

TourismMarketing Today

The Official Newsletter of Destinations Florida | www.DestinationsFlorida.org | July 2021



Visit St. Pete/Clearwater Tells Its Story in Streaming Video Series *Life's Rewards*

Extraordinary times call for extraordinary measures, perhaps even disruptive measures.

Visit St. Pete/Clearwater and VISIT FLORIDA are disrupting the tourism industry by leveraging streaming platforms to reach travelers directly in their homes. Embarking on an entirely new

frontier, the scripted video series *Life's Rewards* promotes St. Pete/Clearwater destinations to target audiences by leveraging Amazon Prime Video's AI technology.

Life's Rewards, the first original episodic series developed by a DMO for streaming services, follows the life of Dan Kinney,



Don CeSar bartender-turned-life-coach Jared takes Dan through a yoga workout on St. Pete Beach.

Opportunities

by Robert Skrob, CAE



It's never been more important to engage your local community in your marketing efforts.

At some points and for some tourism businesses, 2021 is exceeding 2019 by several percentage points. Rates and activity are way up!

But the growth is uneven, and so far it has been without competition from cruise lines, Mexico, and countries throughout the Caribbean. Florida has a massive head start at the moment. It's a good thing that so many businesses

LIFE'S REWARDS ... continues on pg. 3

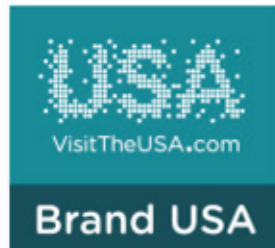
OPPORTUNITIES ... continues on pg. 3

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Today

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On the Cover

The iconic Don CeSar provides much of the backdrop for the streaming video series *Life's Rewards*, which showcases things to do and see in St. Pete/Clearwater through the eyes of the series' main character. See the story on page 1.

the privileged son of a high-profile wealth manager who loses everything on a big gamble and ends up stranded at The Don CeSar on St. Pete Beach during a defunct business trip. Forced to live off the only two assets he has left (his unquestionable charisma and a massive cache of hotel points), the series takes viewers all around St. Pete/Clearwater while the main character manages to find his way after a life crisis.

Filmed, produced, set, and written exclusively in St. Pete/Clearwater, *Life's Rewards* takes advantage of a new medium to subtly and effectively promote a destination by immersing viewers in a story line that showcases local restaurants, businesses, and attractions. It entices visitors to explore the destination just like the main character, by eating at the same places, exploring the same museums, and relaxing on the same beaches.



Dan and his new friends go on a geocache competition that takes them all over St. Pete/Clearwater.

LIFE'S REWARDS ... continues on pg. 4

OPPORTUNITIES ... continued from pg. 1

that were hurt by the pandemic are now experiencing a recovery; however, the recovery is uneven.

This is where you can have the largest impact by identifying opportunities to attract visitors to fill gaps in demand, to attract customers to the lower time periods and businesses that haven't yet recovered.

It's all about seeing opportunities, communicating, and taking action. Looking beyond the crowded weekends to

see the gaps. Communicating the opportunities to get your industry and elected leaders engaged to spread the recovery to more businesses and days of the week. And taking action to put the programs in place that will seize this opportunity for a lasting positive impact.

Business is up. THIS is the most important time to have the vision, communication, and initiative to help where you are most needed. Make it impossible for elected leaders to miss the positive impact you have on the people in your community.

Steve Hayes, president and CEO of Visit St. Pete/Clearwater, is one of the executive producers of the series, but don't look for him on screen. Instead, he and his staff played important behind-the-scenes roles in taking *Life's Rewards* from marketing idea to a ground-breaking tourism promotion vehicle.

Hayes credits his staff, the St. Pete/Clearwater Film Commission, and the DMO's partnership with VISIT FLORIDA for creating the series, now streaming on Amazon Prime Video.

"Content development is something we all deal with in terms of our destinations," he says. "Between our film commission and our marketing department, they were talking about unique ways we could get a message out. At the same time, VISIT FLORIDA was talking along the same lines. Next thing you know, a joint conversation turned into a joint idea. Collaboration is the big story here."

Hayes says the idea grew out of an experience most of us have experienced, scrolling through a streaming service looking for something interesting to watch.

"You come across something that sounds appealing. You watch it, and then you get hooked," he says. "Now, all of a sudden, we're subtly telling our story versus directly telling our story."

Hayes says they turned to iconic as well as lesser-known locations for filming. While most of the storyline takes place at The Don CeSar, the characters travel throughout St. Pete/Clearwater to visit restaurants, night spots, the new St. Pete Pier, the Chihuly Collection, and The Dali Museum. They also compete in a geocache hunt that showcases the true star of the show—St. Pete/Clearwater.

"We're telling our story in a way that hasn't been told before," Hayes says. "It is all destination driven and



Dan enjoys one of the many spa services available at The Don CeSar.



Dan takes his niece and nephew to a Tampa Bay Rowdies soccer game.

a unique way to tell who we are and what we are, to showcase the community and the destination as a whole. This is another marketing function that we do to help tell our story."

News of *Life's Rewards* is spreading word of mouth, on the DMO's social media, and in the signature line of DMO staff emails.

"We're trying to promote it organically as much as possible," Hayes says. "I understand we have 4.5 stars so far on Amazon Prime. It kind of feeds itself from there."

The DMO is continuing to look at creative ways to market the St. Pete/Clearwater area.

"Again it goes back to content," Hayes says. "You're telling a story and the format can be in a 15-second pre-roll, a 30-second TV ad, or a 15-minute binge watchable show. The interesting one is when we take it to a 90-minute feature! As destinations, we just have to look at more creative ways to get our story out. I think destinations have always been on the front edge of things. Sometimes they're a home run and sometimes they're just a single, but you know, we have to try it because we've got to get in front of the ultimate consumer, the traveler coming to our state in our own cities."

Life's Rewards premiered May 10 on Amazon Prime Video, which wasn't a moment too soon for Hayes. He says he was so involved in the behind-the-scenes making of the series that he needed to sit down and binge watch all eight episodes to find out what happened to Dan Kinney.

"I'm like, well, OK, there's a cliffhanger at the end," Hayes says with a laugh. "Now we know they can either leave it there or they can go to the next phase with it."

Hooked viewers are hoping for a second season!

Florida Celebrates the Spirit of Travel National Travel & Tourism Week 2021



Tourism promoters across Florida rallied in support of National Travel & Tourism Week (NTTW) May 2-8 to recognize the POWER OF TRAVEL and the industry's role in bringing back Florida's vibrant communities, restoring the U.S. economy, rebuilding our workforce, and reconnecting America.

Here is a sampling of how DMOs in Florida celebrated.



Jeff LaHurd, Voice of Sarasota recipient, and President Virginia Haley of Visit Sarasota County

Visit Sarasota County Recognizes Voice of Sarasota

Visit Sarasota County (VSC) named the Sarasota County Tourism & Hospitality Voice of Sarasota recipient, Jeff LaHurd, while celebrating its 38th annual NTTW Award Ceremony. LaHurd is a local historian and author who has lived in Sarasota since 1950. Sarasota County is proudly celebrating 100 years of the county's accomplishments, people, and places. "With 2021 being the Centennial for Sarasota County, we couldn't think of a better time to honor Jeff," says Virginia Haley, VSC president. "Jeff

LaHurd embodies what it means to raise a genuine awareness of the culture and personality of our beautiful, historic destination."



Hospitality workers in Flagler County are pleased to receive goodie baskets as part of the NTTW celebrations.

Palm Coast and the Flagler Beaches Salutes Industry Employees

Flagler County's tourism office celebrated National Travel and Tourism Week with a salute to local industry employees who work hard year-round to make visitors' experiences memorable. "Our office felt it was important to direct all our efforts to thank the folks that show up day in and day out to service our visitors," Tourism Director Amy Lukasik says. Staff delivered goodie baskets and branded travel bags to tourism partners, and displayed variable message boards acknowledging tourism and hospitality workers.



The Future Is Bright in Punta Gorda/Englewood Beach.

Punta Gorda/Englewood Beach VCB Celebrates a Bright Future

Charlotte County inducted a new member into its prestigious Tourism Hall of Fame while also expanding the awards to celebrate those who go above and beyond to deliver a memorable experience in Punta Gorda/Englewood Beach. The keynote speaker was author MK Mueller, a TEDx speaker and internationally respected authority on positive attitude, change management, and leadership. Her eight-step process for greater happiness and success is taught by more than 2,500 trainers and life coaches to businesses, health care organizations, and nonprofits on four continents. This year's theme was The Future is Bright.



WESH 2 News interviews the Queen at Medieval Times.

Experience Kissimmee Celebrates Unique Tourism Jobs

Experience Kissimmee honored this year's National Travel and Tourism Week by celebrating unique tourism jobs within the destination. The organization focused on Medieval Times' Queen, Fun Spot America's maintenance workers, Gatorland's animal care supervisor, Discovery Cove's horticulture team, Fantasy World Resort's four-legged employees, and more. As a call to action, EK shared information from industry partners that are currently hiring for open positions. This angle drew interest from local media including *Osceola News-Gazette* (print) and WESH 2 News (television).



Dave Serino, founder and chief strategist of TwoSix Digital, makes a presentation on marketing and hospitality.

Visit South Walton Hosts Free Tourism Industry Workshops

Visit South Walton celebrated National Travel and Tourism Week at its Visitor Center with special treats for guests from local bakeries. Visit South Walton also provided free tourism industry workshops for industry partners, showcasing speakers with expertise in marketing and social media, branding strategy, and Key Data Dashboard for tracking visitation trends. Information packets containing materials about beach safety, marketing materials, and the 2020 Tourism Update were also distributed to partners.



Visit Pensacola President & CEO Darien Schaefer, Board Chairman D.C. Reeves, and Destinations International President & CEO Don Welsh honor the 2021 Visit Pensacola Hospitality Heroes.

Visit Pensacola Honors Hospitality Heroes

Visit Pensacola celebrated front-line industry workers and the Power of Travel during NTTW. Joining the celebration was Destinations International President & CEO Don Welsh. "This is my first visit to Pensacola, and I am pleased to see that Darien Schaefer and his team at Visit Pensacola play an active role in the community, making it a wonderful place to live, work, and visit." Highlights for the week included Coffee With the CEO, the annual Hospitality Hero Luncheon, a virtual travel and tourism workshop including VISIT FLORIDA President & CEO Dana Young, a complimentary B.A.R.E Night, and a community cleanup on Pensacola Beach.



Daytona Beach Area CVB Executive Director Lori Campbell Baker, VISIT FLORIDA President & CEO Dana Young, Joanne Magley (Daytona Beach International Airport), John Betros and Bob Davis (Lodging & Hospitality Association of Volusia County), Tim Buckley (Ocean Center convention complex), Danny Robins (Volusia County Council), Debbie Meihls (Visit New Smyrna Beach), and Georgia Turner (Visit West Volusia)

Daytona Beach Area CVB Salutes Tourism Professionals

CVB Executive Director Lori Campbell Baker was part of a panel of industry leaders at the Lodging and Hospitality Association of Volusia County's May 7 NTTW breakfast that included VISIT FLORIDA President & CEO Dana Young. Campbell Baker saluted the area's hardworking and dedicated tourism

professionals, noting that 7.2 million visitors generated an estimated \$3.4 billion in economic impact for local businesses and created 31,700 jobs in 2020 in Volusia County. The CVB also provided area hotels with #LoveDaytonaBeach stickers to give to their guests, with posters encouraging them to post what they love most about the area on social media.



Tampa Convention Center's Marwan Williams receives the Bern Laxer Award of Excellence for superb customer service and commitment to the team.

Visit Tampa Bay Lights Up for Tourism

Visit Tampa Bay once again lit up its iconic landmarks in red in honor of the industry. The team was proud to receive proclamations from the city and county designating it Tampa Bay Tourism Week. Additionally, the team visited more than 30 partners, presented three Bern Laxer awards, and held a sold-out Tee Off for Tourism golf tournament. The success of this year's NTTW shows Visit Tampa Bay's commitment to its partners and the industry, and included the Pineapple Cup shuffleboard tournament with Visit St. Pete/Clearwater to show a united front in support of tourism.



Florida's Nature Coast is a natural paradise. Photo: Pat Bonish

Levy County, Florida's Nature Coast Focuses on Natural Beauty, Rich History

The Levy County BOCC signed a proclamation to declare May 2-8, 2021, Travel and Tourism Week in Levy County. Staff capitalized on the opportunity to

promote exciting outdoor opportunities available in Levy County. Several local newspapers also shared the chance to promote the local tourism destinations around Levy County, the heart of Florida's Nature Coast, touting a playground full of opportunities for outdoor enthusiasts to discover and enjoy their next adventure. Stories focused on the beauty of this natural paradise, the rich history of an ancient Native American culture, a coastal artistic village, and clear natural springs.



Orlando North engages with social media audiences to promote Central Florida businesses and experiences.

Orlando North, Seminole County Highlights Central Florida Visitor Favorites

Orlando North, Seminole County celebrated this year's NTTW by engaging with residents and visitors through social media and highlighting their favorite spots. The purpose was to help promote travel and tourism across not only Seminole County, but all of Central Florida. Questions were posted a week prior to the event asking followers to submit their favorite restaurants, attractions, and trails. The answers were gathered and user-generated content was used to promote the businesses to show authentic interactions for each location. This helped drive social media engagement for tourism partners and raise awareness for things visitors can experience during their stay.



Florida Keys snorkeling at Looe Key Sanctuary Preservation Area, eight nautical miles southwest of Bahia Honda State Park
Credit: Florida Keys News Bureau

The Florida Keys & Key West Launches Fish & Ships Campaign

The Florida Keys & Key West launched a Fish & Ships campaign on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to spotlight the Keys' summer water-related and environmental elements including coral restoration, artificial reefs, dive and snorkel offerings, safely catching invasive lionfish, and ways to protect and help sustain the Keys' in-water ecosystem. Videos and photographs of summer water-related offerings, including the famed Lower Keys Underwater Music Festival on July 10, are to be posted frequently.



Bradenton Area CVB Celebrates With Virtual Summit

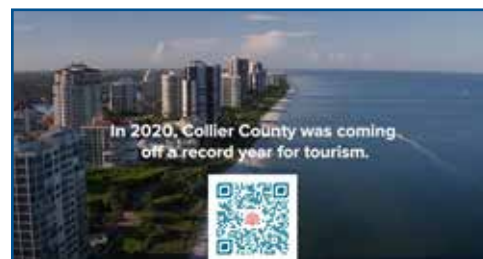
This year, the Bradenton Area invited its industry partners to a safe, virtual event titled Bradenton Area Tourism Summit: Be in the Know. In addition to reflecting on 2020 successes (including the hosting of international sporting events and welcoming of inaugural Southwest Airline flights into Sarasota Bradenton International Airport), the summit refocused the industry on the future by celebrating the positive impact of tourism in 2020 and promising visitor projections for the months ahead.



The Pineapple Cup inspires friendly competition, evidenced by the laughter of VISIT FLORIDA President & CEO Dana Young, St. Petersburg Mayor Rick Kriseman, VSPC President & CEO Steve Hayes, and VTB President & CEO Santiago Corrada.

Visit St. Pete/Clearwater Celebrates With Inaugural Pineapple Cup Tournament

Visit St. Pete/Clearwater celebrated the Power of Travel during U.S. Travel's National Travel & Tourism Week with industry events, a regional lighting demonstration, and a friendly competition with sister city DMO, Visit Tampa Bay. The highlight of the week included the inaugural Pineapple Cup Battle of the Bay shuffleboard tournament, which had both sides of the Bay battle it out with some friendly competition—VSPC taking home the trophy!



In honor of NTTW, the CVB chronicled the challenges, tenacity, and reemergence of the tourism sector in Collier County within a Paradise Coast 2020 Tourism Recap Video.

Naples, Marco Island, Everglades CVB Celebrates Banner Month for Tourism

April 2021 was a banner month for tourism in Collier County. Not only did the destination close the gap on 2019 visitation, occupancy, and hotel rates, but in many cases even exceeded them.

SPIRIT OF TRAVEL NTTW 2021 ... continues on pg. 8

More than 28,000 people returned to work while the destination welcomed 1.1 million+ travelers to Southwest Florida International Airport and enjoyed a 20% increase in total economic impact. Visitation remained steady throughout April, providing strong optimism for a continuation into the summer. Congratulations to the community heroes who committed to the Paradise Pledge, instilled confidence in visitors, and displayed courage in the midst of the pandemic.



Winner of the 2021 Providencia Award, Loggerhead Marinelife Center

Discover The Palm Beaches Hosts Travel Rally Day

Discover The Palm Beaches (DTPB) hosted key industry representatives for a Travel Rally Day on May 7. Each year The Palm Beaches hosts the Travel Rally Day to bestow The Providencia Award and the David Burke Award to organizations making an extraordinary and positive impact on local tourism. This year, Loggerhead Marinelife Center was awarded the 29th Providencia Award, the Hilton West Palm Beach was recognized in the David Burke Partner accommodations category, and the Cultural Council for Palm Beach County was recognized in the David Burke Partner non-accommodations category.



Be Kind Tuesday profiled employees whose acts of kindness helped guide them through the pandemic.

Lee County VCB Holds Weeklong Virtual Celebration

In place of the Lee County VCB's annual in-person, single day Travel Rally, a virtual weeklong NTTW celebration featured engaging videos on YouTube.com/LeeVCB about the people and places that make Southwest Florida special to its visitors and community. For example, Magical Managers Monday highlighted three leaders who make a difference as they are exemplary role models and mentors to frontline staff. As the tourism industry moves forward, it's important to recognize that visitor spending in calendar year 2020 generated an economic impact of over \$4 billion. The destination attracted 3.4 million visitors, and tourism supported 49,006 jobs.



GMCVB Chairman of the Board Bruce Orosz, Carnival Corporation & PLC President & CEO Arnold W. Donald, and GMCVB President & CEO William D. Talbert, III, CDME

GMCVB Celebrates the Power of Travel During State of the Tourism & Hospitality Industry Breakfast

On May 6, the Greater Miami CVB hosted more than 300 attendees in-person and more than 150 virtually at the 2021 GMCVB State of the Tourism & Hospitality Industry presentation held at

the reimagined Miami Beach Convention Center. Arnold W. Donald, president & CEO of Carnival Corporation & PLC and chair of the World Travel & Tourism Council, was a featured speaker. Attendees also enjoyed travel industry updates from GMCVB Chairman of the Board Bruce Orosz and GMCVB President & CEO William D. Talbert, III, CDME, as well as live entertainment, a networking business expo, and breakfast.



Visit Lauderdale President & CEO Stacy Ritter and W Fort Lauderdale General Manager Anna MacDiarmid join two camouflaged models who were painted into the new Everyone Under the Sun mural, a signature of the dynamic murals by Avi Ram.

Visit Lauderdale Debuts New Brand

The Greater Fort Lauderdale CVB announced its new brand as Visit Lauderdale with the destination tagline Everyone Under the Sun during National Travel and Tourism Week. To beautifully illustrate the new brand, Visit Lauderdale commissioned internationally renowned airbrush artist Avi Ram, a Greater Fort Lauderdale resident, to paint an Everyone Under the Sun mural now on display at the entrance to the W Fort Lauderdale. The mural shows the beauty of Greater Fort Lauderdale and the face of Mother Nature welcoming all to experience the area's natural beauty as well as the inclusive and welcoming spirit of the destination.





Can TDT Cover That?

by Steven M. Hogan

The most common question that comes up with the Tourist Development Tax is whether particular projects or expenditures can be funded from TDT revenues. This question is important, as the TDT statute spells out a list of authorized uses—and anything not on the list doesn't count.



Amenities such as a boat ramp and dock must relate to and primarily promote tourism to be an authorized TDT expenditure.

The full list of "Authorized Uses" is straightforward and can be found in section 125.0104, Florida Statutes (find it for free here: <http://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/>). Though the Legislature may have meant to make things clear, there are always situations where particular facts aren't covered in the statutory language.

I've explained it by saying that any time you draw a "bright line" you end up with "fuzzy edges."

With the TDT, the most common "fuzzy edge" is whether a given use of TDT funds is "primarily" focused on promoting tourism.



Steven M. Hogan

Sometimes, the answer can be found in Florida Attorney General Opinions that address similar issues. Often, though, specific issues will not have been addressed by the attorney general. What to do then?

The answer is that the county must make "legislative findings" to the effect that the proposed use of TDT funds is an "Authorized Use" under the statute. *See Op. Att'y Gen. Fla. 201514 (2015)* ("Ultimately, the county must make the appropriate legislative determination that the construction of a boat ramp and observation platform that serve as a part of a nature center ... relates to and primarily promotes tourism.").

This throws the ultimate determination back onto the county's governing body. When questions are close, that is likely the safest route.

As always, legal counsel should be sought on specific questions, as particular facts can change the analysis.

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.



In the News

GMCVB President & CEO Honored as Hospitality & Tourism Leader of the Year by the GMBHA

The Greater Miami & the Beaches Hotel Association (GMBHA) recently honored GMCVB President & CEO William D. Talbert III, CDME, as its first Hospitality & Tourism Leader of the Year. Proceeds from the event go toward the GMBHA/GMCVB Academy of Hospitality & Tourism (AOHT) Scholarship Fund in Bill Talbert's name. Numerous elected officials and dignitaries were there to honor "Miami Bill," and U.S. Travel Association President & CEO Roger Dow made a surprise appearance! *MiamiAndBeaches.com*



U.S. Travel Association President & CEO Roger Dow, Miami Beach City Manager Alina T. Hudak, Greater Miami & the Beaches Hotel Association President Wendy Kallergis, GMCVB President & CEO William D. Talbert III, CDME, Miami-Dade County Mayor Daniella Levine Cava, MDM Hotel Group VP Development & Tourism Florencia Tabeni, and JW Marriott Miami General Manager Mildred Riscigno



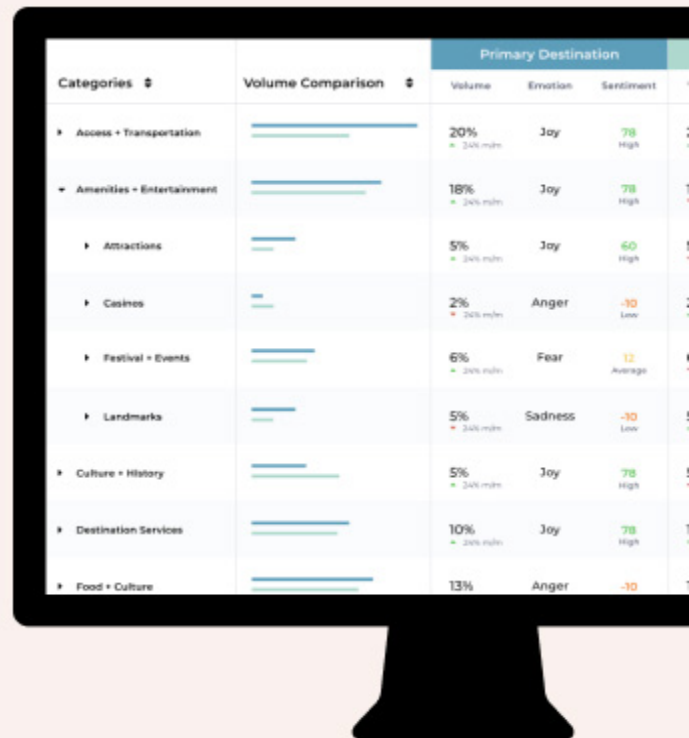
Real-time Traveler Sentiment Data to Drive Your Destination's Recovery

Introducing the Tourism Sentiment Index (TSI LIVE)

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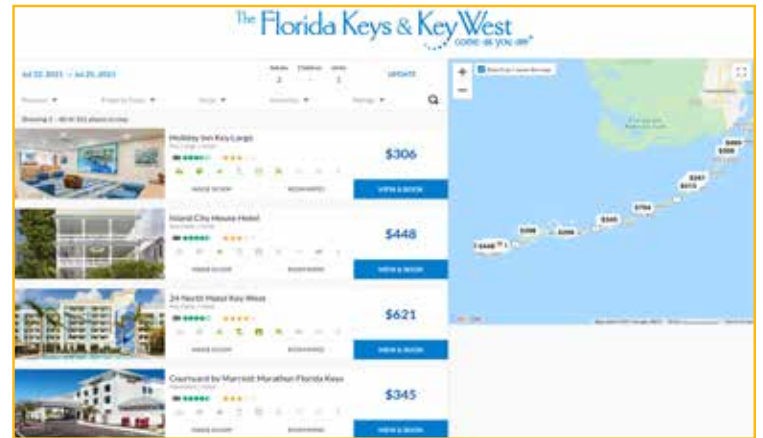
Only Paradise Will Do Ad Campaign Delivers Record Results for Naples, Marco Island, Everglades CVB

From all indications, 2021 could be a banner year for Florida's Paradise Coast. The CVB's COVID Recovery campaign, highlighting the safety-first commitment of the Paradise Pledge and the targeted messaging Only Paradise Will Do, exceeded all expectations. Reaching individuals in the early stages of the travel planning process resulted in record growth in visitors, ADR, RevPAR, and TDT collections during the first quarter of 2021. Advance reservations from Florida and out-of-state travelers are pacing well above average while group meetings are ramping up this fall toward previous levels. *ParadiseCoast.com*



Florida Keys Has New Online Reservation System

The Monroe County TDC has launched a commission-free online reservation system for Florida Keys lodging suppliers through its destination website at <https://lodging.flk-keys.com>. The service, providing seamless bookings for overnight stays by consumers visiting *Fla-Keys.com*, is offered to licensed lodging establishments collecting the Monroe County resort tax and listed on the site. It's managed by Key West-based Two Oceans Digital with RootRez, a contracted third-party provider utilizing Global Distribution System data from sources including Sabre. *Fla-Keys.com*



Consumers can book Florida Keys overnight stays through <https://lodging.flk-keys.com>. Photo: Two Oceans Digital

Visit Sebring Launches Local GeoTour

Visit Sebring launched the *Sebring Area GeoTour: Florida's Hidden Gem* to rave reviews. The GeoTour consists of 38 geocaches, two Adventure Labs, and seven posters hidden in the area. It's the third active GeoTour in Florida and one of only 70 GeoTours in the world. By using a GPS or smartphone, geocachers are guided along four GeoTrails (Ranch & Harvest, Parks & Recreation, Historic, and Arts & Culture) that make up the GeoTour. A fifth GeoTrail, the Centennial Trail, will be added to commemorate the county's 100th anniversary. *VisitSebring.com/geocaching*



A young geocacher proudly displays his find.

Bradenton Area—Past and Future Host of ACO World Championships of Cornhole

In March, the Bradenton Area Convention Center hosted a major American Cornhole Association tournament, bringing 150 players and their families and fans to the Bradenton Area. In July, the World Championships of Cornhole are expected to bring more than double that, with almost 100% of visitors arriving from out-of-state and with festivities throughout the Bradenton Urban Core as the sport continues to grow in both competitors and fans. *BradentonGulfIslands.com*



Cornhole players compete at the World Championships of Cornhole held in Bradenton.



Clay County Fair Has Record-Breaking Attendance

After missing the 2020 season, the 2021 Clay County Fair (ClayCountyFair.org) welcomed back guests with a record-breaking attendance of 148,000 fairgoers—an increase of 13% from previous years. With a marketing tagline What a Ride!, the sentiment hit home with families and fair fans ready to experience great weather, midway rides, and new promotions—like Ferris Wheel Speed Dating. The next Clay County Fair is scheduled for March 31-April 10, 2022. ExploreClay.com



What a Ride! at the Clay County Fair

Polk County Sports Hall of Fame Inducts Class of 2020

For the 21st time, Polk County celebrated the accomplishments of its high school, college, and professional athletes. Polk County Tourism and Sports Marketing hosted the Polk County All Sports Awards and Hall of Fame Ceremony on June 8. Inducted were college basketball coach Norm Benn, Detroit Tigers executive Ron Myers, former NFL player Dr. Sam Silas, college baseball coach Johnny Wiggs, and track and field coach Mike Musick, Sr., who was inducted posthumously. VisitCentralFlorida.org



Polk County Sports Hall of Fame inductees Johnny Wiggs, Norm Benn, Dr. Sam Silas, and Ron Myers
Photo: The Ledger

New Golf Industry Magazine Promotes N.E. Florida Travel Partners

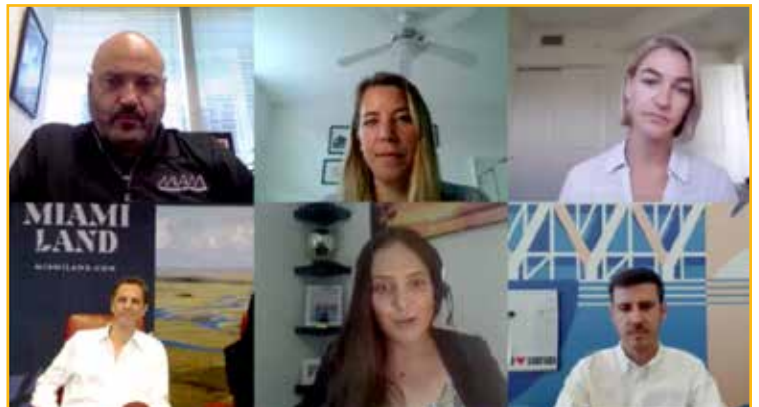
THE DRIVE by Florida's First Coast of Golf is a new monthly Northeast Florida golf industry newsletter sharing Northeast Florida golf trends, publishing news about area golf courses and hotels, and providing strategic advertising opportunities available to partners targeting the golf traveler in top golf spend markets across proven medias. National Golf Foundation trends and leisure travel research along with upcoming events in Northeast Florida's five county destinations are also included. Florida-Golf.org



FY22 FFCG Board of Directors Chairman Russ Libby, owner/manager of Hidden Hills Golf Club, reads *THE DRIVE*.

GMCVB Travel Industry Sales Team Hosts Canada Virtual Sales Mission

The Greater Miami CVB Travel Industry Sales Team hosted a virtual sales mission for the Canadian market on June 8-9 in partnership with Sunny Isles Beach Tourism & Marketing Council, Surfside Tourist Bureau, SOLE Miami, Residence Inn Sunny Isles, and the Cleveland Hotel. The team met with Canadian tour operators, travel trade media, and travel advisors who received updates on the destination ahead of the pending reopening of the Canadian border. MiamiAndBeaches.com



Top row: GMCVB Director of Travel Industry Sales Joe Docal, Cleveland South Beach Hotel Area Group and Events Sales Manager Sacha Vrielynck, and Marriott International Area Sales Leader Stephanie Barnes; Bottom row: Dragonfly Expeditions Owner Charles Kropke, Development Counsellors International Account Manager Tania Kedikian, and Town of Surfside Marketing & Special Projects Coordinator Frank Trigueros



Florida's Sports Coast Hosts Tampa Bay Pro Combine

From June 3-5, Florida's Sports Coast was the presenting sponsor and host for the inaugural event of the Tampa Bay Pro Combine. More than 40 top eligible NCAA Men's College prospects from around the nation with hopes of making it into the NBA competed in front of top basketball decision-makers who attended virtually at the newly opened Wiregrass Ranch Sports Campus of Pasco County, owned by Florida's Sports Coast. The three-day event featured drills, games, and athletic testing. FLSportsCoast.com



Tourism Director Adam Thomas and Communications Manager Kolby Gayson pose with players participating in the Tampa Bay Pro Combine.

Top Minds in Travel Meet in Tampa Bay for the Destination International CEO Summit

Visit Tampa Bay welcomed the Destinations International CEO Summit on May 25-27. Hosted at the new JW Marriott Tampa Water Street, the Summit brought in high-profile destination leaders from across the globe with content focusing on how they can work hand in hand with their communities through transformational leadership. The event received significant media coverage from several local affiliates and was attended by trade media Meetings Today, NorthStar Meetings Group, Skift, PCMA, USAE, and others. VisitTampaBay.com



CEOs Chris Thompson of Brand USA, Dana Young of VISIT FLORIDA, Don Welsh of Destinations International, and Santiago Corrada of Visit Tampa Bay come together at the Destinations International CEO Summit.

Visit Gainesville, Alachua County Hosts Colombian Travel Influencers

Visit Gainesville, Alachua County partnered with VISIT FLORIDA and Visit Natural North Florida to familiarize five Colombian travel influencers with the area's unique experiences and outdoor adventures. The group explored inspiring off-the-beaten-path gems like Micanopy, Poe Springs, Paynes Prairie, First Magnitude and High Springs breweries, and Kanapaha Botanical Gardens. They promoted the area by posting 60+ photos and video stories on various social media platforms with a combined audience of 500,000+ followers. VisitGainesville.com



Social media travel influencers hailing from Colombia spent time in Micanopy, Florida, and other off-the-beaten-path points of interest, sharing What's Good in Alachua County and Natural North Florida with their 500,000+ followers throughout their visit.

Visit Pensacola Welcomes Spirit Airlines

Pensacola International Airport has a new bold color in its terminal with the addition of Spirit Airlines. The low-cost airline brings seven nonstop flights to the destination. "The growth our airport continues to see is a testament to the strength and resiliency of Escambia County's diversified economy, and that includes a strong tourism destination," says Visit Pensacola President & CEO Darien Schaefer. Visit Pensacola has launched a dedicated marketing campaign targeting existing and new flight routes to support air service development and invites travelers to experience Pensacola. VisitPensacola.com



Pensacola Airport Director Matt Coughlin, Pensacola Mayor Grover C. Robinson IV, Spirit Airlines VP Airport Services Mike Byrom, and Visit Pensacola President & CEO Darien Schaefer celebrate the addition of Spirit Airlines.



NATJA Virtual Conference Includes Lee County

Sanibel Lighthouse was the setting as Lee County VCB's Miriam Dotson gave a destination presentation to travel writers attending the 2021 North American Travel Journalists Association (NATJA) Virtual Conference & Marketplace, June 2-4. Dotson's interactive tour—filmed on an iPhone by her colleague Annie Banion—was done in collaboration with Visit St. Augustine and Visit Central Florida. NATJA's virtual conference included 106 attendees, and the presentation can be viewed at youtube.com/watch?v=eDspnfvhqR4. *FortMyers-Sanibel.com*



Lee County VCB's Miriam Dotson gives her NATJA presentation from Sanibel Lighthouse.

Space Coast Builds Momentum for Return of Cruising

The Space Coast Office of Tourism is excited about returning to cruising soon and has been working hard to build momentum. In the last few months, Space Coast Office of Tourism secured 212 media mentions with a 1.04 million reach and PR value of \$731,300 directly relating to awareness and celebration of the return and economic impact of cruising. Placements included interviews with Executive Director Peter Cranis on Good Morning America and Fox Business. *VisitSpaceCoast.com*



Executive Director Peter Cranis is interviewed by Good Morning America at Jetty Park overlooking Port Canaveral.

Destin-Fort Walton Beach Welcomes Southwest Airlines

This May, Destin-Fort Walton Beach Airport (VPS) welcomed Southwest Airlines to the destination, ushering in a growing number of nonstop flights from Dallas, Baltimore/Washington D.C., Nashville, Chicago, and more. Passengers of the inaugural flights from Dallas (which flew Florida One) and Nashville were treated to a number of surprises and celebrations both on board and upon arrival. With the addition of new routes with Southwest and Allegiant, VPS now offers nonstop service to 52 destinations. *VisitSouthWalton.com*



Southwest passengers celebrate the inaugural flight to Destin-Fort Walton Beach with branded gear and activity packs as they depart Dallas Love Field aboard Florida One.

Travelers Invited to Win a Summer Getaway in Orlando North

The Orlando North Summer Getaway Giveaway campaign's focus was on increasing visibility for hotels and businesses in Seminole County, as well as raising brand awareness for Orlando North. These giveaways are conducted quarterly and are promoted through online social channels. With more than 500 entries for the Q1 giveaway, followers were able to stay engaged and informed about what to do and where to stay in Orlando North, Seminole County. *DoOrlandoNorth.com*



Orlando North, Seminole County turns up the summer heat with its second Getaway Giveaway!



Visit Tallahassee Launches Local Summer Campaign

Visit Tallahassee recently launched a new community-focused program, the Tallahassee Backyard Bucket List challenge. With over 25% of visitors coming to see friends and family, the campaign encourages residents to explore their backyard and become local ambassadors. Each month, the program features a new bucket list of attractions, restaurants, breweries, trails, shops, and museums to explore. Participants who visit the featured sites and post on Instagram will be entered for a chance to win prizes. VisitTallahassee.com/BackyardBucketList/



Residents become local ambassadors during Visit Tallahassee's summer campaign.

Orlando Partners Wins Silver Anvil Award

Visit Orlando, Orange County Government, and Orlando Economic Partnership were recently honored with a PRSA Silver Anvil Award for their Safer, Stronger, Together campaign, educating Orange County businesses and residents on health and safety measures to stop the spread of COVID-19 and emerge from the shutdown. The Silver Anvil is one of the most coveted national awards in the public relations field, recognizing those who "successfully address challenging issues with exemplary professional skill, creativity and resourcefulness." VisitOrlando.com



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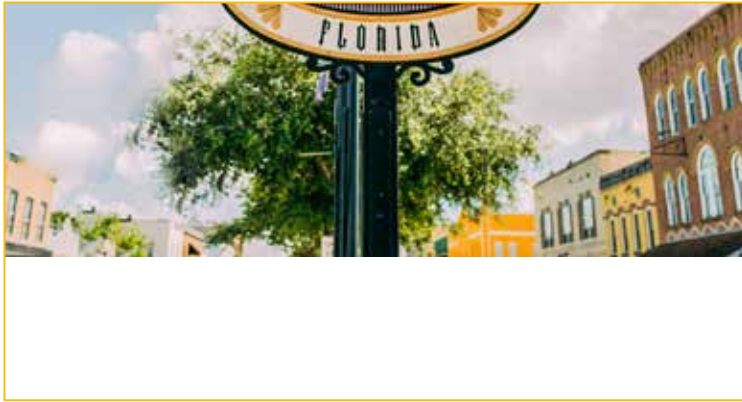
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Experience Kissimmee Creates Tool to Calculate Economic Impact

Experience Kissimmee recently launched its Impactulator™ (impactulator.powerappsportals.com), designed to help fellow tourism authorities determine the economic impact of marketing and sales efforts. The online self-service tool combines raw data, field-tested formulas, nationwide benchmarks, independently validated figures, and research-driven messaging—delivering a broad set of print-ready narratives for key audiences in the destination, including internal leadership, local elected officials, and residents. ExperienceKissimmee.com



Experience Kissimmee VP of Business Applications Jason Holic presents the Impactulator™ at Destinations Florida.

Visit Lauderdale's Tagline 'Everyone Under the Sun' Inspires New Destination-Themed Craft Beer

Inspired by Visit Lauderdale's new tourism tagline, Gulf Stream Brewing Company partnered with the DMO to reveal the new Everyone Under the Sun beer with a VIP event at the Fort Lauderdale brewery for local community and tourism leaders. "Like Greater Fort Lauderdale's diverse community, the Everyone Under the Sun beer is a blend of styles and tastes," says brewery owner and co-founder McKay Ferrell. In its coverage of the launch, Florida Beer Blog comments, "It turned out absolutely perfect. It seems to somehow have been formulated for the perfect sunny beach day." Sunny.org



The Everyone Under the Sun craft brew is now the official beer of Visit Lauderdale. Plans are in the works for distribution to Greater Fort Lauderdale bars and restaurants and for use at destination meetings and events.

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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.**

Download a PDF copy at EmpoweringFloridasGrowth.com

2021 ANNUAL MEETING

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2021

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 14, 2021

8:00 am	Registration Desk Open
8:00 am – 9:00 am	Networking Breakfast
9:00 am – 11:30 am	Educational Programming
11:30 am – 1:00 pm	Networking Luncheon
1:00 pm – 4:30 pm	Educational Programming
5:30 pm – 9:30 pm	Miles Evening Extravaganza

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26640 Silver Maple Pkwy
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The Hilton Garden Inn Tampa-Wesley Chapel is offering special rates for Destinations Florida meeting participants at \$119 per night. You may call the hotel directly at (813) 591-6900 and reference the group name Destinations Florida 21 Annual Meeting. Reservations must be made by Tuesday, September 21, 2021.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2021

8:00 am – 9:00 am	Networking Breakfast
9:00 am – 11:30 am	2022 Legislative Session Outlook

WESLEY CHAPEL, FLORIDA



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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: Florida Celebrates National Travel & Tourism Week.

Destinations Florida
Executive Director Robert Skrob, CAE | Lobbyists Brian Ballard and Mat Forrest, 850/577-0444
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Destinations Florida serves as the single unifying voice for all of Florida's DMOs, providing continuing insight and direction as we face an increasingly competitive tourism marketplace. Organized in 1996, Destinations Florida strives to increase the overall effectiveness of Florida DMOs' destination marketing efforts through industry education, legislative outreach, enhancing professionalism and facilitating communication.

Destinations Florida represents the 55 official county DMOs that promote their communities throughout the world. Tourism promotion activities help to attract 131.4 million visitors to Florida, adding \$96.5 billion to Florida's economy and supporting more than 1.6 million jobs. These activities are made possible by Tourist Development Taxes provided by Florida Statutes Section 125.0104. Statistics: VISIT FLORIDA Research

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