

TourismMarketing Today

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

Experience Kissimmee Introduces New 'Perfectly Whelmed' Campaign to Cure Vacation Blues



For Now ...

by Robert Skrob, CAE



For now we've avoided a huge expansion of tourism-related taxes because of your calls and efforts to educate lawmakers.

For now we've reauthorized VISIT FLORIDA for three years with a \$50 million annual budget.

For now we can focus on our day job, attracting visitors to Florida amid a global pandemic and various travel bans.

And although we are extremely busy, it's critical that we also begin preparations for the 2021 Legislative Session. The water

The results are in, and it turns out many parents return from vacation more drained and in need of a vacation than when they started the planning process. The survey conducted by Experience Kissimmee via Pollfish asked 500 moms and dads about their recent travels.

Seventy-nine percent of respondents said they feel like they need a vacation from their vacation. Moms, especially, felt exhausted after returning home. Overscheduling activities and cramped lodging were some of the notes added to the results, creating undue stress to a setting that should be fun and refreshing.

As a result, Experience Kissimmee aims to help parents solve the vacation balance problem with its new "perfectly Whelmed" campaign.

Experience Kissimmee's brand reveal featured a showing of *Finding Whelmed* and a Q&A with the documentary-style film's award-winning documentarian and creative director.

Kissimmee is the destination where, not just parents, but all travelers, can visit and be perfectly Whelmed—meaning the vacation balance is so satisfying, no one in the group will be overwhelmed or underwhelmed. A vacation nirvana, if you will.

With Kissimmee's proximity to world-famous theme parks, extensive eco-tourism activities, and more than 70,000 accommodations including 50,000 vacation homes, Kissimmee offers the perfect blend of both exciting and relaxing engagements for families from all over the world.

FOR NOW continues on pg. 3

PERFECTLY WHELMED continues on pg. 3

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

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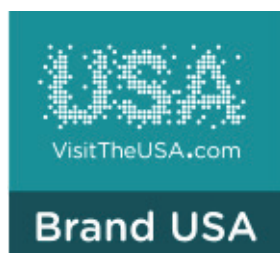
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HAPPY Birthday

Misty Johantgen
April 14

situation in Florida is becoming more urgent in several areas. There will be increased pressure to deal with this issue next year.

You and I must use the time we have now to educate lawmakers at the state and local levels about how tourism-related taxes attract visitors, which in turn expands other tax revenues. These tax revenues provide resources for water quality initiatives.

Tourism taxes are critical to continue feeding the tax-generating machine, the tourism industry.

Lawmakers will flip into campaign mode in the next couple of weeks. Be bipartisan; invite all candidates to your offices to meet your team, to learn about your marketing campaigns, and to understand the link between tourism marketing and a growing economy.

Now is the time to begin the 2021 Legislative Session. We've survived to fight another day. And that day is now.

PERFECTLY WHELMED continued from pg. 1

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On the Cover

Located in Central Florida, Kissimmee brings visitors to everything that makes an unforgettable Florida vacation. The area is home and a neighbor to world-class theme parks, natural and outdoor attractions, exceptional shopping, first-class entertainment, incredible dining, and so much more. See page one to learn more.

The "perfectly Whelmed" campaign launched on January 21, reintroducing Kissimmee to the world in a new way. This came with a brand refresh, including new colors, images, verbiage, and logo.

Not to mention, the "perfectly Whelmed" campaign kicked off with a brand reveal for all of Experience Kissimmee's industry partners and local media to debut its documentary-style film titled *Finding Whelmed*. The film follows a global travel show's crew as they search for their host who has supposedly gone missing in Kissimmee. It features the locations and faces of a handful of Experience Kissimmee's industry partners to show off the destination to viewers around the world. *Finding Whelmed* can be found on Amazon Prime and Experience Kissimmee's YouTube channel.

The "perfectly Whelmed" campaign swept across the organization's social media platforms. It has created a spike in online engagement—including an additional 4.1K sessions on the website through social media platforms, an Instagram follower increase of 1,128, and a Twitter performance increase of 2.8%.

One of the biggest website enhancements is the introduction to Mimi, Experience Kissimmee's very own vacation planning assistant. The interactive, online chat bot is the first of its kind, helping travelers plan and book their accommodations and activities in Kissimmee.

Tap into the magic. Get inspired at ExperienceKissimmee.com.

2020 LEGISLATIVE SESSION REPORT

Destinations Florida, Tourism Industry Achieve Top Legislative Priorities



Mat Forrest

by Mat Forrest and Jessica Martinez
Destinations Florida Government Affairs

The news from the 2020 Legislative Session is good: Destinations Florida and the tourism industry succeeded in our top priorities, protecting the use of the Tourist Development Tax and reauthorizing VISIT FLORIDA. Legislation that would expand the uses of the TDT did not pass, and VISIT FLORIDA was renewed for 3 years. Thank you to everyone who assisted on these issues, and please don't forget to thank your legislative delegation members!

Legislation

Tax Package

HB 7097 relating to Taxation is better known as the "Tax Package." Of note to the tourism industry were provisions in the original bills relating to TDT, convention development tax, and local option food and beverages taxes by Miami-Dade County. The House bill allowed for the TDT to be used for water quality improvement and parks and trails projects. The first version of the Senate bill was slightly better in that it required some checks and balances for the projects, but it still would have allowed for a massive expansion of the allowed uses by local governments.

Fortunately, on March 11, the Senate Appropriations Committee adopted two amendments that removed all text relating to these provisions.

In the end, the only revision to pass was an update on the population size of certain counties.

Section 1:

288.1226 Florida Tourism Industry Marketing Corporation; use of property; board of directors; duties; audit.-

(5) AUTHORIZED USES OF REVENUE.-

(b) Tax revenues received pursuant to this section by a county of less than 950,000 ~~750,000~~ population imposing a tourist development tax may only be used by that county for the following purposes in addition to those purposes allowed pursuant to paragraph (a): to acquire, construct, extend, enlarge, remodel, repair, improve, maintain, operate, or promote one or more zoological parks, fishing piers or nature centers which are publicly owned and operated or owned and operated by not-for-profit organizations and open to the public. All population figures relating to this subsection shall be based on the most recent population estimates prepared pursuant to the provisions of s. 186.901. These population estimates shall be those in effect on July 1 of each year.

There was also a slight change for reporting purposes:

Section 21:

212.181 Determination of business address situs, distributions, and adjustments.-

(b) A county that imposes tourist development tax in a subcounty special district pursuant to s. 125. 0104 (3) (b). must identify the subcounty addresses to which the tourist development tax applies as part of the address information submission required under paragraph (a). This paragraph does not apply to counties that self-administer the tax pursuant to s 125.0104 (10).

Thank you again to everyone who engaged on this important topic. It was truly a team effort from multiple DMOs, lobbyists, and the tourism industry.

VISIT FLORIDA (reauthorized)

SB 362 & HB 213 relating to Florida Tourism Marketing by Sen. Hooper (R-Palm Harbor) and Rep. Ponders (R-Fort Walton Beach) VISIT FLORIDA legislation moved late in the session. House and Senate leaders agreed to extend this critical organization for three more years, and funding was allocated at \$50 million, the same amount as the current fiscal year.

Speaker Oliva continues to be "philosophically opposed" to the idea of VISIT FLORIDA, but the session is a series of give and take and he conceded on this issue. The Senate bill was amended and passed through the House with a vote of 114-2. The Senate concurred with the amendment and passed the bill with a vote of 38-0. The bill has been enrolled and will be sent to the governor for approval.

Budget

Fortunately, issues regarding funding of VISIT FLORIDA were also resolved.

Line 2294	
SPECIAL CATEGORIES GRANTS AND AIDS - VISIT FLORIDA	
FROM STATE ECONOMIC ENHANCEMENT	
AND DEVELOPMENT TRUST FUND	
26,000,000	
FROM TOURISM PROMOTIONAL TRUST FUND	
24,000,000	



The House and Senate must now vote and pass the agreed-on budget, which by publication time will have taken place on March 19. The last step is when the governor reviews, vetoes projects, and signs the budget into law. This can take several weeks or even months. The new budget isn't technically required until July 1, 2020.

TDT Expansion for Film & TV (Died)

SB 334 relating to Tourist Development Tax by Sen. Stewart (D-Orlando)

Legislation to expand the uses of TDT to include film and television incentives did not pass. It would have authorized counties that are imposing the tax to use the revenues to promote or incentivize film or television productions in Florida.

Vacation Rentals (Died)

SB 1128 & HB1011 relating to Vacation Rentals by Sen. Diaz (R-Hialeah Gardens) and Rep. Fischer (R-Jacksonville)

After much debate, short-term rental legislation did not pass this session. The Senate bill stalled in its last committee, and the House bill was never heard on the floor.

After Governor DeSantis expressed his thoughts on the issue, the bills began to lose traction. The governor expressed concerns over the state "micromanaging" vacation rentals. His comments seemed to indicate that he thinks this issue should be left to local governments.

It's a safe bet this issue will be back in 2021, so please review the final versions of the bills and let your delegation members know what you might have supported or opposed so you'll be ready to go next session.

Spring Training Stadiums (Died)

HB1369 relating to Sports Franchises and Facilities by Rep. Pigman (R-Sebring)

Legislation was filed in the House but not the Senate that would impact the use of TDT for spring training stadiums. The bill limited counties' abilities to impose certain taxes and lease certain facilities and public lands for purposes related to sports franchise and their facilities. It also would have removed statutes relating to spring training baseball franchises and required local government to fund facilities that applied before July 1, 2020. Despite moving well in the House committees, this bill was never placed put on the agenda to be heard on the House floor.

What's Next?

The 2021 Regular Session will convene on Tuesday, March 2, and conclude on May 7. Pre-session committee weeks have not been announced, but they likely will take place in December 2020 and January, February, and March 2021.

The next session will be the start of new leadership teams in both the House and the Senate, with new committee chairs and several new members after the November 2020 elections.

Please stay engaged with your delegation members this summer and fall. Strive to know each one of them personally and to educate them on the issues that are important to the tourism industry. Also, the campaign trail provides a great time to discuss issues with both incumbents and new candidates. It is never too early! The 2020 Session is over. Advocacy for the 2021 Session starts today.

Greater Miami CVB and Greater Miami and the Beaches Hotel Association Present Hotel Industry Forum for COVID-19

The GMCVB and the GMBHA brought together more than 250 leaders in the hotel and travel industries to participate in a forum discussing COVID-19, March 9 at the Miami Beach Convention Center. Industry leaders gathered to reveal best practices, and working together with local, regional, and state officials, the GMCVB and GMBHA presented the latest updates on the crisis and distributed materials to inform and help the hospitality industry prepare for the effects of Coronavirus.



Wendy Kallergis, GMBHA president; health officers with the Florida Department of Health in Miami-Dade; Mark Hatfield, assistant aviation director/chief security officer at Miami International Airport (MIA); and Rolando Aedo, CDME, GMCVB chief operating officer (standing), provide a briefing on COVID-19.

The GMCVB has posted a video of the forum as well as accompanying materials on its website that may be useful to DMOs in creating their own Coronavirus information, prevention, and recovery toolkits. Go to bit.ly/2TTyJBd to watch the video and to download the following:

- Hotel Industry Coronavirus Forum, March 9
- Coronavirus Management Guidelines for Hotels
- Miami Herald: Coronavirus 411: How do I get it? How do I stop it? And other key Q&A
- Coronavirus Prevention Tips for Hotel Guests
- Coronavirus Prevention Tips for Hotel Staff

RESOURCES FOR DEALING WITH CORONAVIRUS

HEALTH INFORMATION RESOURCES

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) CALL CENTER

866/779-6121, Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-midnight (hours subject to change)

Email: COVID-19@flhealth.gov (after hours/weekends)
floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/COVID-19/index.html

CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html
 800/232-4636

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

nih.gov/health-information/coronavirus
 301/496-4000

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019

TOURISM & MEETINGS INFORMATION

AMERICAN HOTEL & LODGING ASSOCIATION

ahla.com/facts-about-coronavirus

PCMA'S RESOURCE HUB:

WHAT BUSINESS EVENT PROFESSIONALS NEED

TO KNOW ABOUT THE COVID-19

pcma.org/coronavirus-business-eventsprofessionals-need-to-know-faq

U.S. TRAVEL ASSOCIATION'S COVID-19 TOOLKIT

ustravel.org/toolkit/emergency-preparednessand-response-coronavirus-covid-19

GOVERNMENT RESOURCES

U.S. CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION

305/810-5120

cbp.gov/contact/ports/field-office/miami

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

state.gov

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE – BUREAU OF CONSULAR AFFAIRS

travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html



TDT and Geography

Can Tourist Development Tax funds be used for events outside of the county or subcounty taxing districts? The Florida attorney general has answered yes to this question, with some qualifications.

In Opinion 2014-02, the Florida attorney general explained that some uses of TDT funds are specifically limited to projects within the borders of the county or subcounty taxing district that imposes the TDT tax. These geographically limited projects are set forth in section 125.0104(5)(a), Florida Statutes, and include stadiums, aquariums, museums, and tourist information centers,



TDT funds typically can be used to promote zoological parks outside of a county or subcounty taxing district so long as the promotion has a distinct relationship to promoting tourism in the area.

among other projects. Op. Att'y Gen. Fla. 2014-02 (2014).

However, the Florida attorney general noted that other uses of TDT funds are not similarly limited in their geographic location. These types of projects include promotion of zoological parks and advertising tourism activities or events, among other things. *Id.*

Of course, if TDT funds are used for a project outside of the county or subcounty taxing district, the event must still have a distinct and direct relationship toward promoting tourism in the area. *Id.* (approving use of TDT funds for a project within a county but outside of the taxing district).

As always, the details matter and can change the analysis. This is a reminder to keep geography in mind when making decisions about how TDT funds are used.

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

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CENTRAL FLORIDA



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

Ocala/Marion County VCB

The Ocala/Marion County VCB is busy working with the community and industry partners to bring visitors to the destination. Since 2018, tourism generated more than \$1 billion in economic impact to Marion County, Fla., with visitors spending at least \$667 million in direct expenditures.

VISIT FLORIDA recently awarded the Ocala/Marion County VCB for outstanding achievement in Florida tourism marketing: 2019 Bronze Flagler Award for the newly designed website, *OcalaMarion.com*, and Silver in the Mixed Media Campaign category for a summer families campaign.



Representatives of the Ocala/Marion County VCB accept the 2019 Flagler Awards. Pictured are Corry Locke, CSEE, group sales coordinator; Loretta Shaffer, CPM, CDME, tourism director; and Jessica Marr, marketing and communications coordinator.



Babe Ruth League, Rotary baseball teams in uniform, team members from Ocala/Marion County VCB, and Marion County leadership announce the Cal Ripken tournament at the Rotary Sportsplex.

Photo: GlossyFinish.com

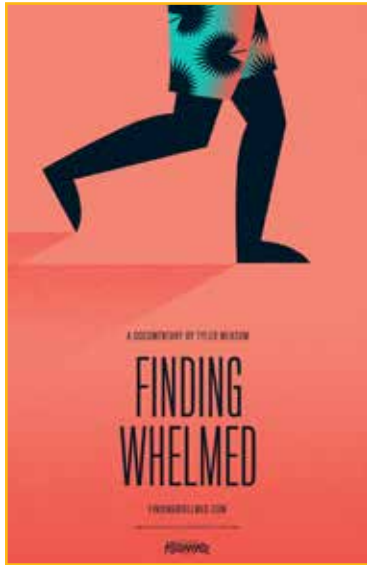
"We are honored to be recognized at a state level for the work the Ocala/Marion County Visitors and Convention Bureau is doing to drive visitors to the area," said Loretta Shaffer, tourism development director for Marion County. "I am so proud and thankful to the entire tourism development team and our awesome tourism industry for their exceptional efforts."

More exciting news for the destination is that the Cal Ripken Rookie World Series, beginning this August, will be coming to Ocala for the next five years. The tournament is expected to bring 15 to 20 teams along with coaches, parents, and families from across the country. A similar tournament in 2016, the Cal Ripken 12U World Series, brought a total of \$1.2 million in estimated economic impact to Marion County.



Experience Kissimmee

Experience Kissimmee kicked off 2020 with its “perfectly Whelmed” campaign on January 21, introducing the world to a perfectly balanced vacation. But that’s not all the organization has accomplished recently.



The “perfectly Whelmed” campaign launched with a documentary-style film titled *Finding Whelmed*.

Since January, Experience Kissimmee’s Media Relations Team has hosted 10 familiarization trips (FAMs), welcoming media, bloggers, and influencers from countries across the globe. The team also aired two segments about the new campaign with a Jacksonville-based travel expert on Tampa’s WFLA-TV News Channel 8.

Experience Kissimmee’s Sports department, Kissimmee Sports Commission, hosted two FAMs of its own in 2020, one of which welcomed a Canadian travel writer for Postmedia, whose Kissimmee coverage was syndicated across more than 80 platforms.



Travel Expert Angie Orth shares details about Kissimmee as a “perfectly Whelmed” destination with Tampa’s WFLA-TV News Channel 8.

With a current total of 935 industry partners—18 of which are new partners since January—Experience Kissimmee is staying active in its community. The organization is always championing its partners through promotional and advertising opportunities, as well as media exposure.

Experience Kissimmee works every day as a dedicated, flexible team to engage and inspire new generations of travelers, and each other.

Orlando North, Seminole County Tourism

2019 was another record-setting year in Seminole County. Record statistics include the highest Tourist Development Tax collected, the third highest hotel occupancy percentage, and the highest average daily rate in the history of Seminole County. These historical achievements have allowed the county to invest in multimillion-dollar sports facilities, to feature this beautiful community on national and international TV shows, to broadcast on the Good Morning America Times Square digital board, and even to explore marketing ventures in Toronto.



Aerial view of Seminole County’s beautiful Boombah Sports Complex

What’s next? Beginning in January 2020, Seminole County Virtual School, in collaboration with National Academy Foundation, launched the nation’s first virtual program in hospitality and tourism. The new initiative follows the framework set forth by the American Hotel and Lodging Educational Institute and provides innovative solutions for students seeking careers in the hospitality and tourism industry.



Seminole County Virtual School’s site visit to Orlando Marriott Lake Mary



Visit Central Florida

New hotels and venues are indicators that tourism and sports tourism are strong in Polk County.

In Winter Haven, the January ribbon cutting at the AdventHealth Fieldhouse and Conference Center was the second event held there. Earlier, more than 50 basketball teams participated in the Polk County Hoopfest, the first of 40-plus planned weekend-spanning events. The fieldhouse will also serve as a training facility for the G-League Lakeland Magic as well as headquarters for Youth Basketball of America, one of the nation's largest youth basketball programs. A new Courtyard Marriott, one of the largest hotels in the city, has brought with it more than 100 new rooms.



The 150-room Pirate Island Hotel opens at LEGOLAND Florida Resort on April 17.



The new AdventHealth Fieldhouse and Conference Center in Winter Haven

Meanwhile, LEGOLAND Pirate Island Hotel—the first pirate-themed hotel in the portfolio—is set to open.

In the northeastern corner of the county, a quad of baseball fields is planned at Northeast Regional Park in Davenport, where there are already six multipurpose fields. Miles away at Balmoral Resort Florida, Feltrim Sports has completed its own multipurpose field and soccer training area.

In Lakeland, the largest city in Polk County, a Marriott SpringHill Suites will open on the RP Funding Center campus. With a Hyatt Place hotel already there, the two hotels will not only increase the quality and diversity of accommodations in the area but will be a boon to drawing larger events at the multipurpose entertainment complex.

Visit Orlando

In 2019, Visit Orlando continued to create global marketing campaigns that highlight the destination's myriad of experiences.

Domestically, "Uniquely Orlando" media campaigns targeted families in the Northeast and the Southeast. International campaigns focused on shopping, dining, and entertainment



Visit Orlando's three-person team vacationed virtually nonstop. The MORlando Challenge uncovered 121 days of experiences.

(Brazil), tour operator and airline partnerships (Canada), and 2020 vacation planning (UK). And to help travel advisers sell the destination, Visit Orlando launched a new training resource, the Orlando Travel Academy.



Visit Orlando's Magical Dining raised a record \$306,772 for two local nonprofits.

Public relations efforts, including a real-life experiment on how many days it would take to do everything Orlando, helped generate coverage in top publications and kept the destination top-of-mind. On the community relations front, thanks to 125 participating restaurants, Visit Orlando's Magical Dining raised a record \$306,772 for the National Alliance on Mental Illness Greater Orlando and Lighthouse Central Florida.

As for meetings and conventions, Orlando continues to be distinguished as the best, with Cvent naming it the No. 1 domestic meeting destination for the fifth consecutive year. Visit Orlando also earned top recognitions from Meetings & Conventions and Successful Meetings—a testament to its success in driving business travel.

For 2020, Visit Orlando will continue to implement innovative marketing initiatives to complement the destination's on-going product investment.

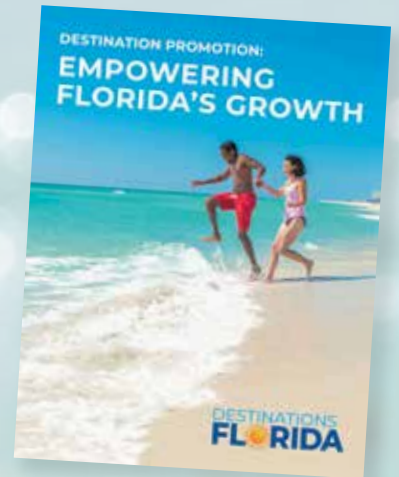
Communicate the Value of Your Destination Promotion Efforts

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.

Download a PDF copy at EmpoweringFloridasGrowth.com



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Naples Marco Island Everglades CVB Sponsors Art Exhibit to Help Save Animals

The Naples Marco Island Everglades CVB is proud to sponsor the Naples Zoo's newest traveling art exhibit. The National Geographic Photo Ark features large-format, stunning images of endangered animals taken by National Geographic photographer Joel Sartore. There are 52 images featured at the zoo daily through April 20. The exhibit is "using the power of photography to inspire people to help save species at risk before it's too late." Portraits of a few of the Naples Zoo animals are part of the exhibit. ParadiseCoast.com



A Florida panther is among the featured images of the National Geographic Photo Ark, on display now at the Naples Zoo.

Experience Kissimmee Teams Up to Help Families in Need

Experience Kissimmee's Meeting Sales and Community Relations (Experience Kissimmee Cares) departments teamed up with Global Cynergies to help a local social services organization. The meetings team hosted 14 meeting planners in Kissimmee for a familiarization trip, showcasing the community and needs of the Osceola Council on Aging. Experience Kissimmee, Global Cynergies, and local hotels made monetary, gift card, and hygiene product donations. All donations were delivered to the Osceola Council on Aging on March 3. ExperienceKissimmee.com



Donations for the Osceola Council on Aging's elderly and families in need included \$610, \$840 in gift cards, and 717 hygiene products.

A Simple Partner Project Becomes Huge Hit for Visit St. Lucie

Visit St. Lucie and its municipal partner, the city of Fort Pierce, partnered to construct and install a perfectly framed photo opportunity at Jetty Park, a popular local tourist attraction where the Fort Pierce Inlet meets the Atlantic Ocean. The 8'x5' colorful frame encourages visitors to snap a photo with a framed view of the beautiful panoramic waterfront scenes in the background. Just minutes after its installation, Visit St. Lucie was able to begin tracking social media posts of visitors posing in the frame using the hashtag #LovetheFort. VisitStLucie.com



Visitors to St. Lucie pose in the frame at Jetty Park in Fort Pierce.

Clay County to Host USA Cycling Road Amateur Nationals

The best amateur cyclists in the country will descend upon Clay County for the USA Cycling Road Amateur National Championships on June 25-28. The two-year agreement brings the event to Northeast Florida in 2021 as well. With 800 participants coming from across the country, all hotel rooms in Clay County will be sold out as more than 4,000 room nights will be booked during the week. The Nationals are expected to make a \$2.3 million economic impact on Clay County. ExploreClay.com



One of the routes of the USA Cycling National Championships coming to Clay County in June



'Voluntouring' in the Florida Keys Promotes Sustainability

The Florida Keys' Connect and Protect initiative targeted sustainability, encouraging visitors to include experiential, transformational, and "voluntourism" activities in Keys vacations, helping to preserve the destination's natural environment and local lifestyle. Connect and Protect promoted motivational experiences such as touring Marathon's famous Turtle Hospital, diving and fishing with Blue Star operators, choosing renewable stone crab claws, or "voluntouring" with coral reef restoration. Fla-Keys.com



Visitors to the Florida Keys help with coral reef restoration.

Punta Gorda/Englewood Beach VCB Hosts Spring Training Instameet

The Punta Gorda/Englewood Beach VCB hosted an Instameet on February 26 during the Tampa Bay spring training game versus the Minneapolis Twins at the Charlotte Sports Park in Port Charlotte. Five influencers attended from the Fort Myers-Naples and Tampa-St. Petersburg-Sarasota markets. The goal was to increase awareness of the area as a vacation destination in key drive markets and to raise awareness of Tampa Bay Rays' spring training. Social shares reached a potential audience of more than 1.1 million. PureFlorida.com



An influencer captures a hotdog's best side during the Tampa Bay Rays Spring Training Instameet with the Punta Gorda/Englewood Beach VCB in Port Charlotte. Photo: PureFlorida.com

The Perfect Week of Sports in The Palm Beaches

The stars aligned for sports fans in The Palm Beaches, when major golf, tennis, equestrian, and baseball events all transpired within a single week. The Perfect Week of Sports, from February 22 to 27, welcomed visitors to the Honda Class PGA Tour; MLB Spring Training games at the destination's two stadiums, including the home of the 2019 World Series Champions and runners up; the Delray Beach Open; Gauntlet of Polo; and Winter Equestrian Festival. ThePalmBeaches.com



FITTEAM Ballpark
Photo: Discover The Palm Beaches

UNwineD Culinary Festival Returns to Panama City Beach

Visit Panama City Beach is excited to announce the return of UNwineD, a premier two-day culinary festival held in Aaron Bessant Park, presented in partnership with Southern Living. Taking place March 20-21, the fourth annual event featured craft beer, wine, and spirits from around the world in addition to mouth-watering creations from some of the area's leading chefs like delicious bites from Top Chef winner Kelsey Barnard Clark. This year's headliner, alternative rock band Death Cab for Cutie, took the stage following opening entertainment from Joywave during Saturday's concert in the park. VisitPanamaCityBeach.com



UNwineD Garden Party



Celebrating the Arts at Uptown Altamonte

Cranes Roost Park at Uptown Altamonte comes alive through art and music for its annual Uptown Art Expo! Each year visitors come to experience three days of fine crafts, live entertainment, and exhibits showcasing artists' displays of jewelry, glass, mosaics, paintings, photography, pottery, and sculpture. Along with its colorful display of artisan works, the event also features an array of delicious food and beverage options, including craft beers and wine selections as well as live entertainment featuring kids' activities, live street-chalk painting competitions, and live concerts. *DoOrlandoNorth.com*



Visitors enjoy the Uptown Art Expo in Altamonte Springs.

Amelia Island, Collier County Bring Fresh from Florida to NYC

Amelia Island and Collier County partnered together to bring a taste of Fresh from Florida seafood to the Bon Appétit Kitchen in New York City. Chef Don Splain and mixologist Damon Roseberry from Founders Market + Bistro, Naples, Marco Island Everglades and Chef Rich Laughlin from The Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island showcased locally sourced stone crab, shrimp, and produce to the delight of invited journalists and travel writers. It was the first time the two destinations have worked together for this successful event. *AmeliaIsland.com*



Amelia Island and Collier County are all smiles in the Bon Appétit Kitchen after a media party.

Martin County Wins STS Shining Example Award

The Martin County Office of Tourism and Marketing recently won a Southeast Tourism Society Best Marketing Shining Example Award for its *Like a Local* video campaign. The nine-video series earned a staggering six million impressions, 100,000+ website sessions, and 165,000+ page views. Each video highlighted a water-based business in Martin County, and the videos were provided free of charge to participating businesses as marketing assets. Funding was made available from VISIT FLORIDA's initiative to assist local communities experiencing negative impacts from Red Tide. *DiscoverMartin.com*



Monica Smith (right), president and CEO of Southeast Tourism Society, presents the Shining Example Award to Nerissa Okiye, tourism director for Martin County.

Visit Orlando Encourages Canadians to Escape the Cold

The weather is anything but warm right now in Orlando's top international market, and Visit Orlando leverages those chilly conditions by encouraging Canadians to "forget the winter blues" and "escape to Orlando." In addition to high-impact billboards in greater Toronto, Visit Orlando's campaign, which ran through the end of March, featured ads in the city's subways, trains, pedestrian tunnels, and downtown squares. It also included national TV, digital, and social media spots. *VisitOrlando.com*



High-impact billboards in Toronto encourage Canadians to escape the cold weather.



Visit Space Coast's 2020 Bucket List

Florida's Space Coast rang in the New Year by distributing a news release titled "Florida's Space Coast Revealed: 20 Bucket List Items for 2020." This curated list celebrated unique must-see offerings and plenty of new and upcoming events and attractions debuting this year. During February, the release picked up a total of 78 placements with a combined reach of 18.2 UVM. VisitSpaceCoast.com



Get ready to buckle up and see all that the Space Coast has to offer from the front seat of a 2019 Slingshot GT.

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Siesta Beach Is TripAdvisor Travelers' Choice Top U.S. Beach

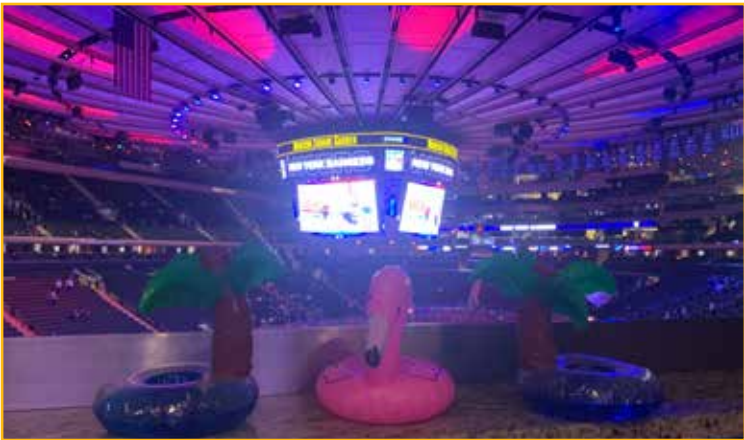
Siesta Beach was once again designated the TripAdvisor Travelers' Choice Top Beach in the United States and No. 11 in the world. Part of VSC's strategy to raise awareness of Siesta Key Beach is to sponsor the Siesta Key destination page on TripAdvisor. This tactic increases consideration of the island and beach within the platform and reaches those researching a trip to Siesta Key Beach. VSC also sponsors the Sarasota destination page on TripAdvisor. VisitSarasota.com



Siesta Beach in Sarasota County is Top Beach again in 2020.

Bradenton Area CVB Makes Big Splash at Madison Square Garden

In early March, the BACVB successfully partnered again with The Madison Square Garden Company to execute a New York Rangers game suite takeover and launch a series of promotional videos on MSG's network, reaching millions. The beach-themed suite event included travel media and representatives from top airline carriers who discussed the destination with CVB and Sarasota Bradenton International Airport reps. The accompanying spots highlighted the destination's assets and included an invitation to enter to win a trip. BradentonGulfIslands.com



The Bradenton Area CVB hosts another successful activation event at MSG, welcoming media and airline representatives into its beach-themed suite during a Rangers game.

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Chicago Tribune Showcases St. Pete

As Visit St. Pete/Clearwater anticipates the opening of the new St. Pete Pier on May 30, media coverage continues to roll in from major metro newspapers. Resulting from VSPC's PR efforts, the *Chicago Tribune* put St. Pete on the map letting readers know that "this lively Florida city is having a renaissance." The online story reached more than 3.6 million Chicagoans and nearly 520,000 in the Sunday print edition. VisitStPeteClearwater.com



Chicago Tribune: Get to Know St. Pete 2.0.



Visit Pensacola Announces Spring 2020 Grant Recipients

Visit Pensacola is pleased to announce its spring 2020 grant recipients for events taking place between May 1 and September 30. "This year, we are pleased to award marketing dollars to seven events throughout the community," interim President/CEO Jack Brown said. "These dollars support events and organizations, providing them with the tools to reach out-of-market audiences that they typically couldn't. By focusing on the area's quality of place, our community has the opportunity to show the world our destination's greatest assets." VisitPensacola.com



Visit Pensacola awards grant funding to a variety of events, including Pensacon, Pensacola Mardi Gras, and the Gulf Coast Summerfest Jazz Edition.

Visit Tampa Bay Brings Sunshine to Boston

Who wants a snow globe when you can have a sun globe? Residents of Boston recently encountered the Visit Tampa Bay sun globe last month as part of a marketing activation. The centerpiece positioned outside Faneuil Hall Marketplace was a large inflatable see-through globe filled not with snow but with sunshine and pool towels. Visitors got a chance to win a trip to Tampa Bay by submitting a text entry. VisitTampaBay.com



The Visit Tampa Bay sun globe invites Bostonians to enter to win a Tampa Bay Getaway.

Lee County Celebrates 30,000 Acres

Lee County's milestone of acquiring its 30,000th acre in its Conservation 20/20 program was celebrated throughout March with birding seminars, nature walks, an online trivia game, a full-moon walking event, a Calusa Blueway paddling trail outing, and more. Since 1996, the voter-supported initiative has allowed the county to buy property that will be used for wildlife, water supply, flood protection, and recreation. In 2016, voters once again supported Conservation 20/20 by 84%.

LeeGov.com/2020celebration/events; FortMyersSanibel.com



Visit Tallahassee Launches New Marketing Campaign, Website, Destination App

2020 is off to a busy start with Visit Tallahassee recently introducing a new integrated marketing campaign, website, and destination mobile app. Emphasizing Tallahassee's beauty and unexpected elements, the new "Pretty. Unexpected." marketing campaign takes a fresh and modern look at the destination, reaching visitors in a dynamic way through strong imagery and video content. The new mobile-first website includes fast download speeds, less text, larger fonts, and easy touchscreen navigation. Complementing the new site, the Visit Tallahassee! free mobile app allows users to create personalized itineraries.

VisitTallahassee.com



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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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Enclosed is your copy of Tourism Marketing Today
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INSIDE: 2020 Session Report (p. 4) & Coronavirus Info (p. 6)

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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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