and significant impact on the development of Florida as a desirable visitor destination.

"I'm humbled by my induction into the Florida Tourism Hall of Fame and very appreciative of the recognition," says Thompson. "My near 40-year career in travel and tourism began and will likely end in the destination management and marketing space. Stewardship of destinations I've had the privilege to lead has been the most professionally challenging and personally fulfilling opportunities of my lifetime, including my association with Destinations Florida promoting best practices and institutional excellence in the Sunshine State."

Thompson began his career in tourism with the Division of Tourism in the former Florida Department of Commerce in April 1983, and he became bureau chief for domestic tourism in April 1986. In November 1988, he joined the Leon County TDC as the organization's first executive director, and in April 1991, he took leadership of the Tallahassee Area CVB as president & CEO. In August 1995, Thompson founded MarketServe, Inc., a professional management, marketing, and planning services company based in Tallahassee. Two years later, he joined VISIT

FLORIDA as senior vice president of partner development. He was promoted to COO in May 2003 and named president & CEO in May 2009. From there, Thompson went on to promote U.S. tourism as president & CEO of Brand USA, a position he has held since 2012.



Christopher L. Thompson is inducted into the Florida Tourism Hall of Fame. Pictured are Dana Young, president & CEO of VISIT FLORIDA; Christopher Thompson; and Greg Cook, chair of VISIT FLORIDA.

He serves on the board of Destinations International, where he is on the organization's Executive and Global Leadership committees. He is also a member of the Advisory Board for the Eric Friedheim Tourism Institute, an entity within the Department of Tourism, Recreation, and Sport Management at the University of Florida. Thompson's experience, expertise, and dedication have been essential to the success of Florida's tourism industry, and continue to make a positive impact on travelers from all over the world.



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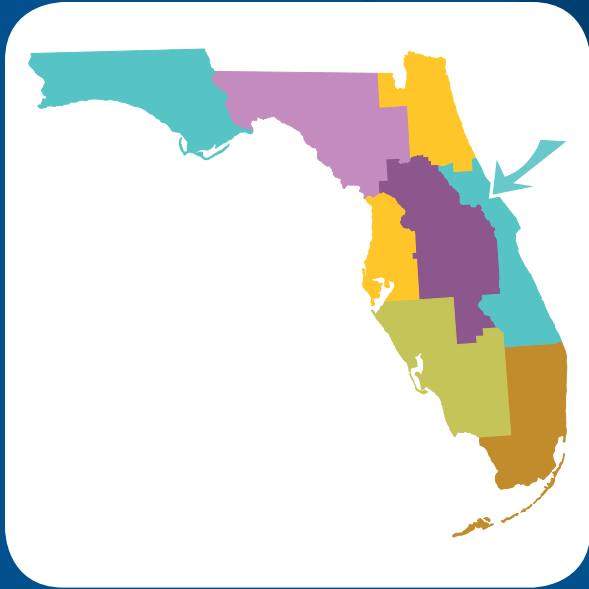
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- Daytona Beach Area CVB
- Florida's Space Coast Office of Tourism
- Martin County Office of Tourism & Marketing
- New Smyrna Beach Area Visitors Bureau
- Okeechobee County TDC
- Visit Indian River
- Visit St. Lucie
- West Volusia Tourism Advertising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

Daytona Beach Area CVB Presents Inaugural Visitors' Choice Awards

The Daytona Beach Area CVB initiated the Visitors' Choice Awards in 2022, a new program that celebrates visitors' most beloved attractions and businesses in the destination.

The Visitors' Choice Awards was determined through a survey that was sent to thousands of Daytona Beach area visitors in the CVB's database and promoted through its social media channels. The 20 different category selections and top suggestions were based solely on DaytonaBeach.com analytics and other key data points, and each category allowed for write-in submissions.

The program continues to build great momentum throughout the year with attractions showcasing the Visitors' Choice logo in both their businesses and marketing materials.

"We look forward to continuing to build upon this program in 2023 and recognize establishments that are delivering a first-class experience to the visitors," says CVB Executive Director Lori Campbell Baker.

Another community program the CVB launched in September is a series of Community Tourism Listening Sessions with area residents. The sessions shared information on how the CVB markets the destination and the importance of the tourism industry in the community. Residents were encouraged to provide their input and to learn how they can participate and get involved.



Daytona Beach Area CVB Executive Director Lori Campbell-Baker presents the Daytona Beach City Manager Deric Feacher with three Visitors' Choice Awards for the Daytona Beach Bandshell and the Daytona Beach Boardwalk & Pier.



The staff of Daytona International Speedway accepts the Visitors' Choice Award for Attractions.



BEST of EAST CENTRAL FLORIDA!

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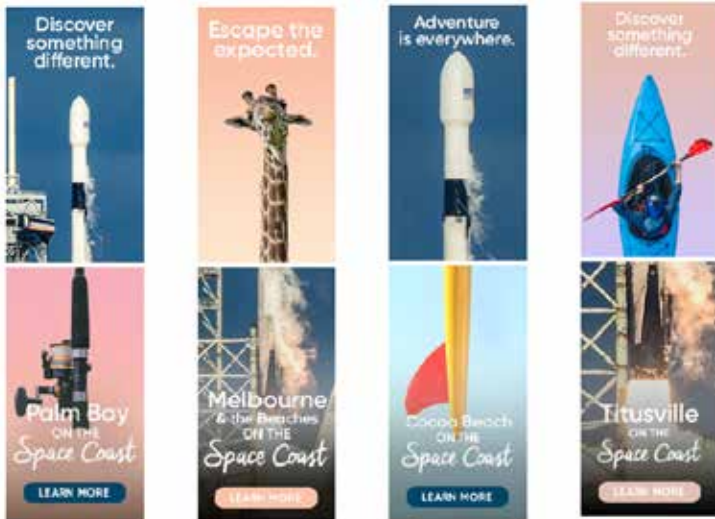
Florida's Space Coast Enjoys a Year of Accolades and Record-Breaking TDT

The Space Coast has had an incredibly busy year filled with awards and breaking records. Fiscal year 2020-21 reached a record \$16,939,307 in Tourist Development Tax, beating the prior record of \$16.023 million in 2019. Fiscal 2021-22 has already beat that with \$19.918 million year-to-date in July and with 16 consecutive months of "best month ever" results. In 2021, the Space Coast was again the number 1 launch site in the world with 32 launches; that number was surpassed as of July 2022.

Awards won include a Gold G award from Graphis International Design and a Gold Adrian Award for Outstanding Travel Marketing for the split screen ads, an FPRA Image Award of Distinction

(Space Coast Chapter) and an FPRA Golden Image Award of Distinction for promotion of Surfing Santas, and a Silver Flagler Award for "On The Space Coast" Pandora radio ads.

In office news, the headquarters moved from Historic Cocoa Village to Cocoa Beach with a new Visitor Information Center. John Giantonio has joined as the new deputy director, Terry Parks as sports coordinator, and Angela Essing as operations coordinator. Charity Stewart, marketing director, graduated from Leadership Brevard. Meagan Happel, PR manager, joined the FPRA Space Coast board as VP of Image Awards and Film Florida's board as an alternate.



This static image provides an example of the split screen ads that won two awards for Florida's Space Coast.



Melbourne Orlando International Airport welcomes TUI as the UK's and Europe's gateway to Central Florida.

Martin County Celebrates Another Record-Breaking Year

The Martin County Office of Tourism & Marketing saw another year of creative programming, award-winning campaigns, and record-breaking Tourist Development Tax collections in 2022. The latest TDT collections demonstrated an increase of 32% over 2021 and an incredible 53.7% rise over 2019 collections, which had previously been the best year on record.

"Martin County's under-the-radar charm, beautiful beaches, and broad range of experiences and attractions continue to attract a diverse mix of visitors looking for an unforgettable escape," says Nerissa Okiye, Martin County tourism director.



Martin County visitors enjoy more than 22 miles of uncrowded beaches plus over 100,000 acres of parks and conservation land.

The team's innovative Tourism Industry Training Program was celebrated during the Flagler Awards in the Tourism Advocacy category. The team also accepted the Shining Example Award on behalf of the Ocean EcoCenter in the Escape to the Southeast Travel Attraction of the Year category at the annual STS Connections Conference. Additionally, Martin County tourism program manager Ian Centrone was named the 2022 Emerging Leader Rising Star Award winner by the Travel and Tourism Research Association during the annual Marketing Outlook Forum.



The Martin County Office of Tourism & Marketing nominated the Ocean EcoCenter for the STS Shining Example Awards and accepted the award on their behalf.



BEST of EAST CENTRAL FLORIDA!

New Smyrna Beach Area Visitors Bureau Works to Maintain the Area's Beautiful Beaches

New Smyrna Beach Area Visitors Bureau continues its commitment to keeping the area's beautiful white sandy beaches pristine for residents and visitors. As part of International Coastal Cleanup Day on Saturday, September 17, employees and stakeholders turned out for the annual cleanup of their "adopted section" of the beach, a mile-long area that is designated with a plaque at Mile Marker NSB5 – NSB 6.



New Smyrna Beach Area Visitors Bureau has adopted a one-mile area of beach for annual cleanups.

Since the area of beach was adopted in 2017, dozens of employees and stakeholders have turned out to assist with the cleanup efforts. All participants receive a New Smyrna Beach Area Visitors Bureau recyclable bag and reusable straw.

"We are proud to work together to clean up our beaches and keep the area pristine for all to enjoy," says Debbie Meihls, president & CEO of New Smyrna Beach Area Visitors Bureau. "The beach cleanup is one of many sustainability efforts conducted year-round by the Visitors Bureau."

The New Smyrna Beach Area is a leader in seaside sustainability and responsible tourism and has received awards for its ongoing efforts. Meihls has been recognized with the GSTC Professional Certificate in Sustainable Tourism from the Global Sustainable Tourism Council, which establishes and manages global standards for sustainable travel and tourism.



New Smyrna Beach has 17 miles of beautiful beaches.
Photos: New Smyrna Beach Area Visitors Bureau

Indian River County Welcomes Fall With an Event for Visitors and Residents Alike

Each year Indian River County celebrates the change of season from the heat of summer to the warm days and cooler nights of fall with what everyone agrees is a perfect, iconic event. This year's fourth annual Beachside Bonfire Fest promises something for everyone as visitors and residents gather at Vero Beach for this family-friendly celebration.



The Vero Beach Bonfire Fest is an annual celebration of fall in Indian River County.

Every year a group of six oceanside businesses gets together to form a one-of-a-kind event the whole family can enjoy. The Fest this year will be on November 5, and the folks in Indian River County say it is going to be "lit."

While in town for the festival, visitors are invited to paddle board out and snorkel the SS Breconshire shipwreck located 150 yards off the coast of Vero Beach.

"The SS Breconshire Shipwreck is one of my favorite activities to do in Indian River County. While out on the water you become immersed in the rich history and adventure and is truly a great way to reset from a busy work week," says Kirk Funnell, director of tourism for Visit Indian River. "Whether you are looking for a premier Florida event or just want to go explore, there is always something for everyone in Indian River County."



The SS Breconshire shipwreck just off the coast in Vero Beach provides snorkelers a deep dive into history.



Visit St. Lucie Celebrates Successes and Record-Breaking Performance in 2022

Like many Florida counties, Visit St. Lucie finished FY 2021 with a record-breaking year in Tourist Development Tax collections and hotel performance. And the numbers continued to break records throughout 2022, having already surpassed last year's TDT collections with two months remaining to collect (at the time of this publish date). The 2022 numbers have also surpassed the pre-pandemic levels recorded in 2019, which serves as more realistic comparison. Several factors have contributed to this success including:

- An influx of new economic activity in the hospitality and leisure industry—two new hotels, including a new 300-site campground
- Increased number of vacation rental accounts and remittance of TDT representing anywhere from 20% to 33% of the TDT collections
- An influx of new commercial and residential development, bringing thousands of corporate room nights

For Visit St. Lucie, the DMO continued its "always on" digital marketing strategy launching targeted campaigns and distributing branded content to increase destination awareness and hotel demand. Visit St. Lucie also implemented new passport programs to enhance the visitor's in destination experience and

visitor spending by launching a digital Treasure Coast Wine & Ale Trail Pass and a digital Nature & Wildlife Pass.



Treasure Coast Wine & Ale Trail digital pass promo (24x36 banner)



New KOA Fort Pierce Holiday (KOAfp)

West Volusia Tourism Partners With Volusia Speedway Park

A brand new partnership is set to "drive" more visitors into West Volusia. West Volusia Tourism is proud to announce it is now the Preferred Travel Partner of the Volusia Speedway Park.

Volusia Speedway Park, located in Barberville, is known as the World's Fastest Half Mile. It hosts dirt track and go-kart racing events throughout the year, as well as the prestigious Dale & Emil Reutimann Memorial in November, the Sunshine Nationals in January, and the DIRTcar Nationals in February. The new partnership between Visit West Volusia and VSP began on July 1.

"The partnership with Visit West Volusia provides us the opportunity to continue to grow and build relationships throughout the community," says new VSP General Manager Anthony Tate. "Georgia Turner and her team at West Volusia Tourism are an excellent incubator along with all of our partners to bring the racetrack and community together in the coming years."

Volusia Speedway Park has been hosting racing events since 1968. Originally built by Benny Corbin, VSP helped grow dirt racing in Volusia County. World Racing Group now owns and operates VSP and airs its events live on its streaming platform DIRTVision.



Racing at Volusia Speedway Park





What Is a 'Convention Center'?

by Steven M. Hogan

The TDT statute states that TDT funds can be used to build, renovate, or operate a "convention center." For example, section 125.0104(3)(l)2.-3., Florida Statutes, allows TDT funds to be used to pay debt service on bonds for convention centers, or pay for the operation and maintenance costs of such centers for up to 10 years. Similarly, section 125.0104(5)(a)1.a. allows the use

of TDT funds to "construct, extend, enlarge, remodel, repair, improve, maintain, operate, or promote" publicly owned and operated convention centers.

But what *is* a "convention center"?

While we all have a notion in our minds of what a convention center is, the term is not defined in section 125.0104. This leads to some potential ambiguity about what may or may not fit within the proper use of TDT funds for such facilities.

Helpfully, the Florida attorney general has addressed this issue twice, first in 1983 and again in 2008.

In AGO 83-18 (March 17, 1983), the Florida attorney general had this to say on the matter:

This office has been unable to find a definition for either the term "convention center" or "exhibition hall." However, "exhibition" is defined by Webster's *supra*, at 796, as a public show, display or show and by The Random House Dictionary, *supra*, at 499, as "a public display, as the works of artists or craftsmen, the products of farms or factories, the skills of performers, objects of general interest, etc." A convention is stated to mean "a meeting or formal assembly, as representatives or delegates for action on particular matters" and "usually suggests a meeting of delegates representing political, church, social or fraternal organizations." The Random House Dictionary, *supra*, at 319.

Conventional wisdom and common experience tell us that convention facilities and "civic centers" are commonly used for such things as concerts, tradeshow, circuses and other exhibitions and performances. A multi-purpose building used as a place for meetings of conventions and exhibitions as defined above would, in my opinion, fall within the scope of the term "convention centers" as used in § 125.0104(5)(a) 1., F.S. I therefore conclude that such a building or project designed and maintained primarily for the purpose of furthering the advancement, improvement and promotion of tourism may be funded from the local tourist development tax revenues. Id. (emphasis added).

In AGO 2008-26 (May 23, 2008), the Florida attorney general reiterated this analysis by quoting the 1983 opinion, and stating that "a multi-purpose building, intended to be used as a convention center, would fall within the scope of those projects for which tourist development taxes may be committed." *Id.*

Therefore, it is the intended use of the facility that determines whether it will qualify as a "convention center" under the TDT statute. The Attorney General Opinions set forth above are useful illustrations of the criteria by which to judge whether an intended use fits within the statute.

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 intended use of a facility determines whether it will qualify as a "convention center" under the TDT statute. AGO 83-18 and AGO 2008-26 are useful illustrations of the criteria by which to judge whether an intended use fits within the statute.



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Palm Beaches Restaurant Month Dinner Raises \$15,000 to Support Industry, Feed the Hungry

Discover The Palm Beaches and PGA National Resort hosted a Friends of James Beard benefit dinner on August 2 to kick off The Palm Beaches Restaurant Month. The sold-out dinner was prepared by Chef Lindsay Autry and Chef Jeremy Ford, both James Beard award semifinalists, who collaborated on a unique and Palm Beaches-inspired menu. The event raised \$7,500 for the James Beard Foundation to support restaurant industry programs and initiatives and \$7,500 for Feeding South Florida, which will help provide the equivalent of 67,500 meals for the local community. *ThePalmBeaches.com*



Joseph Fisher, managing director of PGA National Resort; Kris Moon, president & CEO of Friends of James Beard Foundation; Chef Lindsay Autry; Chef Jeremy Ford; Paco Vélez, president & CEO of Feeding South Florida; and Jorge Pesquera, president & CEO of Discover The Palm Beaches
Photo: Lila Photo

Jax Ale Trail Reaches 25 Breweries

Myrtle Avenue Brewing is now open in Jacksonville's Rail Yard District, bringing the total number of craft breweries on the Jax Ale Trail to 25. The family-friendly brewery features a spacious outdoor area, complete with a play area for kids. Myrtle Avenue Brewing is in what is known as the Jax Railyard Exchange, which includes these other businesses: Bobbyk Boutique, Longroad Coffee Co., and Hillary's Chicago Pizza. The brewery will serve pizza Wednesdays and Fridays from a commissary kitchen, and Route 90 BBQ will be available Thursdays and Saturdays. *VisitJacksonville.com*



Myrtle Avenue Brewing joins the Jax Ale Trail.

Keys TDC Wins Flaglers for Tourism Marketing

The Florida Keys won Henrys for a digitally based radio campaign with 60-second spots on Spotify and Pandora and for spotlighting Keys content via Condé Nast Traveler's website. Communicating Keys' resource protection during the 2021 lobster mini and regular seasons also won a Bronze in sustainability. "This is the third consecutive year we've won for sustainable tourism," says TDC Director Stacey Mitchell. "Natural resource protection is important to residents and the right thing to do for future generations." *Fla-Keys.com*



From The Florida Keys & Key West: Andy Newman of the TDC's public relations agency; Stacey Mitchell, TDC director; Clint Barras of the TDC's internet agency; and John Underwood of the TDC's advertising agency
Photo: Chad Newman/TDC

457 Years and St. Augustine Is Still Drawing Crowds

On September 3, hundreds of onlookers attended the historical reenactment commemorating the 457th anniversary of the landing of Spanish explorer Pedro Menendez de Aviles and the founding of the City of St. Augustine. A celebration of Mass at the rustic altar of Mission Nombre de Dios was followed by a reenactment of the first Thanksgiving at the Fountain of Youth Archeological Park, with historic storytellers representing native Timucuan and Spanish settlers of 1565. *FloridasHistoricCoast.com*



Each year actors provide a historical reenactment of the Spanish landing in St. Augustine in 1565.



Volunteers Clean Up Sarasota County Beach on Labor Day

Visit Sarasota County staff and partners met pre-dawn at Lido Beach on Tuesday, September 6, for a Lido Beach Cleanup after the Labor Day holiday. Sarasota County has 35 miles of pristine beachfront along the Gulf of Mexico and acts as a top destination for more than 6.5 million tourists coming to the area year-round. Thirty-two volunteers collected more than 20 bags of trash in order to keep Sarasota beaches beautiful! [VisitSarasota.com](https://www.VisitSarasota.com)



Volunteers gather on Labor Day to clean up Lido Beach in Sarasota County.

Martin County Accepts STS Shining Example Award

The Ocean EcoCenter at the Florida Oceanographic Coastal Center on Hutchinson Island recently received the Escape to the Southeast Travel Attraction of the Year award at Southeast Tourism Society's Shining Example Awards. The ceremony was held in Concord, North Carolina, during the annual STS Connections conference. The Shining Example Awards program, an industry fixture since 1985, recognizes outstanding contributions to travel and tourism within the Southeast United States. [DiscoverMartin.com](https://www.DiscoverMartin.com)



The Ocean EcoCenter officially opened its doors in July 2021 and was nominated by the Martin County Office of Tourism & Marketing for the STS award.

Space Coast Sets TDT Record in July

July Tourist Development Tax has come in at \$2.276 million—a record for the month of July, making it the 16th consecutive month of “best month ever” results. Year-to-date, the total stands at \$19.918 million (well beyond total collections in 2020-21 of \$16.94 million). It looks like the first Artemis launch attempt will help August TDT get very close to \$2 million as well. [VisitSpaceCoast.com](https://www.VisitSpaceCoast.com)



Artemis and the moon during the initial roll-out to the launch pad

Visit Sebring Wins Third Henry Award

Visit Sebring won its third Henry during the recent Flagler Awards at the Florida Governor's Conference on Tourism. The award was presented in the Rural Marketing Category for the destination's 2021 Sports Tourism Marketing that exceeded campaign goals by having a \$3.6 million economic impact, recruiting two nationally televised sporting events, and being directly responsible for 11,469 room nights. [VisitSebring.com](https://www.VisitSebring.com)



Casey Hartt accepts the Henry on behalf of Visit Sebring. Pictured are Dana Young, president & CEO of VISIT FLORIDA; Casey Hartt; and Greg Cook, chair of VISIT FLORIDA.



Greater Miami and Miami Beach – In Real Time

The GMCVB inspires visitors to plan their next adventure to Greater Miami and Miami Beach with live webcams featuring bird's-eye views from iconic locales, Atlantic waters gently lapping the shore, and even an urban coral reef. Partners are also encouraged to use the valuable marketing tool—among the GMCVB's most popular website content—in their storytelling and social channels, helping extend the program's reach. MiamiAndBeaches.com



The Coral City webcam provides a real-time view of an urban coral reef.

Amelia Island Brings Home Destiny and Flagler Awards

The Amelia Island CVB won a Destiny at the U.S. Travel Association's ESTO Awards Dinner for Weather Triggered, its short-term marketing campaign, and was named a finalist in the Advocacy & Grassroots and Social Media Campaign categories. In the Flagler Awards, the AICVB won three coveted Henrys in the Social Media Marketing, Mobile Marketing, and Resource Material-Trade categories, which also won Best of Show. The CVB also received a Silver award in Direct Marketing and Bronze awards in the Out-of-Home and Special Event categories. Amelialand.com



The Amelia Island CVB team celebrates their Flagler Awards.

Visit Orlando Partners With Orlando Health

In a first of its kind partnership, Orlando Health is the Official Health and Wellness Partner of Visit Orlando. Now tourists and Visit Orlando member organizations can access visitor-specific wellness tips and individualized health resources including customizable health solution support for event planners and a concierge telephone number to connect visitors to local medical resources. Later this year, an Orlando Health Virtual Care Center will open at the Orange County Convention Center where medical providers will be available virtually and staffed in-person during major conventions by Orlando Health clinicians. VisitOrlando.com/OrlandoHealth



Visit Orlando and Orlando Health announce their partnership at Visit Orlando's Insights Luncheon.

Pensacola Shares The Way to Beach™ at Chicago Air & Water Show

Visit Pensacola sponsored the Chicago Air & Water Show featuring its hometown heroes, the U.S. Navy Blue Angels. Pensacola used its ties to the Blues to continue inviting Chicago natives and airshow attendees to travel to the beachside destination as a top-flight market to the destination. Joined by the Blue Angels Foundation, Visit Pensacola and Co. featured a Blue Angels cockpit experience, a mullet toss game for prizes, a trip giveaway to Pensacola, and a multifaceted marketing campaign throughout the city. VisitPensacola.com



Visit Pensacola and the Blue Angels Foundation Chicago Air & Water Show activation featuring a one-of-a-kind U.S. Navy Blue Angels cockpit experience



Crystal River Hosts Florida Outdoor Writers Association Conference

Discover Crystal River Florida (DCRF) recently welcomed members of the Florida Outdoor Writers Association for its 2022 conference. The Nature Coast, DCRF, and Plantation on Crystal River were thrilled to win the bid and to host some of the top outdoor writers in the state. The conference itinerary included an inshore fishing tournament, paddle scavenger hunt, historic river tour, hiking, biking, shooting, archery, and a pitch and putt clinic/tournament. DiscoverCrystalRiverFL.com



Attendees enjoy the FOWA Conference in Crystal River, which kicked off September 7.

Punta Gorda/Englewood Beach Produces CCA STAR Fishing Competition Winner

The Punta Gorda/Englewood Beach VCB served as a destination sponsor for the 2022 West Marine CCA Florida STAR competition and was rewarded by having the first winner of the 101-day competition catch a tagged redfish in its waters. The winner received an \$80,000 prize package from Pathfinder Boats and Yamaha. Also, the competition's Youth Division provides up to \$100,000 in scholarships, which will be awarded at the STAR Awards Ceremony & Banquet on October 8 in Cocoa. PureFlorida.com



STAR competitor Jeff Moore catches a CCA tagged redfish in Charlotte Harbor area to win a \$80K prize package.

Seminole County Welcomes New Residents of the Central Florida Zoo

The Central Florida Zoo in Orlando North, Seminole County has introduced three infant spider monkeys to their newest exhibit. Klaus, Violet, and Sunny were brought to the Central Florida Zoo through a partnership with the Association of Zoos and Aquariums and the Species Survival Plan for spider monkeys. The exhibit will help educate the population on the illegal pet trade and survival plans that zoos participate in throughout the world. The new residents made their public debut on September 1 and are already capturing the heart of each guest that visits. DoOrlandoNorth.com



Violet enjoys the sun at the Central Florida Zoo.

Daytona International Speedway Hosts NASCAR Events

Thousands of visitors from throughout the Southeast flocked to Daytona International Speedway in late August for the Coke Zero Sugar 400 Weekend. Highlighting the weekend was the NASCAR Cup Series regular season finale. While inclement weather forced the postponement of the Saturday night race to Sunday, the drama for race fans in attendance was at an all-time high as Austin Dillon pulled off the surprising win to earn a coveted spot in the NASCAR Playoffs. DaytonaBeach.com



Daytona International Speedway hosted a pair of events in late August—the Coke Zero Sugar 400 NASCAR Cup Series race and the Wawa 250 Powered by Coca-Cola NASCAR Xfinity Series race.
Photo: Daytona International Speedway



Lee County's E Awards Honor Hospitality Professionals

The E Awards, Lee County VCB's 22nd annual Elaine McLaughlin Outstanding Hospitality Service Awards, honored industry employees for going above and beyond to take care of visitors. Residents, visitors, and colleagues wrote 751 nominations for 553 individual nominees. Awards were presented in seven categories, including accommodations, best tourism boss, attractions, restaurants, transportation, Good Samaritan, other services/businesses, and Honor of Distinction. The E Awards are named after McLaughlin, the VCB's former executive director. VisitFortMyers.com



Tamara Pigott, Lee County VCB executive director (at right), congratulates Gabriela Bellorin of Days Inn by Wyndham Fort Myers Springs Resort for her honorable mention in the Accommodations category as Elaine McLaughlin and Robert Wells III look on at the 22nd Annual E Awards on September 8.

Destin-Fort Walton Beach Receives Destiny Award, Five Flagler Awards

In addition to receiving five Flagler Awards from VISIT FLORIDA, Destin-Fort Walton Beach was honored by the U.S. Travel Association with a Destiny Award in recognition of excellence and creative accomplishment in Integrated Marketing and Messaging. The destination's campaign Little Adventures continues to inspire moms who are planning trips, and then continues the connection throughout the stay utilizing traditional advertising, custom content, experiential marketing, and destination stewardship programs that directly benefit families. DestinFWB.com



The Destiny Awards recognize U.S. Travel destination members for excellence and creative accomplishment in destination marketing and promotion at the local and regional levels.

Experience Kissimmee Sponsors Illustrations in *The New York Times*

Experience Kissimmee always is looking for ways to keep the destination top of mind, and one of those ideas recently came to fruition in *The New York Times*. Five sponsored illustrations each highlighted a section of content, ranging from nightlife to outdoors to kicking back in a vacation home. The style was tailored to fit naturally within the content so it would feel more like organic content that would be interesting to *NYT* readers. ExperienceKissimmee.com



One of five sponsored illustrations in *The New York Times* highlights what makes Kissimmee a great destination.

Visit Central Florida TikTok Post Goes Viral

VCF's entry into TikTok earlier this year has exceeded expectations, scoring its first viral video, which featured an alligator at Circle B Bar Reserve in Lakeland. The video has received more than 1.2 million views and 36,000 likes to date and continues to gain new engagement every day while introducing new people to the VCF brand. VCF's account gained nearly 6,000 new followers in a short time as a result of this video. VisitCentralFlorida.org



This Visit Central Florida video has gone viral on TikTok.



Florida's Paradise Coast Announces iARTE VIVA!

Florida's Paradise Coast has a longstanding appreciation for the arts and a deep-rooted history connected to Florida's Hispanic heritage. The Naples, Marco Island, Everglades CVB, in collaboration with 11 local arts and culture organizations, proudly announced the launch of iARTE VIVA! (Arte-Viva.com), a year-long celebration of the rich cultural and artistic contributions of its Hispanic community. More than 50 events, exhibitions, performances, educational seminars, and lectures will be hosted across the destination September 2022 through June 2023. ParadiseCoast.com



iARTE VIVA! is a year-long celebration of Hispanic culture and arts.

Local Press Highlights Tourism Promotion Results in Franklin County

The Apalachicola Times recently published great news about tourism-related nonprofit groups on Florida's Forgotten Coast. The Franklin County Commission approved a recommendation from the Franklin County TDC to fund \$174,000 in promotion grants to 25 nonprofit groups that plan to use the marketing money to host events and festivals and to fund museum-related activities over the next year. "Every nonprofit group that made an application will be receiving funding this year," says TDC director John Solomon. The Commission also recognized the TDC for winning two Flagler Awards. FloridasForgottenCoast.com



The Franklin County Commission recognizes the Franklin County TDC for winning a Silver Flagler Award for Florida's Forgotten Coast mixed media campaign, The Florida You Remember, and a Bronze for its web series, How to Forgotten Coast Like a Local.

Meet the Real Life Abuelas of Tampa Bay in a New Streaming Series

Visit Tampa Bay, Film Tampa Bay, VISIT FLORIDA, and Odyssey Studios announces the premiere of its new unscripted reality TV series *Meet My Abuela*. The unscripted series is a groundbreaking shift in tourism marketing that highlights Tampa's historic Hispanic cultural heritage and showcases the destination to potential travelers while uniquely and insightfully engaging the U.S. Latin market. *Meet My Abuela* features real-life romantic scenarios in which optimistic couples must follow Hispanic tradition and receive approval from their grandmother to make their relationship official. VisitTampaBay.com



Viewers can watch *Meet My Abuela* on Vix (the largest Spanish language streaming service), Vizio, XUMO, and YouTube.



In the News

Lee County VCB Creates Market Intelligence Analyst Position

The Lee County VCB welcomes Dr. Roberta Atzori as its new market intelligence analyst. In this new role, Atzori will provide strategic analysis and insights regarding Lee County's tourism performance. This is a specialized research position to provide data analysis to guide budget spend and business decisions promoting the area as a visitor destination. Previously, Atzori was a professor of hospitality and tourism management for 10 years. She earned the PhD in hospitality management at the University of Central Florida. VisitFortMyers.com



Dr. Roberta Atzori

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INSIDE: Celebrate Flagler Award winners and the Florida Tourism Hall of Fame inductee.

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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

DESTINATIONS FLORIDA