

TourismMarketing Today

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Statues Honoring Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune Unveiled in the U.S. Capitol and Daytona Beach

A piece of Daytona Beach history is now part of the National Statuary Hall in the United States Capitol in Washington, D.C.



Riverfront Esplanade Park in Downtown Daytona Beach is home to this bronze statue of Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune, unveiled on August 18.

On July 13, a 11-foot-tall marble statue depicting Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune was unveiled in the U.S. Capitol, becoming the first African-American to be presented with a state statue in Statuary Hall. The statue of the civil rights pioneer, humanitarian, and educator was sculpted from a 11.5-ton marble block from Michelangelo's cave in Italy.

Since 1864, each U.S. state has been invited to send two statues to represent it in the U.S. Capitol's National Statuary Hall collection. Dr. Bethune's statue replaced a statue of a Confederate general.

About a month later in Daytona Beach, a smaller bronze statue of Dr. Bethune was unveiled in the

*DR. MARY MCLEOD BETHUNE ...
continues on pg. 3*

Two Months of Opportunity

by Robert Skrob



The easiest time to foster new relationships with your elected lawmakers is during

election season.

With the Primary Elections complete and the General Election on November 8, 2022, candidates are more open to meeting with constituents and developing new relationships than ever before.

Be a resource about Florida's #1 economic growth driver, the tourism industry. Inform the candidates about your

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

Support from our partners makes Destinations Florida's industry & legislative representation possible.

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HAPPY Birthday

Julie White
September 24



DESTINATIONS FLORIDA TourismMarketing Today

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On the Cover

Lakeland, Florida, offers the perfect blend of adventure and relaxation in Central Florida. Whether visitors are looking for a place to get away from it all and relax or they want to explore one of the many hidden gems that make up this beautiful city, the Lakeland CVB can't wait to share all that Lakeland has to offer. They invite visitors and locals alike to "Come explore Lakeland with us!"

Riverfront Esplanade Park located in Downtown Daytona Beach.

Dr. Bethune was a tireless advocate for African-Americans and women. She founded the Educational and Industrial Training School for Negro Girls in Daytona Beach in 1904, which later became Bethune-Cookman University, a Historically Black College and University (HBCU). She also became an advisor to U.S. presidents, including President Franklin Roosevelt, and founded the National Council of Negro Women in 1935.

"From the college that she established more than 100 years ago to her historic home that is opened to visitors today, Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune's legacy lives on through the residents and visitors to our community," says Lori Campbell Baker, executive director of the Daytona Beach Area CVB. "She is one of the



The Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune statue in Statuary Hall, U.S. Capitol, recognizes this civil rights pioneer, educator, and founder of what is now Bethune-Cookman University in Daytona Beach.

defining figures in our nation's—and our destination's—history, and both statues are a deserving tribute to her achievements."

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

marketing programs that create year-round jobs, provide career growth opportunities, and attract additional investments into your community.

If you can't reach out directly, provide support to leaders

on your TDC or within your tourism industry. Even one new opportunity can be pivotal when Legislative Session rolls around.

Thank you for all you do.

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

Parkview at Cascades | Tallahassee, Florida

Register at DestinationsFlorida.org

FIFA Brings the World Cup to Miami in 2026

The Greater Miami CVB, government leaders, industry partners, and soccer fans throughout the community celebrated as FIFA named Miami one of only 16 cities across the United States, Canada, and Mexico to host the World Cup in 2026.

The celebration was a long time coming. While the World Cup's highly anticipated return to the United States is still four years away, the official bidding process kicked off in 2017.

"Our bid team collaborated through a very competitive process to bring World Cup soccer to its rightful home in Greater Miami and Miami Beach," notes GMCVB President & CEO David Whitaker.



Greater Miami elected leaders celebrate the FIFA World Cup 2026™ announcement.

Throughout the nearly five-year bid process, impacted by the pandemic and international flight restrictions, FIFA representatives met both in-person and virtually with bid officials. A coalition led by the GMCVB, Miami-Dade County, and Hard Rock

Stadium, and supported by state leadership, addressed FIFA priorities including stadiums and training sites, transportation, commercial potential, sustainability, overall fan experience, and human rights initiatives.

"We're a big event town. Big events require a big stage, and an even bigger backdrop," adds Whitaker. "There is perhaps not a destination in North America that better combines world-class venues and events, and our most coveted asset—one of the most diverse fan bases found anywhere—than Greater Miami and Miami Beach. This is the recipe event organizers look for."



Miami bid officials in NYC with FIFA VP Victor Montagliani






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Tallahassee to Host 2026 World Athletics Cross Country Championships at Apalachee Regional Park

With the 2026 event coming to Apalachee Regional Park, Tallahassee joins Boston and New York City as the only three U.S. cities to host the World Athletics Cross Country Championships. Since 1992, countries including Denmark, Uganda, China, Poland, Spain, Jordan, Great Britain, Kenya, Japan, France, Belgium, Switzerland, Ireland, Portugal, Morocco, Italy, and Hungary have played host to the prestigious event.

The World Athletics Cross Country Championship is expected to draw more than 550 runners from more than 60 countries to

compete in five official World Championship races at Apalachee Regional Park. In addition to being internationally televised, the event is projected to be attended by more than 10,000 spectators from around the world, bringing in an estimated economic impact of over \$4.3 million. This announcement marks the beginning of increased visibility, additional events, and more training opportunities that come with being a World Championship site.



Pictured here is Visit Tallahassee hosting the 2022 NCAA Division I Cross Country Championships in November 2022.



Crowds gather for the Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA) cross country state championships at Apalachee Regional Park in Tallahassee.

Kerri L. Post, executive director of Visit Tallahassee/Leon County Division of Tourism, and her team have worked hard to build a premier cross country facility and to create a new event standard.

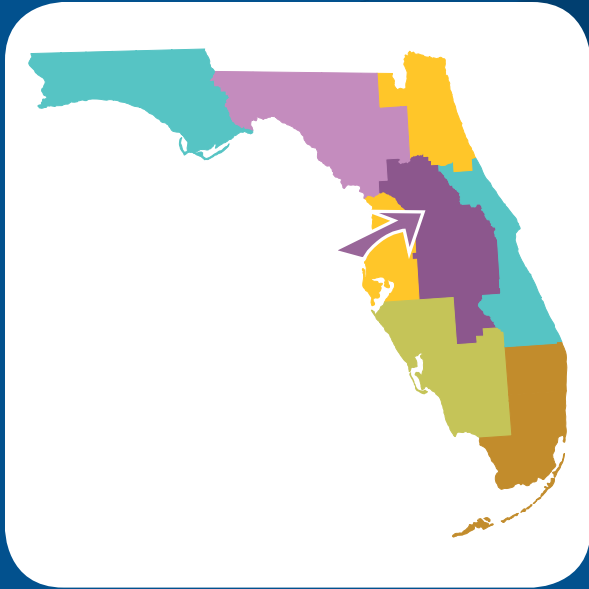
"We are so excited and proud to host this prestigious event and look forward to welcoming the world to Florida," Post says.

Travel is the catalyst in every great story.



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at TripAdvisor



- Experience Kissimmee
- Explore Lakeland
- Ocala/Marion County VCB
- Orlando North, Seminole County
- Visit Central Florida
- Visit Lake
- Visit Orlando

Experience Kissimmee Celebrates a Packed Year of Accomplishments

As travel and tourism ramped up during 2022, so did Experience Kissimmee. During the first quarter, Kissimmee was the No. 1 booked destination on VRBO in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa, and No. 2 in North America, according to Expedia. Vacation homes have exceeded pre-pandemic Tourist Development Tax levels since April 2021. Even with hotels returning to pre-pandemic revenue this year, the TDT breakdown has shifted from 50/50 between vacation homes and hotels to 60% from vacation homes. The destination continues to be the Vacation Home Capital of the World®, with more than 30,000 vacation homes.

Experience Kissimmee was thrilled to share this message during IPW 2022, which was hosted in the destination's backyard, and beyond. In June, Warner Bros. Discovery announced a new branded content partnership with Experience Kissimmee—the first of its kind—that will present the region as the tourist

destination of choice through a new creative branded content series. The Interactive Media team also won three Gold Stevie® Awards for the most innovative Facebook page, Instagram feed, and TikTok channel.



DT Minich, Experience Kissimmee CEO, addresses attendees during a sponsored lunch at IPW 2022.



Camilla Delfino, Experience Kissimmee social media specialist, accepts three awards for most innovative TikTok channel, Instagram feed, and Facebook page at the Stevie Awards.



Lakeland Chamber Invites Visitors and Residents to 'Explore Lakeland'

Explore Lakeland, the new identity for the Lakeland CVB, aims to connect with visitors and year-round residents.

Lakeland's interesting history, diverse culinary options, eclectic shopping, and beautiful outdoor spaces will be front and center as the Lakeland CVB begins its rebrand to Explore Lakeland. Lakeland's recent record growth means thousands of new residents who yearn for a connection to their new hometown. As both a visitor information center and community resource, the Lakeland Chamber sees an opportunity among the increase in calls and visits.



In addition to natural beauty, Lakeland offers visitors and residents a vibrant town to explore.

Drawing on the experiences of the community, attractions, sports partners, and City of Lakeland leaders, Explore Lakeland will represent Lakeland's spirit of discovery to visitors, new residents, and lifelong Lakelanders.

Partners since 1966, the city and the chamber are equally excited for both the process and the outcome of the rebrand efforts.

"With Explore Lakeland, we can now better educate the community and stakeholders about tourism's value to Lakeland—and help them understand how tourism positively impacts our community. We'll be able to create a brand identity for Lakeland that is as unique as our beautiful city," says Kristen Spiker-Brenneman, director of the LCVB. Throughout 2023, Explore Lakeland will launch new elements including a logo, website, visitor itineraries, social media, and more.



Beautiful outdoor spaces are a draw for visitors to "Explore Lakeland."

Ocala/Marion County Reveals New Tourism Brand

This summer the Ocala/Marion County VCB launched its tourism brand evolution for the destination. The new look, tagline, and messaging for the brand are reflective of months of research collected from visitors and residents alike.

The final tourism logo evolves the horsehead from the previous brand, now incorporating a cascading mane that represents the destination's flowing waters and rolling hills in addition to the Horse Capital of the World®. The new tagline "Florida's Natural Wonder" represents all there is to discover in Ocala/Marion County.



Ocala/Marion County's new logo and tagline represent all there is to discover in "Florida's Natural Wonder."

unique and authentic destination, and is one that we can own to further target current guests that love us, while inspiring new guests that have not yet discovered us."

One of the goals in updating the brand is to have an identity that not only resonates with tourists, but also with those who live and work in the destination. To do this, the research efforts included four community workshops, visitor focus groups, and multiple surveys across more than a thousand tourists and locals to receive input.

The Ocala/Marion VCB partnered with Zehnder Communications to develop the tourism brand evolution.



OcalaMarion.com features the destination's new branding.

"As Ocala/Marion County continues to evolve, our brand needed to as well," says Loretta Shaffer, tourist development director for the VCB. "We built this brand to tell our unique story and share with travelers our amazing destination through a timeless and classic logo. Ultimately, our newly evolved tourism logo represents our



Orlando North, Seminole County Continues to Drive the Future With NIL

On July 1, 2021, Orlando North, Seminole County signed Florida State University's softball star Kayley Mudge as its first brand ambassador when the NIL legislation was passed in Florida, which allows student athletes to make money from their name, image, and likeness. Since then, Orlando North, Seminole County has added 10 athletes to its Student Athlete Brand Ambassador Program. This has led to multiple productions with the largest being a student athlete game show, *The Ultimate Athlete ON Top*, premiering on YouTube on September 16, 2022. The show



Seminole County native and Florida State University softball player Kayley Mudge

includes UCF women's soccer player Jade Barkett and UCF running back Isaiah Bowser going head to head in multiple competitions at Orlando North attractions.

In addition to working with student athletes, Orlando North, Seminole County has partnered with Dreamfield to help search for and sign new student athletes in the most efficient and effective way. Guilherme "Gui" Cunha, administrator for the Office of Economic Development and Tourism for Seminole County, says, "We learned a lot about student-athlete marketing and NIL over our first marketing campaign in 2021. We want to be the best there is at everything we do, and using resources like Dreamfield makes us a dominant force in the economic development and tourism marketing space."



Mikey Keene, UCF quarterback, at TopGolf Lake Mary

June Was a Banner Month, in a Banner Year, for Polk County Tourism

Visit Central Florida (VCF) had one of its most successful months on record in June, recruiting, hosting, and managing a number of high-profile events, as well as hitting record numbers for web traffic and social media.

Following a successful IPW, which included pre and post FAMs, VCF kept up the momentum, hosting premier events and hitting new milestones. Lakeland hosted the first leg of the 45th annual Air Race Classic, a four-day, all-women cross country airplane race, as well as the annual pageant at the RP Funding Center that saw the crowning of Miss Florida 2022 and Miss Florida Outstanding



IPW FAM participants enjoy visiting LEGOLAND Florida Resort.

Teen 2022. On June 25 and 26, the Southern Regional Show Ski Championships christened a revamped Martin Luther King Jr. Park at Lake Silver in Winter Haven during a two-day event considered a preview of October's International Waterski and Wakeboard Federation (IWWF) World Water Ski Show Tournament.

June was the VCF website's best performance month in the site's history—hitting record numbers for sessions while continuing to lower the bounce rate. Plus, June saw VCF scoring its first viral TikTok video, featuring an alligator at Circle B Bar Reserve, which received more than 1 million views, 30,100 likes, 1,981 comments, and 2,099 shares.



Miss Florida 2022, Lindsay Bettis (center), will compete for the Miss America title later this year.



BEST of CENTRAL FLORIDA!

Visit Lake Drives Interest With Local Markets

In conjunction with Madden Media, Visit Lake met with the production team of Tampa Bay 10 and its show *Great Day Live*. The collaboration led to a paid promotion consisting of four segments throughout a week of airtime in July. Themes included Historic Charm in Lake County, Unique Ways to Explore the Land of 1,000 Lakes, Flavors of Mount Dora, and Affordable Family Fun in Lake County. Airing in the Tampa Bay area, the goal was to promote



Great Day Live's shot of a Jones Brothers Air & Seaplane Adventures seaplane parked on the shore in Downtown Tavares

visits from the drive market to explore a new area with unique adventures and leisure.

Staff coordinated the shoot with local partners for a truly collaborative project. Featured businesses include the more adventurous side of the county like Jones Brothers Air & Seaplane Adventures in Tavares, Revolution Adventures for off-roading in Clermont, CatBoat Adventure Tours in Mount Dora, and Showcase of Citrus in Clermont. Viewers got a taste of the best food and leisure in Lake County while exploring places in Downtown Mount Dora including Lakeside Inn and Wave Sushi.



Great Day Live's Historic Charm segment showing Lakeside Inn, Mount Dora

Orlando Is Unbelievably Real!

Visit Orlando in collaboration with Orlando Economic Partnership launched Unbelievably Real—one singular, comprehensive, and consistent brand to promote the destination and region. This first-of-its-kind partnership between the two organizations was developed to speak to all audiences—leisure visitors, meeting planners, meeting attendees, travel professionals, site selectors, business relocation stakeholders, and talent.

Visit Orlando's tourism-focused campaign launched in May with a fully integrated campaign targeting families and adults mainly focused on East of the Mississippi and Texas. It included



The mural designed by Orlando-based artist Clark Orr showcases Orlando's nightly fireworks and adventures on waterways to innovative technologies such as simulation and rocket launches.

heavy digital, social media, television, and unique out-of-home placements including a mural designed by local artist Clark Orr in Brooklyn through October.

To date, the domestic campaign has delivered 1.1 billion impressions, produced 10 million web sessions, generated more than 750,000 hotel and flight searches, and resulted in more than 225,000 booked hotel room nights. This fall, a campaign featuring the new brand will launch in the UK, Canada, Brazil, Mexico, and to meetings and conventions audiences.

This summer, Visit Orlando partnered with Frontier Airlines on a joint marketing campaign to boost travel to Orlando. The Rediscover Orlando campaign included a low fare Orlando promotion and an Orlando trip giveaway sweepstakes focused on Downtown Orlando. The campaign included digital display, paid social, and email promotion driving to a dedicated Orlando landing page with an estimated 22 million impressions.



The Visit Orlando/Frontier Airlines summer promotion invites visitors to "Rediscover Orlando."



AGO 2021-02: Design and Engineering Included?

by Steven M. Hogan

As you may have heard, Florida Attorney General Opinion 2021-02 potentially restricts what TDT funds can be used for. In AGO 2021-02 (Nov. 3, 2021), the Florida attorney general concluded that the term *construct* in section 125.0104(5), Florida Statutes, does not include "design, engineering, and project development studies" for building projects eligible to use TDT funds.



AGO 2021-02 concludes that the term *construct* does not include "design, engineering, and project development studies," but the opinion will not have the force of law until a court rules on the issue.



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We build audiences that help Florida destinations find their ideal travelers: Leisure, MICE, LGBTQ & Inclusion, International, and more.

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The text of AGO 2021-02 can be reviewed here: <https://bit.ly/ago2021-02>

The key to this opinion is the Florida attorney general's analysis of what the word *construct* means under section 125.0104(5)(b).



Steven M. Hogan

It is certainly debatable whether or not the analysis in AGO 2021-02 is the only way to look at the statutory language. Any party impacted by the analysis in AGO 2021-02 could potentially push back on it. To that end, I will repeat what we wrote in this space back in May 2020 when addressing AGO 2020-02, which addressed payment of travel costs for various categories of persons:

Is AGO 2020-02 the Last Word?

It's important to note that an opinion from the Florida attorney general is *not binding in court* and does not have the force of law.

The attorney general's power to issue advisory opinions to subdivisions of state government is created by section 16.01, Florida Statutes. The statute provides that the attorney general may, "upon the written requisition of a member of the Legislature, other state officer, or officer of a county, municipality, other unit of local government, or political subdivision, give an official opinion and legal advice in writing on any question of law relating to the official duties of the requesting officer." § 16.01(3), Fla. Stat. This is the statute that gave the attorney general the power to issue AGO 2020-02 upon the request of a county attorney.

It is well settled, however, that attorney general opinions issued under section 16.01 are not binding in court and do not have the force of law. See, e.g., *Leadership Housing, Inc. v. Dep't of Revenue*, 336 So. 2d 1239, 1241 (Fla. 4th DCA 1976) ("The opinions of the Attorney General are entitled to great weight in construing the law of this State, but are not binding on this Court. ... With all due respect for the Opinion of the Attorney General and interpretation of the Department of Revenue, we have reached a contrary conclusion." (emphasis added; citations omitted)); *Bunkley v. State*, 882 So. 2d 890, 897 (Fla. 2004) ("Bunkley's reliance on the Attorney General's opinion as a statement of 1989 law is misplaced because opinions of the Attorney General are not statements of law.").

This means that though AGO 2020-02 exists, it is not binding on anyone with the force of law.

The same logic applies to AGO 2021-02. Until a court decides this issue, the matter will be up for spirited debate.

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.



Visit Tampa Bay Encourages Vacation-Seekers to Discover the 'Tampa Bay Effect' in New Campaign

Visit Tampa Bay launched a new creative campaign encouraging vacation-seekers to discover the "Tampa Bay Effect." The campaign was designed to showcase the destination's active adventures with a relaxing vibe to create a vacation that is authentically Tampa Bay. The campaign showcases water activities, sunny skies, bright colors, and dynamic points of interest, such as thrilling attractions, new luxury hotels, and world-class restaurants. VisitTampaBay.com



Visitors to Tampa Bay are invited to discover active adventures, sky-high coasters, and authentic cuisine, all at a relaxing pace.

Media Reps Go Scalping on Florida's Sports Coast

Scallop Season provided an excellent opportunity to gather media from all parts of the country to experience scallop season on Florida's Sports Coast. Media representatives were blown away by the variety of locations available in Pasco County, from the water adventure at Anclote Key Preserve State Park to the distinct history of Downtown New Port Richey. Overall, scalloping was a fantastic experience, with the media and DMO staff hauling in almost seven gallons of scallops! FLSportsCoast.com



Scalloping is a favorite pastime on Florida's Sports Coast.

Success of New Air Service to St. Augustine/Ponte Vedra

Elite Airways has expanded service to Northeast Florida Regional Airport (UST), which serves the St. Augustine and Ponte Vedra Beach area. The exclusive seasonal service between UST and Newark (EWR) started in November 2021. In May 2022, Elite Airways added service to and from Portland, Maine (PWM) from St. Augustine. As a result of the continued success of the new service, Elite recently announced its commitment to extending year-round service between Newark and Northeast Florida Regional Airport. FloridasHistoricCoast.com



John Pearsall, president of Elite Airways, celebrates the initial launch of the service between UST and EWR in November 2021.

Gardening Enthusiasts Attend Annual Lake Placid Caladium Festival

In July, a record number of gardening enthusiasts attended the 31st annual Caladium Festival in Lake Placid, Florida, which grows approximately 90% of the world's supply of caladium bulbs. The annual festival celebrates these plants and the local growers with plant and bulb sales, caladium field tours, vendors, entertainment, and a car show. Caladiums are grown in large fields and have been compared to the tulip fields in Holland for their beauty. VisitSebring.com



The Caladium Festival in Lake Placid features local growers who sell their plants and bulbs and educate the public about this versatile plant.



The Naples, Marco Island, Everglades CVB Receives DMAP Accreditation Renewal From Destinations International

Destinations International and the Destination Marketing Accreditation Program (DMAP) Board of Directors has renewed the DMAP accreditation for the Naples, Marco Island, Everglades CVB, one of 24 destination marketing organizations to receive the designation this year. The DMAP seal is awarded in recognition of an organization's commitment to industry excellence and meeting or exceeding industry standards for performance and accountability among destination organizations globally. ParadiseCoast.com



The Naples Pier on Florida's Paradise Coast

Daytona International Speedway Hosts Daytona Soccer Fest

For the first time in history, a professional soccer field was built in the legendary infield tri-oval of Daytona International Speedway for the inaugural Daytona Soccer Fest held over the July 4 weekend. The two-day festival featured a series of soccer games culminating with the Orlando Pride facing off against Racing Louisville FC in a National Women's Soccer League match. Attendees also enjoyed concerts by Latin GRAMMY Award winner Rauw Alejandro, Latin artist Adassa, and Chance the Rapper. DaytonaBeach.com



With the historic asphalt serving as a backdrop, Daytona International Speedway hosted the inaugural Daytona Soccer Fest over the July 4 weekend.
Photo: Daytona International Speedway

Hemingway Look-Alike Contestants Release Namesake Turtle in Florida Keys

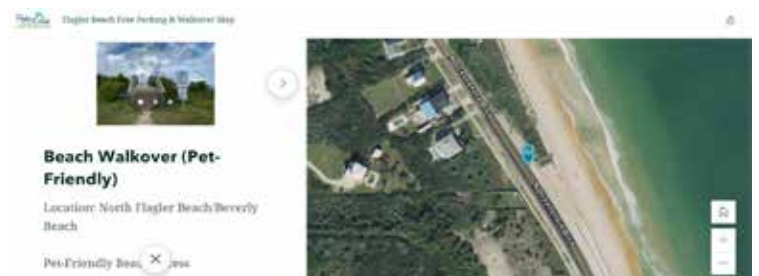
"Papa Hemingway" look-alike hopefuls in the Florida Keys helped return "Papa," an endangered loggerhead sea turtle, back to the ocean on July 21, the 123rd anniversary of legendary writer Ernest Hemingway's birth. Hundreds of spectators cheered as the "Papas," visiting the Keys for Key West's annual Hemingway Look-Alike Contest, watched the loggerhead namesake swim from Marathon's Sombrero Beach into the Atlantic Ocean. The 185-pound "Papa" was rehabilitated at the Turtle Hospital in Marathon. Fla-Keys.com



The "Papas" watch "Papa" return to the Atlantic Ocean.
Photo: Andy Newman, Florida Keys News Bureau.

Palm Coast and the Flagler Beaches Offers Digital Parking Map to Help Protect Sand Dunes

In July, Palm Coast and the Flagler Beaches unveiled its new digital parking map as part of the organization's continued Dodge the Dunes campaign, an initiative to educate visitors on the importance of protecting the fragile coastal landform. The new digital map highlights the area's free parking lots and includes the location and a photo of every public walkover in the destination. Additionally, the map denotes pet-friendly and ADA accessible points. VisitFlagler.com



The digital map is available on VisitFlagler.com.



Clay County Remodels Historic Courthouse

Officials in Clay County held a ceremony on July 28 celebrating the completion of remodeling the county's 1890 Historic Courthouse in Green Cove Springs. Made possible by grants from the Division of Historical Resources, the county matched funds to complete the project. In continuous use since 1890, it served local government until 1973, then home to the county's Teen Court program. It is one of four in Florida built before 1900 that are still standing and in use today. [ExploreClay.com](#)



Clay County's 1890 Historic Courthouse is one of four in Florida built before 1900 that are still standing and in use today.

Ritz Theater Celebrates 100 Years of Entertainment in Sanford, Florida

The Ritz Theater at the Wayne Densch Performing Arts Center in Sanford, Florida, began a year-long celebration in July marking its 100th anniversary of entertaining the community. The theater opened its doors in 1923 and has continued to be an iconic spot for entertainment over the years. The 100th anniversary season continues to showcase a variety of highly popular entertainment including tributes to Michael Jackson, Linda Ronstadt, the Rolling Stones, and the extremely popular theatrical productions *Grease the Musical* and *Murder on the Orient Express*. [DoOrlandoNorth.com](#)



Learn more about the 100th anniversary season of the Ritz Theater at the Wayne Densch Performing Arts Center at [RitzTheaterSanford.com](#).

Mexico Beach's Dune Vegetation Restoration Continues

Beautification continues in Mexico Beach. The ongoing partnership with Stay it Forward had volunteers from Florida Local Environmental Resource Agencies (FLERA) plant 1,500 sea oats last month. "The support that this program has provided to our beaches ensures continued growth," says Mexico Beach CDC President Kimberly Shoaf. "Visit PCB's initiative of Stay it Forward has planted over 6,300 sea oat and other beach vegetation to date along our shores, and we're so grateful." [MexicoBeach.com](#)



Volunteers from FLERA plant sea oats along the dunes in Mexico Beach. Photo: Darryl Boudreau

Martin County Hosts Training Program for Tourism-Facing Business Owners

The Martin County Office of Tourism & Marketing hosted another installation of its award-winning Tourism Industry Training Program, developed with Miles Partnership. The half-day workshop was free for tourism-facing business owners in Martin County and highlighted topics such as Best Practices for Small Business Websites and Fundamentals of SEO. More than 25 attendees participated, representing industry partners such as hotels, attractions, tour outfitters, retailers, restaurants, agritourism operators, events, and more. [DiscoverMartin.com](#)



Martin County Tourism Director Nerissa Okiye welcomes the group of attendees in the Elliott Museum, which generously donated the event space for this training program.



Destin's Chef Al Massa Brings Home Second Place at the 2022 Great American Seafood Cook-Off

Destin-Fort Walton Beach represented the state of Florida with Chef Al Massa of Brotula's Seafood House & Steamer taking second place in the 2022 Great American Seafood Cook-Off. The competition brought 14 chefs from around the country to New Orleans, hosted in conjunction with the Louisiana Restaurant Association Showcase. This win follows Chef Massa's recent first-place finish during the Emerald Coast Open's restaurant week—bringing awareness to the lionfish invasion in the Gulf of Mexico. [DestinFWB.com](https://www.destinfwb.com)



Chef Massa prepares his pan seared Florida lionfish with black forbidden rice, melting zucchini ribbons with a chardonnay shellfish butter.

Discover Crystal River Florida Showcases Citrus County During ICAST 2022

Discover Crystal River Florida (DCRF) attended ICAST 2022, produced by the American Sportfishing Association. The team from DCRF used the opportunity to showcase Citrus County's uniquely awesome ecosystem, including its many world-renowned lakes and rivers and wide variety of freshwater and saltwater species. As the world's largest sportfishing trade show, it was a "reely" great opportunity to make a splash with fellow exhibitors and to build valuable business relationships within this booming industry and the entire sportfishing community. [DiscoverCrystalRiverFL.com](https://www.discovercrystalriverfl.com)



Capt. Mike Anderson and DCRF's Jodi Saunders talk about sportfishing at ICAST 2022.

Amelia Island CVB/Arts & Culture Nassau Create #BeKindAmelia Traveling Mural

The Amelia Island CVB partnered with Arts & Culture Nassau to create a traveling mural for visitors and locals alike to enjoy while discovering Amelia Island. Created by local artist Lamar Miles, the colorful traveling mural was on display in historic downtown Fernandina Beach and other island locations throughout July and August. To help spread kindness during the busy summer season, the CVB encouraged visitors to share photos on social media using #BeKindAmelia. [AmeliaIsland.com](https://www.AmeliaIsland.com)



The #BeKindAmelia traveling mural inspires kindness during the busy summer season.

Visit Orlando Presented With Destiny Award

Visit Orlando was presented with the Destiny Award in the "Innovation Award" category at U.S. Travel's Educational Seminar for Tourism Organizations. The award stemmed from a marketing program with Tripadvisor that uses Amazon's Alexa technology to promote Orlando's hidden gems and neighborhoods such as International Drive, Downtown Orlando, Winter Park, Lake Nona, and Winter Garden. [VisitOrlando.com](https://www.VisitOrlando.com)



Danielle Hollander, chief marketing officer, and Misty Hoff, director of marketing, accept the Destiny Award on behalf of Visit Orlando at U.S. Travel's ESTO.



Building Prosperity in Greater Miami and Miami Beach

For National Black Business Month, the Greater Miami CVB joined Miami-Dade County for Support BOB 305, a series of initiatives aimed at promoting the value and viability of Miami's multibillion-dollar Black-owned businesses. The month-long series included special events and programming targeting the visitor industry, from the Black Pepper Food & Wine Festival with FIU's Chaplin School of Hospitality & Tourism Management to Tourism Business Enhancement workshops and a Partner Expo, helping small businesses thrive. MiamiAndBeaches.com



Connie Kinnard, VP of multicultural tourism and development with GMCVB, is pictured at the Support BOB 305 launch.

AVP Pro Beach Volleyball Tour Adds Stop in Lake County

Visit Lake and Florida Region of USA Volleyball have collaborated to host elite sand volleyball competitors December 2-4 at Hickory Point Beach in Tavares. The Association of Volleyball Professionals (AVP) announced in August that it will be bringing the country's premier professional beach volleyball tour to Central Florida. Hickory Point Beach is a 68-acre multi-use facility home to Florida's largest permanent sand volleyball complex with 21 lighted courts and a 4,000 sq. ft. athletics center including locker rooms, training room, meeting space, and concession stands. VisitLakeFL.com



Hickory Point Beach offers sand volleyball courts and an athletics center.

Space Coast Enjoys 15 Consecutive Months of 'Best Ever' Results

June Tourist Development Tax has come in at \$2.045 million—a record for the month of June, making it the 15th consecutive month of "best month ever" results. The Space Coast Office of Tourism welcomes Terry Parks as the new sports coordinator, who comes from Brevard County Parks & Recreation and has a background in coaching. PR Manager Meagan Happel received an Award of Distinction at the Florida Public Relations Association's Golden Image Awards Gala for promotion of Surfing Santas. VisitSpaceCoast.com



The awards gala was held during the FPRA annual conference.

Santa Rosa County Brings Navarre Beach to Nashville

On July 9, Florida's Most Relaxing Place arrived in Music City, USA as the Navarre Beach House, a unique and state-of-the-art immersive pop-up event, opened its doors in Nashville. Nashville residents were transported to Navarre Beach as they experienced oceanside paddleboard yoga, creekside meditation, and a sunset dinner while surrounded by spatial audio and 360-degree 8k video from Navarre Beach. This multisensory serene and transformative activation showcased why Navarre Beach is Nashville's beach of choice. SantaRosa.FL.gov



Navarre Beach House offers oceanside paddleboard yoga to Nashville residents in an immersive pop-up event.



Gulf County Hosts Song Contest to Find Destination Anthem

Gulf County, Florida, hosted a Song Contest to find a destination anthem to connect locals and visitors. Submissions were due by August 30. The Gulf County TDC will utilize this song in its upcoming 2023 Spring Campaign. The artist's prizes include a full music video by Wewa Films and an opportunity to play at the Blast on the Bay Songwriter's Festival in October. [VisitGulf.com](https://www.visitgulf.com)



Gulf County will use a new destination anthem to connect locals and visitors.

VCF Flies High at World's Largest Aviation Event

Visit Central Florida (VCF) represented Polk County at the 2022 Experimental Aircraft Association AirVenture in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. VCF partnered with the SUN 'n FUN (SNF) Aerospace Expo to promote its fly-in and expo in Lakeland, Florida's largest annual convention. VCF also produced and distributed an accommodations brochure and area guide targeted to future SNF expo attendees. AirVenture, the world's largest annual aviation event, reported a record number of attendees, 650,000 this year, representing 93 countries and spanning six continents. [VisitCentralFlorida.org](https://www.visitcentralflorida.org)



VCF staff greet attendees at EAA AirVenture 2022.

Pride Month FAM Celebrates Lee County Diversity

The Lee County VCB hosted a familiarization tour for two LGBTQ journalists to attend the first-ever Captiva Pride celebration. The Pride Month FAM was an opportunity to experience the destination as well as meet LGBTQ advocates and business owners who are Southwest Florida residents. 'Tween Waters Island Resort & Spa hosted the celebration, and the property's CEO Doug Babcock said, "Establishing an environment where are all welcome, regardless of background, is vital to us." [VisitFortMyers.com](https://www.visitfortmyers.com)



Lee County VCB's Annie Banion and Amanda Auer tour Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve with guide Jose V. Padilla-Lopez and fam participants Ravi Roth of Ravi Around the World and Andrew Villagomez of Edge Media.

Experience Kissimmee Hosts the Marsh Family

The popular Marsh Family from the United Kingdom had a packed week of adventures in Kissimmee. They went viral in 2020 for their song parodies while in lockdown and have continued to produce catchy videos. Experience Kissimmee brought them "across the pond" for their first holiday post-pandemic and coordinated adventures to Gatorland, Wild Florida, Universal Orlando Resort, Island H2O Water Park, and The Shingle Creek Paddling Center to inspire a tune about the destination. [ExperienceKissimmee.com](https://www.experiencekissimmee.com)



The Marsh Family visits Kissimmee to explore the destination and write a new song.



Visit St. Pete/Clearwater Announces Let's Shine Brand Campaign

Growing on the trend initiated with previous award-winning brand themes like Live Amplified and Immerse Your Senses, Visit St. Pete/Clearwater unveils a new campaign inspired by the destination's vibrant moments, eclectic art scene, and of course, an abundance of year-round sunshine. Let's Shine is an invitation for travelers to expand their horizons and soak up all the destination has to offer. The new campaign will launch in markets throughout the Midwest, South, Northeast, and Florida. VisitStPeteClearwater.com



A billboard displays VSPC's new brand campaign, Let's Shine.

Visit Gainesville, Alachua County's \$10K Meeting Advantage Program Now Open Year-Round

Visit Gainesville, Alachua County modified and repackaged its conference grant incentive to more nimbly adjust to market demands for the benefit of tourism industry partners. Under its new name, the Meeting Advantage Program, applications and funds will be open year-round providing eligible and approved applicants up to \$10K in potential reimbursements to offset the cost of venues, promotions, in-county transportation, and catering excluding alcohol. VisitGainesville.com/group-meetings



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Visit Panama City Welcomes VP of Sales

Visit Panama City Beach is pleased to announce the appointment of industry veteran Steve Bailey as vice president of sales. He follows Jayna Leach in this role, who has been promoted to senior vice president of sales. A Panama City Beach native, Bailey previously served as director of sales and operations for a local hospitality group for over 20 years and has garnered extensive experience in the restaurant, hospitality, and tourism industries. He brings prior hospitality experience from locations including Destin, Florida; Jackson, Mississippi; and Birmingham, Alabama. He is a past board member and chairman for the Bay County TDC. VisitPanamaCityBeach.com



Steve Bailey

personally attended the classes and completed the assignments, it takes an entire village. This would not be possible without my family and my work family. Both have been instrumental in keeping me on task and providing the encouragement and support to succeed," Carter says. VisitSouthWalton.com

Visit Jacksonville Welcomes Senior Destination Experience Manager

Visit Jacksonville recently welcomed Michelle Metzgar to the senior destination experience manager role where she is responsible for managing the daily operations, training, and staffing of Visit Jacksonville's four Visitor Centers as well as welcome tables for meeting and conference attendees. Metzgar brings 10 years of experience in tourism and hospitality to the position, having worked for the Greater Richmond Convention Center, Philadelphia Zoo, and Camelback Lodge & Aquatopia Indoor Waterpark. Metzgar received the Bachelor of Science in sport and recreation management from Temple University. VisitJacksonville.com



Michelle Metzgar

Walton County Tourism Department's Director of Marketing Receives Top Accreditation

The Walton County Tourism Department is honored to announce that its director of marketing, Kelli Carter, has earned the Certified Destination Management Executive (CDME) credential through Destinations International. "CDME has been an accomplishment in the making for quite a while. Although I may have



Kelli Carter, CDME

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2022 ANNUAL MEETING

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2022

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 6, 2022

8:00 am Registration Desk Open
8:00 am – 9:00 am Networking Breakfast
9:00 am – 10:00 am State of the State
10:30 am – 11:30 am Fresh Lessons on Successful Leadership
11:30 am – 1:00 pm Networking Luncheon
1:00 pm – 2:00 pm Building Long-term Community Involvement
2:30 pm – 3:30 pm Creating Community Engagement Boards
3:45 pm – 4:30 pm How Counties Invest TDT in Florida
5:30 pm – 9:30 pm Miles Evening Extravaganza **miles**

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FRIDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2022

8:00 am – 9:00 am Networking Breakfast
9:00 am – 11:30 am Destinations Florida Annual Business Meeting
2023 Legislative Session Outlook
Destinations International Update

AC MARRIOTT TALLAHASSEE



801 South Gadsden Street
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(850) 392-7700

The AC Hotel by Marriott Tallahassee is offering special rates for Destinations Florida meeting participants beginning at \$149 per night. You may make your reservation online using this link: <https://bit.ly/3qrTEMX> or call the hotel directly at 850-392-7700 and reference the group name Destinations Florida 2022 Annual Meeting. Reservations must be made by Wednesday, September 14, 2022. Be sure to make your reservation as soon as possible because the room block will sell out.

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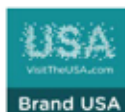
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Register now at DestinationsFlorida.org

Enclosed is your copy of Tourism Marketing Today
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INSIDE: The World is coming to Florida (Miami and Tallahassee) in 2026!

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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