

TourismMarketing Today

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

Tampa Marriott Water Street Hosts VISIT FLORIDA Chairman's Dinner, Flagler Awards

Destinations Florida, DMOs Take Home 47 Flaglers and Sweep Best of Show

Destinations Florida and its DMO members have a lot to celebrate. When VISIT FLORIDA announced the recipients of the 2020 Flagler Awards at its Chairman's Dinner held at the Tampa Marriott Water Street on November 19, most of the awards went to Destinations Florida members, who won 47 Flaglers, including 14 Henrys (the top award in each category) and all three Best of Show. In fact, this year Destinations Florida itself earned a Henry and the Best of Show for its Green Slime Campaign.



This clever marketing message atop cups of "green slime" is one of the ways Destinations Florida advocated for VISIT FLORIDA funding during the 2020 Legislative Session.

Delivering small cups of "green slime" to lawmakers might seem like an odd way to advocate for tourism marketing in Florida, but Jennifer Fennell and Kat Canfield of CoreMessage really delivered for Destinations Florida and VISIT FLORIDA with their unique marketing idea.

"We are proud to have worked on a winning campaign on behalf of Destinations Florida and Florida's tourism industry," says Jennifer Fennell, vice president of CoreMessage, Inc. "We understand how important this industry is to our state, and we remain committed to creative and innovative efforts that help share Florida's tourism story."

The green slime was delivered to shine a light on the negative media potential visitors might hear about Florida and how misperceptions

2.7 Billion Reasons

by Robert Skrob, CAE



One thing is certain when the Florida Legislature begins committee weeks in January: the

\$2.7 billion shortfall in the current budget.

Lawmakers will emphasize cutting expenditures and finding new revenue sources for the state and for local governments, with an imperative to cut spending and raise revenue we didn't see during the recent years of growth.

Anticipating a big opportunity to communicate the value

FLAGLER AWARDS ... continues on pg. 3

2.7 BILLION REASONS ... continues on pg. 3

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

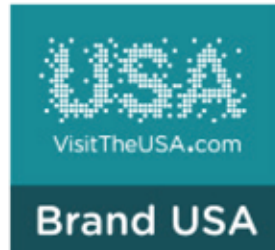
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The Atlanta
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HAPPY Birthday

Nerissa Okiye
December 7

Steve Hayes
December 13

Richard Goldman
December 14

Gil Langley
January 22

**DESTINATIONS
FLORIDA**
TourismMarketing
Today

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On the Cover

The VISIT FLORIDA Chairman's Dinner and Flagler Awards were like no other this year. Kudos to the Tampa Marriott Water Street for hosting a socially distanced, celebratory event that emphasized the important work of promoting visitation to Florida. "These awards remind us why we do what we do and that there is hope, along with hard work, ahead of us," says Robert Skrob, executive director of Destinations Florida. "We are honored to receive these awards and continue to remain focused on supporting Florida's tourism industry and all of Florida's DMOs that are working hard each day to ensure their communities thrive." Read more on page 1.

directly impact our state's economy by driving visitors away. Without an agency like VISIT FLORIDA fighting these misperceptions, many visitors will assume the worst and choose a destination other than Florida.

"Generating \$250,000 of media coverage for a \$500 investment is an amazing achievement," says Robert Skrob, executive director of Destinations Florida. "While it's important to celebrate this accomplishment, it was one communication on one day of five months of hundreds of contacts by our industry partners and thousands of Floridians around the state that won the issue. I am proud of what we achieved, united as one team."

Named for Henry Flagler, the Flagler Awards were established in 2000 to recognize outstanding tourism marketing in Florida. Working independently, 11 judges evaluated the creativity, innovation, production quality, and effectiveness of each entry. Destinations Florida thanks the City of Tampa and the Tampa Marriott Water Street for hosting a wonderful and safe celebration of the great work that DMOs and



Executive Director Robert Skrob accepts the Henry and the Best of Show awards on behalf of Destinations Florida.

other tourism industry partners are doing to keep Florida top of mind in these difficult times. We are proud to recognize the award-winning Destinations Florida members, highlighted in blue text:

Best of Show - Annual marketing budget less than \$500,000
[Destinations Florida for Green Slime Campaign](#)

Best of Show - Annual marketing budget between \$500,000 and \$2 million
[Discover Crystal River Florida for Swimming With Manatees Campaign Landing Page](#)

FLAGLER AWARDS ... continues on pg. 4

2.7 BILLION REASONS ... continued from pg. 1

of maintaining the current uses of the Tourist Development Tax and the importance of VISIT FLORIDA funding, we've been working together with our team at CoreMessage to craft new messaging and develop better media. But it's clear we will need your help.

We cannot rely on past successes. Everything has changed because

of our state's current budget pressures. It will be a lot easier for lawmakers to forego long-term values for short-term relief.

There are 2.7 billion reasons to make the expedient choice. Each of us must work to unite our industry to educate lawmakers on the benefits of making the right choice, especially when it may appear difficult in the short term.



Supreme Court Declines Jurisdiction of Airbnb Case

Over the last few months, we've been following the Airbnb case at the Florida Supreme Court. The case is an appeal from a decision of the Fourth District Court of Appeal. The Fourth DCA held that Airbnb and similar companies were not obligated to collect or remit tax on the rentals they facilitated in Palm Beach County. The decision resulted from the 2014 lawsuit brought by the Palm Beach County Tax Collector against Airbnb and other

online short-term rental companies. (For the purpose of this article, I use the term *Airbnb* to refer to all of the defendants.)



Steven M. Hogan

After considering the jurisdictional briefs filed by the parties, the Florida Supreme Court decided *not* to take the case up for further review. The Florida Supreme Court is one of limited jurisdiction, and it is known to decline discretionary jurisdiction in most cases.

This means that the Fourth DCA's decision will stand. Absent statutory changes in the future, Airbnb and similarly situated companies cannot be forced to collect or remit tax on rentals they facilitate.

You can read the Florida Supreme Court's decision to decline jurisdiction here: <https://bit.ly/fsc-airbnb>

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

Steven M. Hogan is a shareholder with the Ausley McMullen law firm in Tallahassee. Destinations Florida has retained Mr. Hogan to consult with our members on the Tourist Development Tax and related legal issues. You can contact Mr. Hogan at shogan@ausley.com. Nothing in this article constitutes legal advice. Please seek counsel of your own choosing before making decisions that impact yourself or your organization.



The Florida Supreme Court will not review the Airbnb case.
Photo: Florida Supreme Court

FLAGLER AWARDS ... continued from pg. 3

Best of Show - Annual marketing budget greater than \$2 million
Naples, Marco Island, Everglades CVB for Meet Well Campaign

Creativity in Public Relations
Bronze: Miami Beach Visitor and Convention Authority for Virtual Travel to a Place Like No Other
Silver: Amelia Island CVB for NYC Media Event
Henry: The Florida Keys & Key West for Connect and Protect The Florida Keys & Key West

Direct Marketing
Bronze: The Florida Keys & Key West for Monroe County TDC Direct Marketing Campaign
Silver: Franklin County TDC for The Villages "Open for the Business of Peace & Quiet" Invitation
Henry: Palm Beach Marriott Singer Island Beach Resort & Spa for Sand Canvas

Internet Advertising
Bronze: Discover Crystal River Florida for the Swimming With Manatees Campaign Landing Page
Silver: Visit Tampa Bay for Baycrafted Niche Marketing Campaign
Henry: Punta Gorda/Englewood Beach VCB for the Outsiders Welcome Video Series

Mixed Media Campaign
Bronze: Punta Gorda/Englewood Beach VCB for Outsiders Welcome Campaign
Silver: Mote Marine Laboratory & Aquarium for Come SEA for Yourself
Silver: Visit Central Florida for Florida's Sweet Spot
Henry: Destin-Fort Walton Beach for the Destin-Fort Walton Beach Rebrand

Mobile Marketing
Bronze: Visit Panama City Beach for the "Real. FUN. Beach." Game
Silver: The Florida Keys & Key West for Florida Keys &

Key West Travel App

Henry: Amelia Island CVB for Moments Campaign - Mobile

Niche Marketing

Bronze: Discover Crystal River Florida for Ecotourism Branded Campaign

Silver: Visit Sarasota County for Sarasota's Newtown Lands on U.S. Civil Rights Trail

Henry: Visit Panama City Beach for Chasin' The Sun

Out-of-Home

Bronze: Bradenton Area CVB for Sarasota-Bradenton International Airport (SRQ) Mural

Silver: Naples, Marco Island, Everglades CVB for Atlanta Outdoor Takeover Blankets Buckhead

Henry: The Florida Keys & Key West for 2019 UK Taxi Program

Print Advertising

Bronze: Visit Tampa Bay for 2020 Tampa Bay Official Destination Guide

Silver: Destin-Fort Walton Beach for Destin-Fort Walton Beach Rebrand Print Campaign

Henry: The Florida Keys & Key West for 2019 Fishing Print Campaign

Radio Advertising

Bronze: Amelia Island CVB for Dickens on Centre Radio Spot

Silver: Naples, Marco Island, Everglades CVB for Pandora Radio Summer Sensation

Henry: St. Augustine, Ponte Vedra & The Beaches VCB for St. Augustine/Ponte Vedra Travel INTRAnationally Radio

Resource/Promotional Material - Consumer

Bronze: Franklin County TDC for Franklin County Visitor Guide

Bronze: Punta Gorda/Englewood Beach VCB for Outsiders Guide

Silver: Amelia Island CVB for Amelia Island Augmented Reality Experience Map

Henry: Visit Gainesville, Alachua County for Newsletter

Resource/Promotional Material - Trade

Bronze: Visit Tampa Bay for Multicultural Guide Tampa Bay

Silver: Experience Florida's Sports Coast for Florida's Sports Coast Marketing Guides

Henry: Naples, Marco Island, Everglades CVB for Meet Well Campaign

Rural County Marketing

Bronze: Visit Sebring for Sebring Soda Festival

Silver: Visit Sarasota County for Farm Guide of Sarasota and DeSoto Counties

Henry: Play Hard Florida for Florida's Forgotten Coast Promo Video - A Pro Bono Hurricane Relief Effort

Social Media Marketing

Bronze: Visit Panama City Beach for How Do You PCB?

Silver: Visit St. Pete/Clearwater for the Visit St. Pete/Clearwater Video Social Series

Henry: Naples, Marco Island, Everglades CVB for Sharing a Millennial Story Using Instagram

Special Event

Bronze: Cultural Council of Palm Beach County for Second Year of Success for MOSAIC (Month of Shows, Art, Ideas & Culture)

Silver: Delray Beach Downtown Development Authority for the Pineapple Grove Art & Music Fest

2019

Henry: City of West Palm Beach for Holiday in Paradise

Sustainable Tourism Marketing

Bronze: Loggerhead Marinelife Center for Eau-Phelia Returns Home

Silver: Gulf County TDC for Design By Nature Environmental Advocacy

Henry: Visit Panama City Beach for STAY IT FORWARD

Television Advertising

Bronze: Franklin County TDC for Discover the Forgotten Coast TV Show

Silver: St. Augustine, Ponte Vedra & The Beaches VCB for "St. Augustine | Ponte Vedra Travel INTRAnationally" Television

Henry: The Florida Keys & Key West for 2019 Direct Flight TV Campaign

Tourism Advocacy

Bronze: Visit South Walton for Visit South Walton 2019 Annual Meeting Video

Silver: Ocala/Marion County VCB for Local Engagement Content Shoot

Henry: Destinations Florida for Green Slime Campaign

Websites

Bronze: Discover Crystal River Florida for Discover Crystal River Website User Experience

Silver: Experience Florida's Sports Coast for Introducing Florida's Sports Coast

Henry: Visit Panama City Beach for "Make It Your Real Fun Beach" Panama City Beach Website



Santiago Corrada, CEO of Visit Tampa Bay, welcomes the honorees to the Chairman's Dinner and Flagler Awards ceremony.



Punta Gorda/Englewood VCB's Jennifer Huber, tourism public relations manager, and Maureen Morgenthien, director of marketing



Stacey Mitchell, director of the Monroe County TDC, The Florida Keys & Key West



Visit St. Augustine's Susan Phillips, director of tourism promotion and strategic alliances, and Richard Goldman, president and CEO



Erin Duggan, vice president, Visit Sarasota County



Kimberly Shoaf, president of Mexico Beach Community Development Council with Visit Panama City Beach's Jayna Leach, vice president of marketing, and Dan Rowe, president and CEO



John Pritcher, executive director, Discover Crystal River



Florida Keys Unveils Video on Responsible Boating, Diving, and Fishing

A Florida Keys video about safe, responsible actions when boating, diving, and fishing has debuted on the Monroe County TDC's social media platforms. "By educating visitors on the fragility of Keys marine resources before their trips, they'll be more likely to protect those resources," says TDC Director Stacey Mitchell. Providing safety guidelines are Bobby Dube, Keys' public information officer, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission; dive operator Wendy Hall; and sportfishing guide Captain Will Benson. Fla-Keys.com/sustain



Bradenton Area CVB Hosts Socially Distanced Movie Night

As part of its ongoing efforts to provide residents and visitors with safe activities for the whole family, the BACVB hosted Starlight Movie Night, featuring four family-friendly films shown on big screens at outdoor locations (on land and water) throughout the Bradenton Area. Guests reserved their viewing spots at Holmes Beach Community Park, Manatee Performing Arts Center, Premier Sports Campus, or on the Manatee River, ensuring a safe and socially distanced movie night for all. BradentonGulfIslands.com



Starlight Movie Night in the Bradenton Area provides safe and socially distanced fun for all.

Space Coast Tourism Targets Golf Enthusiasts

The Space Coast Office of Tourism hosted an informational breakfast bringing together the Florida Golf Alliance, local hotels, and golf courses to discuss working together to increase tourists' awareness of the excellent golfing and accommodations on the Space Coast. Some 1.47 million people come to Florida specifically to play golf, and the average golf-specific visitor spends around \$1,280 per trip. The direct economic impact of golf tourism on the state of Florida is \$1.84 billion. VisitSpaceCoast.com



The Cocoa Beach Country Club boasts scenic views of the Banana River.

Martin County Uses CARES Act Funding to Launch Digital Marketing Training Program for Local Business Owners

The Martin County Office of Tourism & Marketing recently worked with Miles Partnership to create an innovative four-part Digital Marketing Training Program to help local tourism-facing businesses better understand the ever-changing digital landscape. Participants received access to a robust toolkit of resources as well as "office hours" with the experts. As an added incentive, program graduates received \$500 in funding to launch a Google or Facebook campaign and put their new skills to work! DiscoverMartin.com





GMCVB President & CEO Welcomes Southwest Airlines for the First Time to MIA

President & CEO William D. Talbert III, CDME, of the Greater Miami CVB joined the Miami-Dade Aviation Department in welcoming Southwest Airlines to Miami International Airport (MIA) on November 16. Southwest Airlines launched daily roundtrip flights for the first time from Baltimore, Chicago, Houston, and Tampa to Miami. MIA, one of the busiest domestic airports in the United States, is experiencing steady increases in domestic travelers to Greater Miami following the pandemic. MiamiAndBeaches.com



Steve Goldberg, senior VP of operations and hospitality, Southwest Airlines; Liliam López, CEO, South Florida Hispanic Chamber of Commerce; Alison Hoeftler, community outreach manager, Southwest Airlines; Bill Talbert III, CEO & president, Greater Miami CVB

Paradise Pledge Expands to Include Savings Pass Incentive Program

More than 100 Southwest Florida tourism businesses have taken the Paradise Pledge, the voluntary pledge to follow the CDC and Florida Dept. of Health Guidelines as the world recovers and gets back to business. As part of the program's evolution, the CVB launched a savings pass to incentivize patrons to frequent participating businesses. The new mobile-exclusive, gamified savings pass is available for both residents and visitors and provides users with a special offer or discount at businesses that have taken the Paradise Pledge. ParadiseCoast.com



Businesses throughout Florida's Paradise Coast are signing the Paradise Pledge to show the commitment to safety.

Keeping Nights of Lights Safe—and Spectacular—on Florida's Historic Coast

If there's a light at the end of the dark 2020 tunnel, Nights of Lights offers hope with millions of tiny white lights displayed throughout the ancient city of St. Augustine. Drawing thousands of visitors every year, safety is especially key this year. For Old Town Trolley Tours and Santa's Red Express Tours, that means advance reservations for rows of seats (up to four people), providing social distancing and eliminating long lines at ticket booths. FloridasHistoricCoast.com



Nights of Lights celebrates its 27th year with safely protocols.

Experience Kissimmee Hosts Virtual Media FAM With 100 Journalists

Experience Kissimmee hosted its first-ever Virtual Media FAM, October 20-21, with 100 domestic and international media. Presentations included those from the area's major theme parks, outdoor adventures, vacation homes, meetings and conventions resorts, Orlando International Airport, and more. Prior to the event, each attendee received a box with Kissimmee-themed treats, including margarita mix for journalists to tend their own bar alongside Margaritaville Resort Orlando's bartenders during scheduled virtual happy hours. ExperienceKissimmee.com



The Virtual Media FAM opens with a presentation by Experience Kissimmee President & CEO DT Minich.



Virtual Tourism Outlook Subs for Annual Meeting in Lee County

On October 29, Lee County VCB's in-person annual meeting was replaced with a virtual Tourism Outlook presentation addressing pandemic impacts and recovery. Trends, insights from industry experts, and the FY 2020-21 Sales & Marketing plan were included. The annual Junonia Award for community contributions was awarded to Jeanne Bigos, general manager of the Outrigger Beach Resort on Fort Myers Beach. Watch this video (<https://vimeo.com/473970293>) to see how the area's industry partners helped and gave back during the health crisis. *FortMyers-Sanibel.com*



Will Prather of Broadway Palm Dinner Theatre talks about performing virtually and helping to feed the community.

Fall Sports Return to Tallahassee

This fall, Tallahassee welcomed cross-country athletes and coaches to Apalachee Regional Park for the FSU Invitational Pre-State Meet, the Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA) Cross-Country State Championships, and the Amateur Athletic Union Championship. Visit Tallahassee provided a safe, welcoming environment by establishing mandatory health screenings and safety protocols. Tallahassee is also hosting the FHSAA Division 1A-8A State Football Championships, December 16-19. Combined, these events will draw more than 48,000 athletes, coaches, and spectators and will provide over \$8.6 million in economic impact. *VisitTallahassee.com*



Runners compete in the FSU Invitational Pre-State Meet at Apalachee Regional Park.

Hybrid Meeting Grant Brings More Meetings and Conventions to Hillsborough County

As a meetings and leisure destination and home to a beautiful waterfront convention center, Visit Tampa Bay has launched a new Hybrid Meetings Grant to offset unanticipated expenses due to technology needs of both meeting planners and attendees. Specifically designed to boost short-term meetings and retain convention business in Hillsborough County, the grant allows meeting planners to keep participants connected and allows Visit Tampa Bay to secure more meetings by offsetting costs involved with moving a major meeting to a virtual or hybrid event. *VisitTampaBay.com*



Visit Tampa Bay's Hybrid Meeting Grant is designed to offset the costs involved with hosting a virtual or hybrid event.

The Lockheed Martin Space & Air Show Makes Its Orlando North Debut

Orlando North featured its first full capability demonstration of every major Lockheed Martin fighter aircraft at the Orlando Sanford International Airport. Dazzled viewers were able to see displays of aviation's present and past in the skies as U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds, F-22s, F-35s, and more flew through the air. The show featured performances from four Air Force jet demo teams and seven different military demonstrations. Highlights included the F-16 Viper, A-10 Warthog, Geico Skytypers, and the U.S. SOCOM Parachute Team. *DoOrlandoNorth.com*



The F-22 Raptor and F-35 Lightning II that performed at the air show



Visit South Walton Attends Networking Meetings in Nashville, Orlando

Visit South Walton staff recently attended the Smart Meetings Conference in Nashville and the Connect Florida Marketplace in Orlando, networking with planners from throughout the United States interested in booking events in Northwest Florida. While socially distanced, staff met with about 100 planners. VSW Sales Manager Carley McMillian said these shows are the first that Visit South Walton has attended this year, and she hopes they aren't the last. VisitSouthWalton.com



Meeting goers sit in socially distanced chairs at the general meeting assembly at The Smart Meetings Conference in Nashville.

Trade Snow for Sand With a Coastal Christmas in Panama City Beach

Panama City Beach is spreading Christmas cheer virtually this year with its annual Beach Home for the Holidays event. On November 27, Visit Panama City Beach and the mayor of Panama City Beach hosted a Facebook Live to light the Christmas tree at City Hall. The 38-foot Christmas tree will be set up through the month of December for locals and visitors to enjoy. VisitPanamaCityBeach.com



Snowy-white sand greets visitors to Panama City Beach in December.

Gulf County Shows Increases in TDT Collections

Gulf County TDC ended FY 2019-20 33% ahead of the previous year and 7% above FY 2017-18 (pre-Hurricane Michael). TDT collections increased despite reduced inventory from Michael and impacts from the pandemic, boasting six months of the highest collections ever for respective months and two record-breaking months overall. The GCTDC contributes the success to messaging that highlights outdoor activities, contactless entry homes, and respectful visitation. Tourism partners pulled together to echo the TDC's efforts and to emphasize Gulf County's safe outdoor playground. VisitGulf.com



Gulf County's offering of an uncrowded, outdoor adventure destination is resulting in higher occupancy and increased RevPAR.

Visit Pensacola Highlights Industry's Resiliency and Innovation at Annual Meeting

Despite ongoing challenges from the past year, Visit Pensacola celebrated the hospitality and tourism industry's resiliency and innovation at its annual meeting. In a non-typical fashion to allow for social distancing, the annual meeting was held outdoors at the Pensacola Blue Wahoo Stadium. This year featured a cocktail hour, speeches on home plate, and unlike any other year, masks required. Top accomplishments from the year include launching the Experience Pensacola App, a virtual Pensacola hub including recovery resources, and securing the 2021 Sunbelt Conference Basketball Championship. VisitPensacola.com



Visit Pensacola Chairman Sterling Gilliam, President/CEO Darien Schaefer, and newly installed Chairman D.C. Reeves (FY 2021) celebrate the tourism industry's resiliency and innovation during the annual meeting.



Sarasota Beach Pass Makes 'Secret' Beaches Easy to Find

VSC is excited to share a new feature on the Visit Sarasota App called the Sarasota Beach Pass. Users can unlock levels and prizes that only Beach Pass Ambassadors are privy to! This enhancement stems from one of the 2020-25 Destination Strategic Plan goals to promote lesser known beaches, and is timely considering travelers' desire for spacious, uncrowded outdoor activities. Sponsored by Tervis and featuring 35 miles of Southwest Florida coastline! VisitSarasota.com



Sarasota Beach Pass makes it easy to discover "secret" beaches.

Visit Central Florida Hosts Vacation Rental Industry Summit

Visit Central Florida (VCF) partnered with the Florida Vacation Rental Managers Association to present the Vacation Rental Industry Summit for tourism industry professionals in Polk and neighboring counties on November 10. The summit featured speakers from VCF, VISIT FLORIDA, Key Data Dashboard, and VCF's UK and Latin America representatives. The half-day event was designed to help property managers navigate the current environment and position their properties as Polk County, Florida, and the nation emerge from the current crisis. VisitCentralFlorida.org



The Vacation Rental Industry Summit provides local, statewide, and international industry updates to tourism industry professionals in Central Florida.

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Influencer Visits Generate Social Media Stories About Punta Gorda/Englewood Beach

The Punta Gorda/Englewood Beach VCB hosted four influencers during four separate visits in October. They each participated in the VCB's Tampa Bay Rays spring training event in February in Port Charlotte and were invited for a return visit that consisted of a paddling trip with Glass Bottom Rentals on Boca Grande followed by lunch at Farlow's on the Water in Englewood. Each influencer generated unique content for their social media channels including Twitter, Instagram, and Instagram stories. PureFlorida.com



One of five billboard mockups for VSPC's new winter recovery campaign

Visit St. Pete/Clearwater Launches Winter Recovery Campaign

Highlighting beach and outdoor activities, VSPC's new \$4.5 million campaign focuses on the sensorial with visuals and copy evoking "a whole new point of view." New TV and radio spots, out-of-home, connected TV, and a mixture of other digital tactics are reaching key in-state drive markets, including Orlando, Miami, Fort Lauderdale, Jacksonville, and more, while also centering out-of-state efforts on Midwest cities including Chicago, Indianapolis, and Cincinnati. VisitStPeteClearwater.com





The Palm Beaches Receives Industry's Top Honors

A testament to its quality service and innovative approach when it comes to working with meeting and event professionals, Discover The Palm Beaches is humbled to receive one of the industry's highest honors—Best CVB/DMO in the Southeast, in Northstar Meetings' 2020 Stella Awards—as well as Smart Meetings' 2020 Platinum Choice Award. The destination's iconic Brazilian Court Hotel and Eau Palm Beach Resort & Spa were also recognized in these respective awards. *ThePalmBeaches.com*



Eau Palm Beach Spa Breeze Restaurant
Photo: Eau Palm Beach

Destin-Fort Walton Beach Expands Artificial Reef Program

Destin-Fort Walton Beach continued the expansion of its robust artificial program with the sinking of the M/V Dylan. The 61-foot vessel was deployed in collaboration with U.S. Customs and Border Protection approximately 16.5 nautical miles southeast of shore, in 120 feet of water. This new site is the first of many vessels in line to be sunk in the coming years, not only providing habitat for important species of fish, but also offering an interesting new dive site. *DestinFWB.com*



The M/V Dylan is the first vessel deployed as an artificial reef since the M/V Monica Lee was intentionally sunk in 2011.

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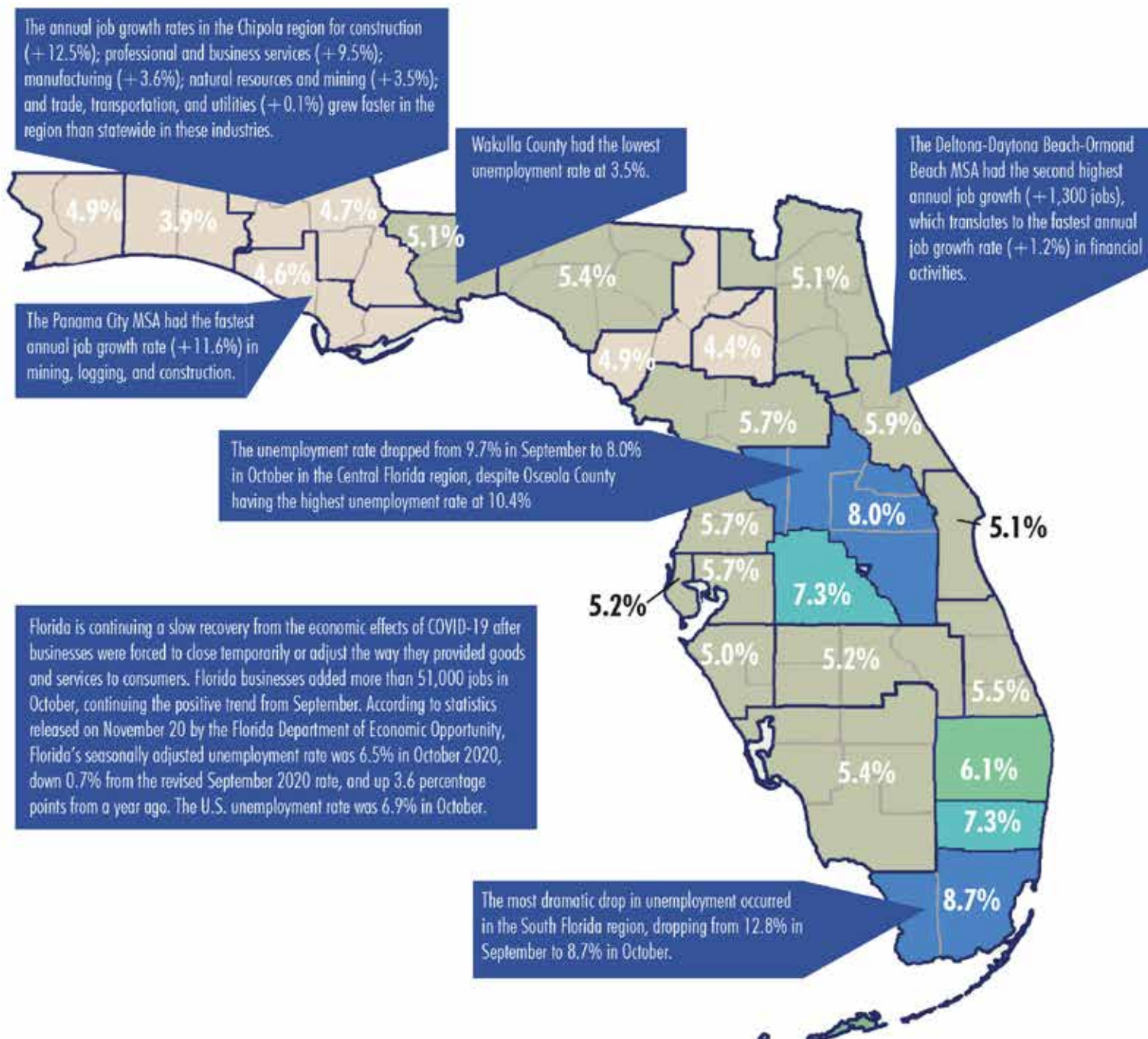
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Florida's Unemployment Rate Continues to Trend Down Slightly October Unemployment at 6.5%, a .7% Drop From September

Unemployment Rates by Region, October 2020



Note: All data are subject to revision.

Source: Florida Workforce Regions prepared by Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, Bureau of Labor Market Statistics



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Quick Trips!

NBC Sports Network Features Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show

Visit Lauderdale sponsored the NBC Sports Network's special broadcast from the final day of the 61st Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show on November 1, viewed by an audience of more than 90 million. The outdoor exhibition was a huge success for exhibitors and the community, bringing a financial boost to hotels, restaurants, and businesses. Show producer Informa did a fantastic job implementing the show's *AllSecure* safety protocols, setting the standard for future events. *Sunny.org*



Visit Lauderdale President & CEO Stacy Ritter joins officials from Informa Markets U.S. Boat Shows, City of Fort Lauderdale, Broward County, and Marine Industries Association of South Florida for the boat show's ribbon cutting.

Clay County Launches Safer Event Kit Program

Clay County knows that getting extra hand sanitizer stations and signage may make it harder for event planners to successfully execute their event. Clay County's Tourism Division now assists event planners by letting them borrow a Safer Event Kit, which includes important safety items like masks, hand sanitizer stations, hand sanitizer, banners, and large signs encouraging CDC guidelines of washing hands/hand sanitizer, physical distancing, and when to wear a mask. Three Safer Event Kits are available to serve multiple events on any given date. *ExploreClay.com*



The Safer Event Kit banner at Amazing Grace Family Farm Fall Festival signals a safe event for families to enjoy.

FIND THE WAY TO RECOVERY

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

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

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People in the News

Rita Irwin to Continue Leading Keys Tourism Board

Rita Irwin, president and CEO of Dolphin Research Center in the Middle Keys, will continue to lead the Monroe County TDC. This will be the Marathon resident's 13th consecutive year as chair. George Fernandez, co-owner of The Key West Butterfly & Nature Conservatory, was reelected vice chairman. Timothy Root, board member of Keys Energy, and Diane Schmidt, general manager at Margaritaville Key West Resort and Sunset Key Cottages, will serve as co-treasurers. *Fla-Keys.com*



Rita Irwin

Punta Gorda/Englewood Beach VCB Welcomes New Staff Members

The Punta Gorda/Englewood Beach VCB is pleased to welcome Maureen Morgenthien, director of marketing, and Sean Walter, sales/sports business development director. Morgenthien's primary responsibility is positioning Charlotte County as a tourism destination through marketing initiatives. She has an extensive tourism marketing background including working in hotel and resort sales and marketing, serving as deputy director, sales and marketing with the Emerald Coast CVB, and as director of leisure sales and marketing with the Greater Fort Lauderdale CVB. Walter brings an extensive background in tourism operations, sales, and marketing to his tasks of retaining and bringing meetings and group business and sporting events to Charlotte County. He served most recently as sports director and senior manager of the Bradenton Area CVB. His experience includes working with national and international governing bodies, collegiate and professional organizations, and youth associations for trainings and tournaments. *PureFlorida.com*



Maureen Morgenthien



Sean Walter



Florida Tourism Day in Tallahassee

March 10, 2021

Sponsored by FRLA, FRPA, FAA, VISIT FLORIDA, and Destinations Florida



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Communicate the Value of Your Destination Promotion Efforts

Empowering members of your industry with the facts and educating lawmakers is a weekly task. To help you, Destinations Florida and our members created the report *Destination Promotion: Empowering Florida's Growth*.

The report reveals the truth behind common misconceptions about Florida tourism and the unique role Florida's local destination marketing organizations play in attracting visitors.

You are welcome to download and distribute this report for:

- Members of your industry who are excited to advocate and need to understand what to say;
- Educating members of your TDC and elected officials about the impact of destination marketing in your community;
- Distributing at your community speaking engagements as a powerful leave behind for attendees who want more information;
- Onboarding new staff members at your DMO to accelerate their understanding of your organization; and
- Ideas for your own materials documenting the value of your tourism marketing efforts.



Download your copy of the report at EmpoweringFloridasGrowth.com. If you'd like to have the print files complete with trim marks for full bleeds, send an email request to Suzanne@DestinationsFlorida.org.

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Legal Resource for Your DMO

As a member benefit for you, Destinations Florida has retained Steven M. Hogan with the Ausley McMullen law firm to provide insight into the operation of the TDT and related issues to Destinations Florida.

There are several situations where it would be helpful for you to have a legal opinion for your community. As a member benefit, you can speak with Mr. Hogan about the facts and laws at a general level.

To take advantage of this program, feel free to reach out to Steve Hogan at the information below:



Steven M. Hogan
Ausley McMullen
850/224-9115
shogan@ausley.com

If you require specific advice on decisions that your DMO will make under the TDT or other law, you can hire Mr. Hogan to advise you separately as your lawyer.

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INSIDE: Join us in congratulating the 2020 Flagler Award winners!

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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. These tourism promotion activities help to attract 118.8 million visitors to Florida, generating \$112 billion in spending and 1.4 million jobs. These activities are made possible by Tourist Development Taxes provided by Florida Statutes Section 125.0104. Statistics: VISIT FLORIDA Research

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