

DESTINATION PROMOTION:

EMPOWERING FLORIDA'S GROWTH



DESTINATIONS
FLORIDA

A high-angle photograph of a person in a yellow kayak paddling down a river. The river is surrounded by dense, lush green vegetation, including palm trees and various shrubs. The water is dark blue and reflects the surrounding greenery. The kayaker is wearing a red shirt, a life vest, and sunglasses. The overall scene is peaceful and scenic.

Destinations Florida is the statewide association serving Florida's destination marketing organizations.

The association and its members created this report to demonstrate the value tourism brings the State of Florida and the critical roles state and local tourism promotion organizations play in sustaining Florida's critical tourism industry.

The report is broken up into six sections, including how tourism contributes to Floridians' quality of life, obstacles to tourism growth, common misconceptions about Florida tourism, how local and state tourism promotion organizations attract more visitors and how tourism drives Florida's economy.

For more information on Florida's local tourism promotion efforts, please contact Suzanne Hurst at (850) 222-6127 or suzanne@destinationsflorida.org.

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DESTINATION PROMOTION:

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ISSUE SUMMARY

Tourism is absolutely critical to our state. After all, tourism creates jobs and Florida's tourism industry is the key to our state's economy, both present and future. So, why do we need to keep talking about it? Florida's visitors have always contributed to a vibrant economy, putting two million people to work in hotels, restaurants, attractions, and other tourism-reliant companies. This paper presents how destination promotion is powering Florida's growth, in six sections:

SECTION 1: Tourism Makes the Great Life We Enjoy in Florida Possible

SECTION 4: Tourism Promotion Works for Florida

SECTION 2: Obstacles to Tourism Growth

SECTION 5: DMOs Tell The Community's Story

SECTION 3: Common Misconceptions About Florida Tourism

SECTION 6: VISIT FLORIDA Promotes Florida's Brand



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



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Any obstacles or challenges to tourism growth should be viewed as obstacles to the state's economic growth and well-being. Tourism is a highly competitive, global industry. Through tourism promotion, Florida works hard to attract conventions, sporting events, festivals, concerts and high-value market segments to our state.

To maintain a healthy economy, keep taxes low, including no state-level income tax, and preserve Floridians' quality of life, we must continue to invest in tourism promotion at the state and local levels.



Tourism promotion is necessary to maintain the state's economic well-being and current tax structure. Florida's tourism businesses, including hotels, restaurants and attractions, all pay local property taxes. The revenue generated by Florida's visitors pays for programs and services utilized by residents at the state and local levels.

Without visitor spending, Florida residents would have to pay more than \$1,800 more in state and local taxes each year just to maintain those same programs and services. The alternative would be for state and local elected officials to raise taxes on constituents in order to pay for those programs and services—or eliminate them altogether.

Even with tourism promotion, and more so without it, Florida's tourism industry faces certain obstacles and challenges that it must overcome.

An increasingly competitive business, tourism is a global industry and one that offers travelers more options than ever before. Potential visitors have many places with sunshine and beaches from which to choose. Today, Florida's tourism competitors have become more sophisticated and targeted in their marketing to showcase the options they can provide.

Another challenge to the industry lies in the misperceptions and misinformation that often follow a natural disaster, man-made disaster, viral outbreak, or violent event—all of which have occurred in Florida within the last decade. When a hurricane hits or red tide is present in a certain area of the state, tourism promotion agencies must work overtime to battle mischaracterizations and misinformation that may dissuade potential visitors from coming to Florida.

Perhaps some of the biggest challenges Florida's tourism industry must overcome are a sense of complacency, the perception that tourism promotion is no longer necessary, and a lack of understanding about the role tourism promotion plays at the state and local levels.

We have seen the effects of shortsighted decisions to eliminate or reduce tourism promotion efforts in Colorado, Washington, and Pennsylvania, which resulted in major losses in state revenue and market share. The losses these states suffered show a direct correlation between tourism promotion efforts and state revenues.

There is a side to these losses that's not discussed: the impacts of decisions to eliminate or reduce tourism promotion on small and medium-sized destinations and their tourism-reliant businesses.

Here in Florida, we know how critical the combined efforts of state and local tourism promotion programs are to these small and medium-sized markets and the businesses located within them.

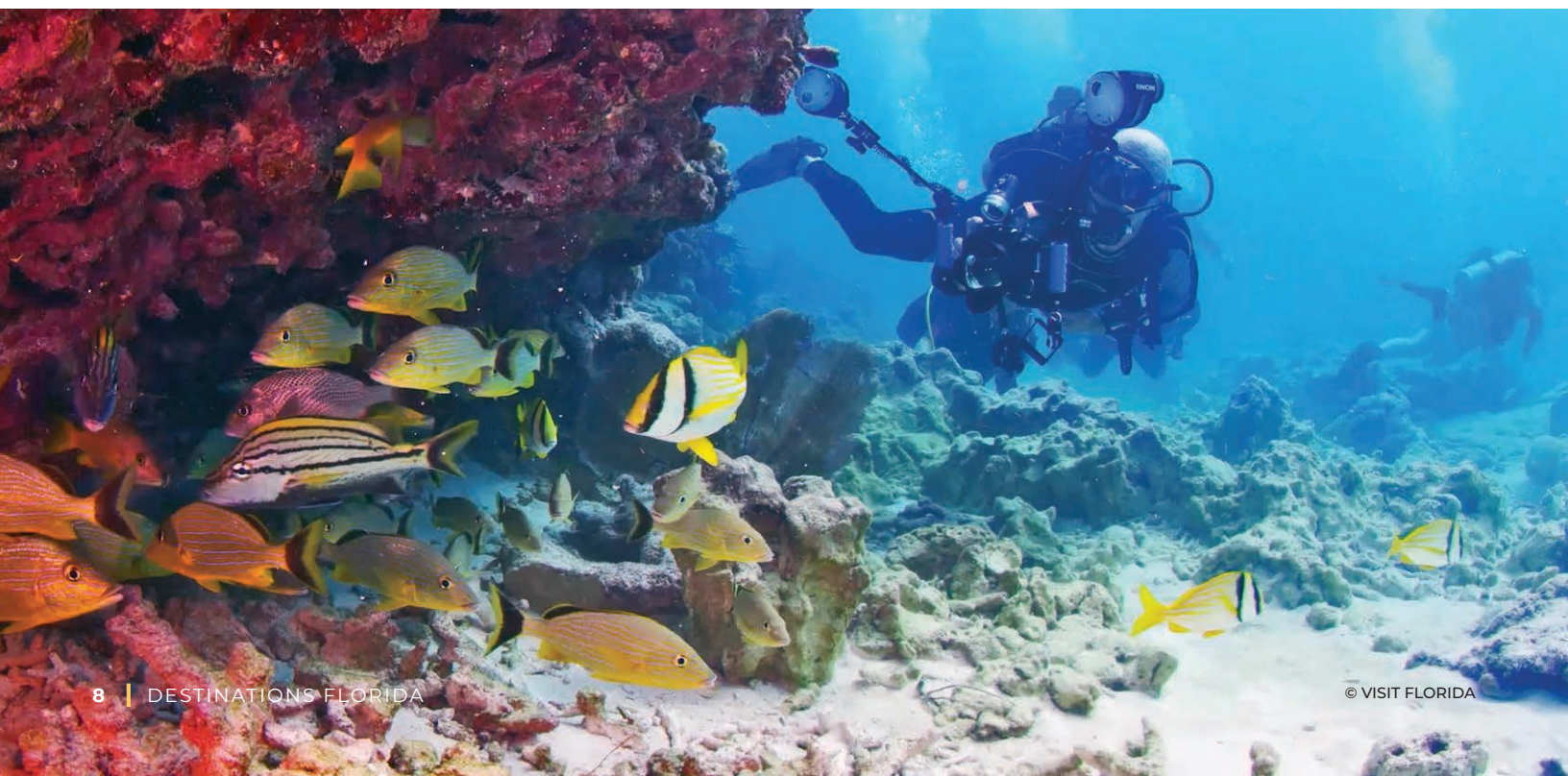
Most small to medium-sized destinations, and

their small-business partners, do not have the funding, resources, or expertise to promote themselves to potential visitors. This is especially helpful to the small and medium-sized markets that compose most of Florida's tourism landscape.

When tourism in these areas suffer, so do the communities. Fewer visitors mean less funding to pay for critical services such as public safety, infrastructure, and education. Residents have to pay more in local taxes and there are fewer job opportunities, including those, such as hospitality, that foster employability skills attractive to employers in all industry sectors.

Any obstacles or challenges to tourism growth should be viewed as obstacles to the state's economic growth and well-being. The way to overcome those obstacles is through the support and continuation of state and local tourism promotion agencies and programs.

Having a state tourism promotion agency, such as VISIT FLORIDA, enables the state to effectively promote the Florida brand more broadly on the national and international levels while supporting





© Visit Tallahassee. Lake Lafayette. Photo by Harry Smith

the state's small and medium-sized markets' efforts. At the same time, it is essential to conduct local tourism promotion efforts through a destination marketing organization (DMO), sometimes also called a convention and visitors bureau (CVB) or a tourist development council (TDC).

These organizations work to persuade potential visitors that their unique Florida destination is the right place for them to visit. DMOs create a brand for their destination and communicate one coherent message about that brand. Through coordination, they bring together a community's tourism-reliant businesses and use their expertise to promote their destination as a package. This is immensely important in areas of the tourism industry that are particularly fruitful to local economies, including international visitors, convention and meeting bookings, and sports marketing.

To maintain a healthy economy, keep the tax base low, and preserve Floridians' quality of life, we must continue to invest in tourism promotion at the state and local levels.

At the state level, we must continue to reauthorize and fully fund VISIT FLORIDA. At the local level, we must protect the funding sources of local tourism promotion agencies by not making any changes to the current permissible uses of visitor-paid Tourist Development Taxes.

Florida's economic engine and future growth is reliant on a vibrant tourism industry and effective tourism promotion.✴

SECTION 1



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**TOURISM MAKES
THE GREAT LIFE WE
ENJOY IN FLORIDA
POSSIBLE**

Florida residents do not pay a state income tax, thanks, in part, to the sales tax revenue generated by visitors to the state. Tourism promotion helps keep the tax base low for Florida residents because the more visitors we have, the more sales tax is generated. Much of the state's services and infrastructure are made possible by the tax dollars coming in from tourism. This funding includes the sales tax on direct spending by visitors, as well as property taxes paid by restaurants, hotels, and other tourism-reliant businesses that own real property; taxes paid by businesses that come into Florida because of our low tax base; and sales tax paid by an increasing number of people who move to Florida.

According to the Florida Legislature's Office of Economic and Demographic Research (EDR), more than \$3.8 billion in annual sales tax revenue is generated by visitors to the state.¹ When you factor in other additional tourism-supported state tax sources, such as corporate income tax, excise tax and fees, Florida car rental surcharge fee and other business taxes, the total amount of state tax revenue generated by tourism surpasses \$8 billion.² These dollars help pay for programs and services provided for in our state budget. Without tourism and tourism promotion, the state would have to raise taxes on residents or reduce or cease to provide vital services.

\$121.5 BILLION TO FLORIDA'S ECONOMY

Without tourism and tourism promotion, every Florida household would have to pay approximately \$1,800 more in taxes each year just to maintain the current level of services.³

In 2022, Florida tourism generated \$8.2 billion in local tax revenues that support our communities.⁴ Those dollars are used by local communities to fund schools and public safety, to build and maintain infrastructure projects, to protect the environment, and to support local arts and culture.



Local taxes from tourism help pay for programs and services important to all Florida residents.



Arts & Culture



Public Safety



Environmental Programs



Schools



Infrastructure

Florida needs visitor-generated sales tax revenue to maintain its current tax structure, to keep taxes low for residents, and to continue to offer existing programs and services.

This is especially important as more Florida visitors choose to become Florida residents after a visit to the state.

Florida's tourism industry is a driver of Florida's growth. Every family's relocation starts with at least one visit to Florida, bringing state and local funding with it in the form of tax revenue. Florida's tourism

industry draws technology businesses to the state because the demand for new technology is an integral part of the operation of so many tourism-reliant businesses and companies. Florida's tax structure, which is made possible through a strong state tourism industry, draws more business to the state, fueling healthy competition and a vibrant free market. In order for Florida to be a leader in domestic migration, we need to maintain the current tourism-reliant tax structure and policies that are drawing visitors and potential residents to our state.

No State Income Tax = Florida's #1 Economic Development Driver

Tourism marketing makes Florida's low tax rates possible.





According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Florida now is the nation's fastest-growing state for the first time since 1957.⁵ Estimates suggest that over the next five years, Florida's population will grow by almost 300,000 new residents per year, or over 800 new residents per day.⁶



More people will require more tax revenue to support services to communities and to provide more work opportunities. Having no state income tax and a low tax base makes Florida an attractive option for businesses looking to relocate or to establish themselves here. Since tourism supports this tax structure, Florida can be a strong player in the global economic development arena. More businesses moving into and starting up in the state will lead to a strong economy, as well as more and better employment options for Floridians. ✨



**Tourism promotion
makes all this possible.**

SECTION 2



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OBSTACLES TO TOURISM GROWTH

Even though Florida is well regarded as a premium tourism destination, we still face serious obstacles to getting visitors to come here. These obstacles fall into two main categories, misinformation/misperceptions and competition.

MISINFORMATION/MISPERCEPTIONS

Another obstacle Florida faces in our efforts to market our state to visitors is misinformation or misperceptions that follow shootings and other violent events or natural disasters such as hurricanes, the Zika virus outbreak, red tide, green/blue algae, and oil spills. Potential visitors see sensationalized news coverage of Florida following a hurricane or other natural disaster, many times accompanied by alarming images, and are led to believe that Florida's destinations are no longer attractive travel locations or they may think an entire area of the state is no longer open for business. Here are a few examples:

HURRICANE MICHAEL

- From a *New York Times* article: "There's no infrastructure that a tourist would want or need for this winter. There's no restaurants, the mom-and-pop shops are virtually all gone, so if I'm a tourist, as much as I love Mexico Beach, I wouldn't go there."⁷

GREEN/BLUE ALGAE AND RED TIDE

- *Bloomberg Businessweek* headline: "Toxic Slime Is Ruining Florida's Gulf Coast"⁸
- CNN headline: "Florida's toxic algae problem and your health: 'Red tide' and 'green slime'"⁹

DEEPWATER HORIZON OIL SPILL

- Reuters headline: "Florida coast suffers first impact from oil spill"; from the article: "It's pretty sad because we go here on vacation every summer, and now we won't be able to go anymore. I just can't believe it, because it used to be all just white sand," one visitor, Grace Vondohlen, said.¹⁰

When disasters occur, Florida needs to work overtime to correct misinformation in the media and the misperceptions our potential visitors might have about how bad or widespread the problem is. We can't do that without a coordinated, organized effort to communicate the facts, not only through the media, but directly to potential visitors and to the visitors already here so they know that Florida is still a great place to be. As stated earlier, economic studies show that tourism is very sensitive to news about disease outbreaks and natural and man-made disasters, and tourism marketers have an important role to play in making sure visitors have correct and timely information to make travel decisions for themselves and their families.

People who live outside of Florida do not necessarily understand the geography of our state. When a hurricane hits in North Florida, for example, visitors see the video of devastated coastal towns and assume all of Florida is out of consideration for their next beach vacation. Of course, Florida has hundreds of miles of coastline, and one job of tourism marketers after a hurricane is to ensure visitors know they have many options in Florida for their beach vacation. Another job is to send continual updates about the areas that were affected by a storm because our coastal towns are resilient, and many hotels, restaurants, and attractions are up and running quite quickly.

While tourism is an important economic driver in the state of Florida, three things are eroding and destroying that driver: the pandemic, competition and misinformation/misperceptions. These two obstacles are taking away visitors while the tourism promotion industry is trying to attract more of them. ✨

COMPETITION

Travel is a global industry and it's incredibly competitive. Potential visitors have many options available to them, including other locations with beautiful beaches and year-round sunshine such as California, Mexico, and the Caribbean. Potential visitors can easily choose these other options over Florida.

In 2023, Florida welcomed more than 140.6 million visitors, but we tend to think of them as one huge market.¹¹ The fact is our visitors comprise several hundred different smaller markets that each require targeted marketing messages to attract them to come here. The demographics range from families in the Midwest who have saved for years to make their one family vacation to Florida, to New Yorkers and other snowbirds who make a trip to the Sunshine State an annual ritual to get away from their cold winters, to wealthy international visitors in South America, the United Kingdom, Europe, Asia, and the Middle East who see Florida as just one of the many beach destinations they have the opportunity to visit.

It is crucial that we have an organized tourism promotion approach for each of these markets because our competitors already do. Mexico is trying to compete with Florida in the Midwestern family market. They are also trying to compete in

the New York City winter getaway market. And they are using their beaches, their hospitality, and frankly, their less expensive pricing to lure visitors to fly over Florida. In addition, more than 50 Caribbean destinations are all competing in the U.S. domestic market, not to mention the many attractions families can visit in and around their own communities. For example, Hershey, Pennsylvania, promotes itself as a summer family destination, and a visit to “the place where they make chocolate” competes with a family vacation in Florida as much as the Caribbean does.

International visitors from Europe and Asia view Florida as a premium destination to visit. They have easy and economical access to nearby beaches in Spain or Turkey, for example, or they might choose an even less expensive vacation in the Middle East because the governments in those countries subsidize flights. Florida is competing internationally with the many governments that want the tax revenue and the job stimulus that come from tourists visiting their destinations, staying in hotels, and visiting their attractions. In addition to providing incentives to visitors by subsidizing flights, these governments also subsidize tourism marketing in order to bring visitors to their communities instead of Florida.

International visitors pay more to come to Florida, and this requires coordinated and targeted marketing to specific audiences to encourage them to visit here. For example, in Brazil, as part of a coming of age ritual for their children, the family gets to go on a vacation and where the children aspire to visit determines where the family goes. Those children won't know that Florida exists unless we tell them how wonderful it can be to take a family vacation here.

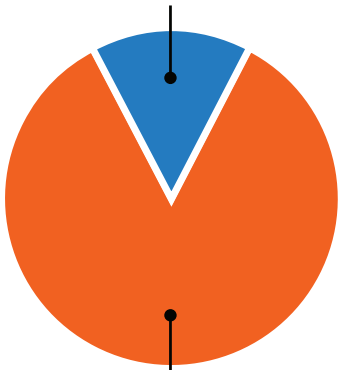
Other demographics require different messaging. For example, single travelers, couples with no children, and older couples won't respond to family vacation messaging. Sports enthusiasts are looking for sports-related reasons to visit a destination. Whatever the demographic, you can be sure that our competitors both within and outside of the United States are sending targeted messages about why those visitors should choose a competitor's location over Florida. Competition for tourists is fierce. ✨



Florida's Top 15 Domestic Markets, Share and Competitors



Florida's Tourism Market Share Per State



Florida's Opportunity To Grow Tourism Market Share



With additional marketing in key markets, Florida has the opportunity to take market share from competitors.



Florida's Top 6 International Markets



Competition is Fierce as Destinations Around the World Battle for Tourism Market Share



DESTINATIONS
FLORIDA

SECTION 3

COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS



While most Floridians agree that visitors drive Florida’s economy, some common misconceptions exist about how Florida attracts visitors and the role of communities and the state in attracting visitors to create demand for tourism-reliant jobs. In this section, we will explore lessons learned from other states.

MISCONCEPTION #1:

FLORIDA DOESN’T NEED ADVERTISING. PEOPLE WILL COME NO MATTER WHAT.

Colorado experimented with this misconception, with disastrous results:

From *The Rise and Fall of Colorado Tourism* report:

“In 1993, Colorado became the only state to eliminate its tourism marketing function, when it cut its \$12 million promotion budget to zero. As a result, Colorado’s domestic market share plunged 30 percent within two years, representing a loss of over \$1.4 billion in tourism revenue annually. Over time, the revenue loss increased to well over \$2 billion yearly. In the important summer resort segment, Colorado dropped from first place among states to 17th.”¹²

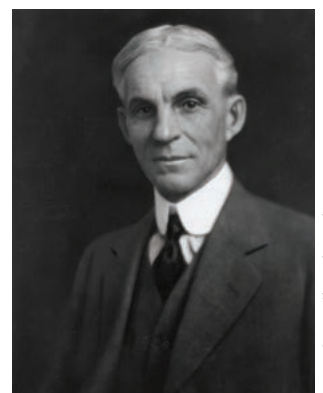


From a U.S. Travel Association report:

“Visitor spending fell dramatically, creating an immediate loss in total revenues of \$1.4 billion, which increased to \$2.4 billion annually by the late 1990s; as a consequence, state and local tax receipts dropped by \$134 million between 1993 and 1997.”¹³

“A man who stops advertising to save money is like a man who stops a clock to save time.”

– Henry Ford, 1863 – 1947
Part-time Florida resident and member of the Florida Inventors Hall of Fame



Encyclopædia Britannica

Realizing the mistake it had made, in 2000, the state of Colorado opened the Colorado Tourism Office with a \$5 million annual budget. Here are the results:

Denver Post headline in 2008: “Tourism grows in Colorado”; from the article:

- “Colorado tourism has regained its momentum after a detour 15 years ago knocked it off track. A renewed effort to advertise the state with funds committed for that purpose has helped propel the state’s tourism industry back to its pre-detour levels.”
- “For the first time, the number of visitors to Colorado has surpassed a 1992 record set shortly before state funding for advertising was slashed.”
- “Though tourism funding was restarted in 2000, it has taken the state nearly eight years to regain the market share that was lost—both in number of trips and in tourism dollars spent in the state.”¹⁴

The Durango Herald headline in 2016: “Increased Colorado tourism attributed to national marketing”; from the article:

- “The Colorado Tourism Office credits its national marketing campaign for a 34.2 percent increase in overall traveler spending in 2015 and an increase in spending from visitors outside the West.”
- “This is some of the best and most positive evidence we’ve seen that increased media budgets and a concerted strategy can yield the desired results,” said Cathy Ritter, director of the Colorado Tourism Office.”¹⁵



Today it is difficult to appreciate the impact this misconception had on Colorado. Prior to 1993, however, the Colorado brand was synonymous with ski vacations, and destinations such as Aspen and Vail dominated U.S. market share. This misjudgment by Colorado lawmakers was exactly the opportunity that states like Utah needed to establish themselves as premium ski destinations, and it took Colorado years to regain its tourism footing.



Colorado is not the only state that thought “people will come no matter what.” Let’s take a look at Washington State. The following information comes from the previously cited report by the U.S. Travel Association, “What’s at Stake When Destinations Stop Marketing.”¹⁶

- In 2011, Washington completely shut down its state tourism promotion office.
- Washington’s neighbors increased their promotion budgets, including a 30 percent increase in Montana. Traveler spending in Montana grew 70 percent faster than in Washington State.
- With zero state support, the travel industry has tried to fill the void by creating the Washington Tourism Alliance (WTA)—a group formed by industry stakeholders to keep alive some critical tourism programs. The WTA’s limited budget enables it to keep up the state’s tourism website and app, as well as publish the annual visitors’ guides. Despite these efforts, Washington State’s tourism continues to fall behind that of other states in the region.

While private companies can do some good by pooling their efforts to advertise their destinations and services, WTA shows that the positive effects are limited. The simple reason is their efforts are not coordinated to benefit the entire state. The members of organizations like these do not have the viewpoint of looking beyond the benefits to their own organizations. There is only so much groups like these can do to help promote tourism to their state without public funds and a coordinated statewide vision behind them.

Pennsylvania also experimented with cutting its tourism promotion budget. Again, citing the U.S. Travel Association report:¹⁷

- Tourism funding fell from \$30 million in Fiscal Year 2008-2009 to only \$7 million in Fiscal Year 2014-2015—a 77 percent decrease.
- Between 2009 and 2014, the state lost more than \$600 million in state and local tax revenue that travelers would have generated had promotion been sustained.
- Between 2010 and 2014, national direct travel spending increased 24 percent, and state and local tax revenues increased 22 percent across all 50 states. Yet during this period, travel spending and state and local tax revenues increased by only 17 percent in Pennsylvania.
- Since 2007, overseas visitors to the United States increased by 44 percent, compared to just 19 percent in Pennsylvania.

Pennsylvania’s experience underscores what happens when a state stops prioritizing tourism promotion in its budget. The state loses money at the state level, and local tax authorities lose money at the city and/or county level.

It may seem impossible for another brand to steal market share from Florida; nonetheless, other states and several countries are promoting themselves every day in an effort to steal visitors away from Florida. It’s crucial that Florida continues to compete to win!

MISCONCEPTION #2:

IT'S SO LITTLE MONEY COMPARED TO PRIVATE ENTERPRISE; HOW COULD IT HAVE AN IMPACT?

It has been said that “in Florida’s trillion-dollar economy, a few million dollars put toward advertising a few different places cannot possibly have a direct correlation to tourism ... the types of attractions that exist here in Florida, the weather—there’s a whole series of factors. VISIT FLORIDA is probably least among them.”

The reality is that these “few million dollars” have huge impacts for small and medium-sized destinations and the tourism-reliant businesses in those destinations.

The larger tourism players have the resources to market themselves. But the 10,000 or so smaller tourism-reliant businesses in our state, businesses that employ a large percentage of the Floridians who work within the tourism industry, do not have the resources or sometimes the requisite marketing skills to adequately promote the great services they provide to their customers. They may not be as sophisticated in negotiating deals with the various media providers around the country and around the world. They may not have as much experience using Facebook and other social media ads, and they could waste a lot of money on ads or marketing that is not going to generate visitors for their community or the state of Florida.

When we have a team of people who come together in order to promote the state of Florida and they are able to select markets, focus on audiences, and then work on a cooperative basis with members of the industry, then every stakeholder is able to grow. The investments made for marketing are more effective and they

are maximized because they are being paired with other dollars. Everyone benefits by working together versus each business working in its own silo.

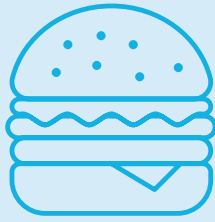
State funds are especially critical for helping communities communicate and promote themselves following natural disasters or environmental crises. Here is an example of how designated tourism promotion dollars helped Collier County keep visitors coming to Naples, Marco Island, and the Everglades in the wake of sensationalized reports about red tide on Florida’s Gulf Coast:

Using its emergency marketing funds and VISIT FLORIDA grant dollars, the Naples, Marco Island, Everglades Convention and Visitors Bureau (the CVB) developed a campaign to overcome misinformation put out by national media about red tide on Florida’s Gulf Coast. News reports made it sound as if the entire region was suffering from the effects of red tide, with photos of dead fish featured prominently in TV, newspaper, and other reports. The CVB was able to communicate accurate, up-to-date information, and a regional grant from VISIT FLORIDA helped the area’s tourism partners to get improved listings on Google so that their customers could be better informed that they were open and welcoming visitors.

The results speak for themselves: There were no significant cancellations or drops in the Tourist Development Tax in Collier County during the red tide event.

Here are two more examples of how destination marketing dollars were put to good use after a natural disaster:

The Sand Dollar Café in Port St. Joe is a small local eatery in a Hurricane Michael-impacted community. This restaurant was included in a post-hurricane recovery marketing effort launched by the Gulf County Tourist Development Council (the TDC). The owner and his restaurant were included in an ad that was promoted outside of Florida, and the co-owner received a call from his friends in Atlanta to tell him they saw him and his business on TV in the Atlanta market. The ad helped the owner and his restaurant immensely. The Sand Dollar Café regained all its business in 2019 and saw a season as busy, if not busier, as before the storm. None of this could have happened without the help of the TDC because the restaurant's business comes mainly by word of mouth.



VISIT FLORIDA partners with DMOs that don't have the financial resources to market their regions on their own, especially if a region has been hit with a natural disaster. VISIT FLORIDA offers several grant opportunities, recognizing that marketing specific regions and what they have to offer is vital for local communities and in turn, all of Florida.¹⁸ Here is an example:

Destination Panama City launched a post-hurricane recovery campaign, *Postcards from Panama City*, which sought to keep the region relevant to visitors while the region was recovering. The campaign was a mix of direct mail and social media, effectively using photo assets the DMO already had on hand. Since the hurricane had wiped out many of the other resources Destination Panama City needed to be successful with this campaign, the DMO received a grant from VISIT FLORIDA, which helped fund the direct mailer portion of the campaign.





© Weeki Wachee Springs State Park, Blue Spring Waters River

MISCONCEPTION #3: BUSINESSES CAN MARKET THEMSELVES.

While larger companies can afford to market themselves, small and medium-sized businesses cannot. Without the assistance of state and local tourism promotion programs, small tourism-reliant businesses would not have the time, resources, or dollars to promote themselves and would lose entire sectors of customers and potential customers. Here's an example:

NJoy Spirits Distillery in Weeki Wachee is one of Florida's first craft distilleries. This very small business, owned by a husband and wife, works with a modest budget to market the distillery as an agri-tourism business, which is why the couple relies heavily on support from local and state tourism promotion efforts.

This mom and pop company didn't have the funds to purchase much-needed signage to engage visitors traveling on U.S. Highway 19. With a VISIT FLORIDA grant obtained with the help of the area's destination marketing organization, Florida's Adventure Coast, Brooksville-Weeki Wachee, NJoy Spirits Distillery was able to purchase signage to attract visitors and direct them to its location. The remaining grant dollars enabled the business owners to produce a short video to use in their tasting room, to create print brochures, and to advertise on social media.



The results? Since NJoy Spirits Distillery received that help, visitation has quadrupled and 95 percent of visitors say they plan to return.

MISCONCEPTION #4:

THE MONEY BEING SPENT ON TOURISM DOES NOT HAVE A DIRECT CORRELATION TO INCREASED TOURISM.

It has been said that fluctuations in the funding of VISIT FLORIDA do not correlate to fluctuations in tourism to the state. But the statistics don't bear this out. When state tourism promotion funding is eliminated or decreased, market share is lost, visitors decrease, and tax funds are lost, as we have seen in the case studies of Colorado, Washington State, and Pennsylvania. When funding decreased, market share decreased. And when tourism promotion was reinstated, as it was in Colorado, for example, market share returned over time and visitation eventually reached record levels. This is the result of tourism promotion. There is a direct link between tourism promotion and a healthy tourism industry, according to Florida TaxWatch:

2023 Florida TaxWatch Report:

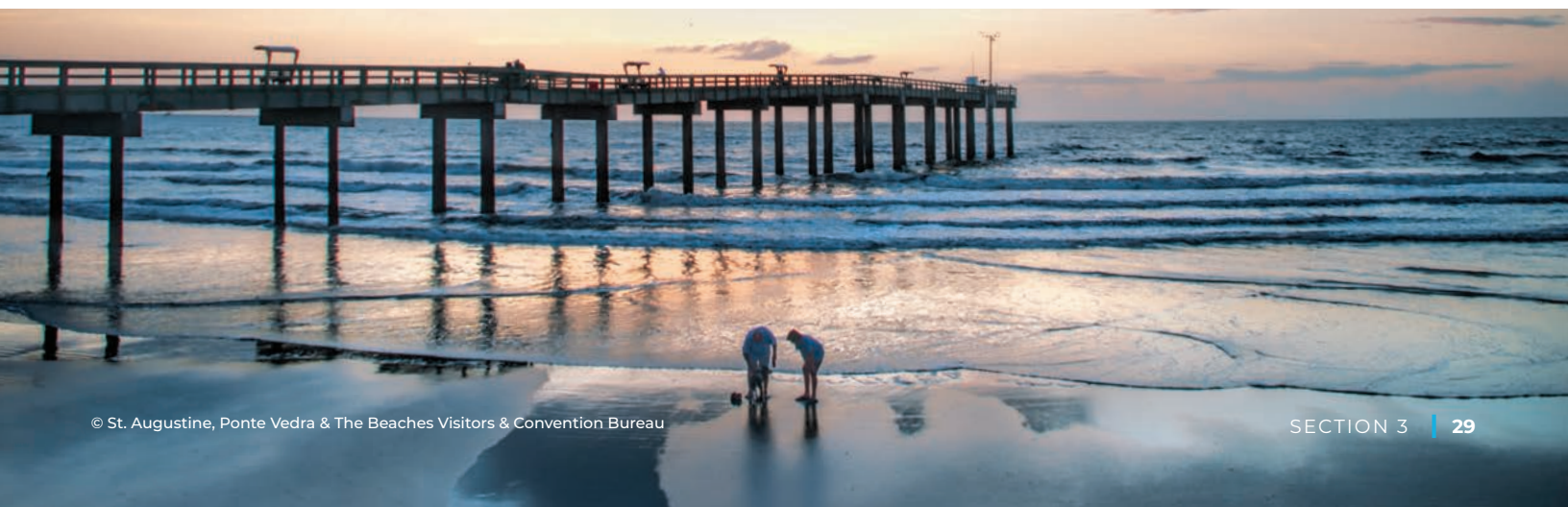
Over the years, a number of Florida TaxWatch research projects have highlighted the value of VISIT FLORIDA and shown that continuous, targeted investment in Florida tourism promotion is critical to our state's economic success. VISIT FLORIDA has been instrumental in helping tourism recover following disasters and events such as hurricanes, red tide, the Zika virus scare, and the COVID-19 pandemic, dispelling rumors and letting the world know that Florida and its beaches and other attractions were open for business.¹⁹

Tourism promotion also has an important environmental impact, which in turn has a direct correlation to Florida's economy.

The sales tax revenue and the Tourist Development Tax funding generated by tourism makes a significant impact on preserving Florida's environment. For example, when Hurricane Matthew moved up the northeast coast of Florida, Jacksonville Beach lost 80 percent of its sand dunes. Not only are the dunes part of the beauty of this area, but they are also a major protection against coastal flooding. Visitors help to provide direct funding to restore beaches and sand dunes, both after storms and for regular maintenance to mediate natural erosion. If visitors aren't paying for it, then it will be the residents who must pay for it.

From Florida Tourism cited by a Florida Climate Institute report:

"It is estimated that each state dollar spent on the protection of Florida's public access beaches prevents the loss of \$8 in state taxes paid by out-of-state tourists and resident users of those beaches."²⁰



MISCONCEPTION #5:

DO SOMETHING ELSE WITH MY MONEY, LIKE FUND OUR POLICE FORCES BETTER OR FUND SCHOOLS BETTER. LOW CRIME AND GOOD EDUCATION WILL BRING PEOPLE TO FLORIDA FOR THE RIGHT REASONS.

The fact is, local taxes generated by tourism promotion support critical citizens services, including education, public safety, and infrastructure such as roads. In addition to providing people in local communities with the services they need, tourism and tourism promotion put 2 million people to work in Florida²¹ and provide them with many opportunities to improve their lives. Reducing or diverting tourism

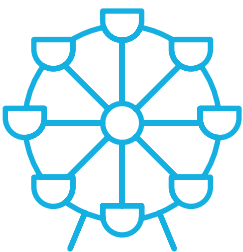
marketing funds to other uses actually eats into the source of funds for public safety, education, and infrastructure. Visitors underwrite those services, so increased tourism marketing will actually result in increased funding for community services.



MISCONCEPTION #6:

TOURISM IS JUST A BUNCH OF LOW-PAYING HOSPITALITY JOBS.

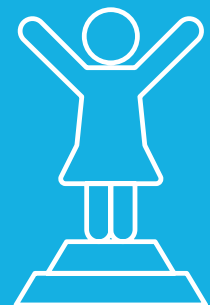
According to the Florida Chamber of Commerce and the Florida Chamber Foundation, Florida's hospitality industry helps foster the employability



skills ("soft skills") attractive to most employers.²² One of the goals to improve Florida's talent pipeline delineated in the Florida Chamber Foundation's

Florida 2030: The Blueprint to Secure Florida's Future is "80 percent of Florida's workforce has essential employability skills,"²³ skills that many workers hone while working in the hospitality/tourism industry. And according to the U.S. Travel Association, two out of five workers that start their careers in hospitality end up earning six figures.²⁴ The tourism industry gives Florida's citizens a foot in the door, invests in their training, and then give

The tourism industry gives Florida's citizens a foot in the door, invests in their training, and then gives them the opportunity to learn the essential skills that can advance their careers.





SECTION 4

TOURISM PROMOTION WORKS FOR FLORIDA



Tourism promotion has resulted in Florida being one of the world's leading destinations. A many layered approach, tourism promotion works best through teamwork and partnership. It is a mix of efforts from both the public and private sectors. We start at the top with a strong state tourism promotion effort by VISIT FLORIDA to promote Florida's brand. Local tourism promotion organizations communicate about their specific destinations within that strong brand. The private sector markets their unique businesses adding to the tourism promotion efforts and marketing spend.

When structured as a public-private partnership, tourism promotion works as a team to generate

more revenue for state and local governments and create a framework to support continued business growth.

Both the private and public sectors have an important stake in ensuring revenue to local travel industry businesses and the corresponding tax receipts derived from visitor expenditures continue to grow. Both VISIT FLORIDA and local tourism promotion agencies and travel industry partners serve an important role that the other could not fully perform. Here's a look at the different roles the private and public sectors have and how they work hand-in-hand.

Role of the Public Sector	Role of the Private Sector
Serve as the official voice of travel and tourism.	Identify target markets and develop appropriate messaging.
Create a unified brand all Florida businesses can promote.	Support the unified Florida brand by using consistent imagery in all marketing efforts.
Promote one trusted source website for Florida information.	Ensure destination information is up to date on VisitFlorida.com to ensure visitors find the information they are looking for and can rely upon.
Advertising and promotion to support statewide Florida brand.	Incorporate the Florida brand on their websites, marketing collateral and onsite to demonstrate their official status and unity of message to visitors.
Use statewide buying power to negotiate cooperative marketing programs for Florida businesses.	Buy into cooperative marketing opportunities to access programs that wouldn't have been available or affordable on their own.
Identify underserved communities to provide increased exposure.	Engage when invited and provide relevant information for promotions.
Promote destinations and small businesses that out-of-state visitors may have never heard of.	Provide a product visitors are motivated and willing to travel to for a visit.
Conduct promotions in target destinations for businesses that couldn't provide them on their own.	Provide accommodations and activities that can be used as giveaways for promotions in exchange for out of market promotion.
Keep politics out of tourism promotion.	Ensure all constituencies throughout the destination are included.



LIBRARY

MONEY

RESTROOMS

Bowling

ART Gallery

ANTIQUE SHOP

FIDDLE: REPAIR

HAIRCUTS

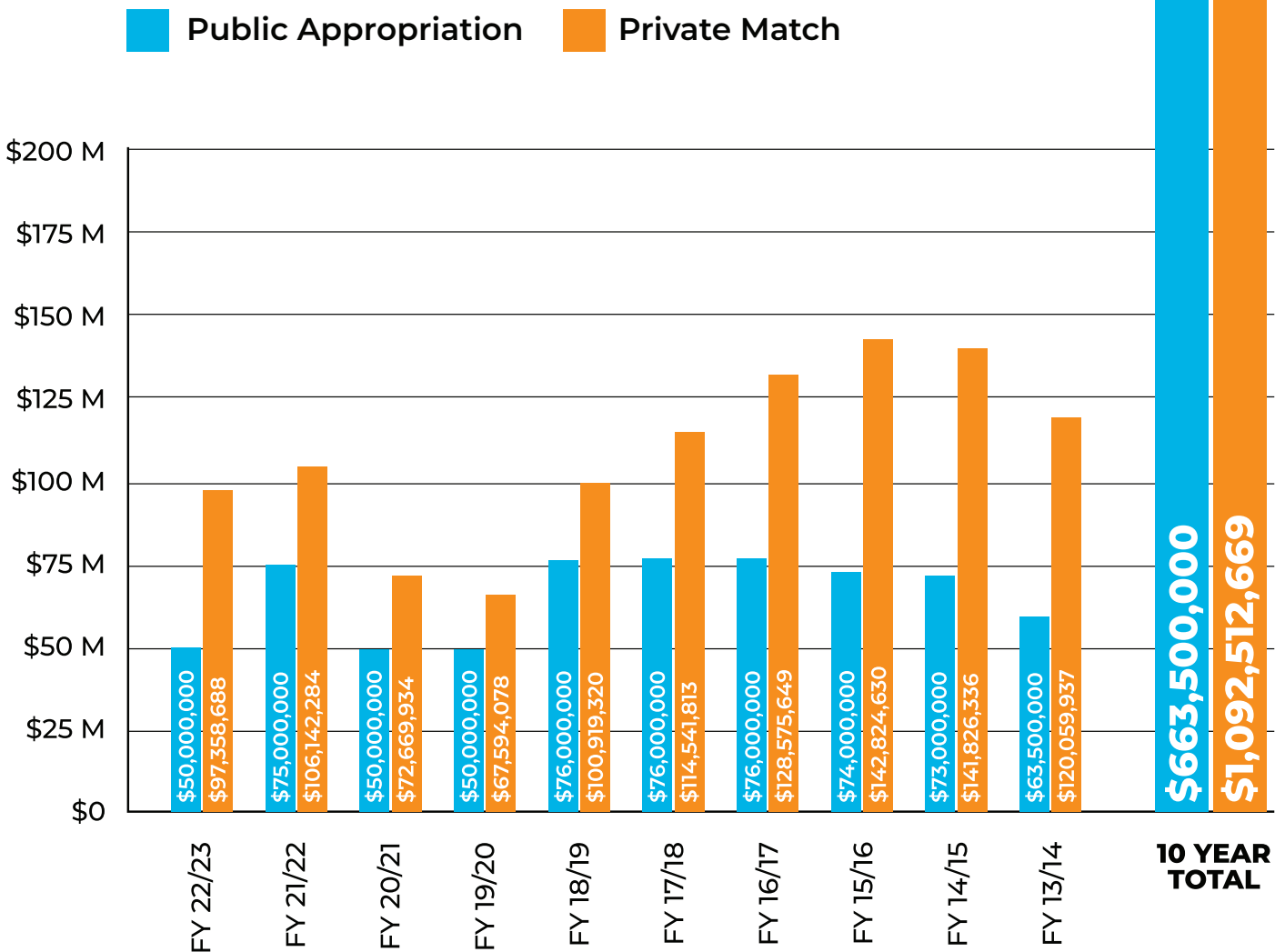
FOOD

PORTLAND 2955 mi.

FRESH
Bambi's
COUNTRY
MARKET

NATURAL FOODS
Cafe
sandwiches • Soups
Salads • Desserts
Coffee • Hibiscus Tea
fresh Juices & Smoothies

Additionally, VISIT FLORIDA matches each dollar it receives from taxpayers with a dollar in value from the private sector. This partnership allows Florida’s tourism industry to invest in VISIT FLORIDA’s programs that are designed to benefit the entire state. Over the course of the past 10 years, every dollar VISIT FLORIDA has invested in tourism promotion, the private sector has matched with \$1.65.



SECTION 5



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DMOS TELL THE COMMUNITY'S STORY

Florida is not one large homogeneous destination. Florida offers big-city excitement and sophistication, small-town charm, beach-town relaxation and water sports, horse ranches, NASCAR racing, natural springs and rivers, hunters' and fishers' paradises, cruise ports, and the list goes on and on. Because each area of Florida is unique, each community needs its own brand of tourism promotion. That is where a DMO/CVB/TDC comes in.

WHAT IS A DMO/CVB/TDC AND WHY DO WE NEED THEM?

A destination marketing organization (DMO), sometimes called a convention and visitor bureau (CVB) or a tourist development council (TDC), is responsible for promoting a community as an attractive travel destination and for enhancing its public image as a dynamic place to live and work. Through the impact of visitors, the DMO strengthens the economic position and provides opportunities for people to work in its community.

Destination promotion is a public good for the benefit and well-being of all. It is an essential investment no community can afford to abate without causing detriment to the community's future economic and social well-being. DMOs are especially important for small or medium-sized markets that have to compete against the major metropolitan areas of our state, such as Miami, Orlando, Tampa and Jacksonville.

A DMO PROVIDES THREE MAIN BENEFITS TO ITS DESTINATION

1 PROMOTION

The first benefit a DMO provides is promoting the destination. Most visitors choose the destination first, and then select the hotels and attractions they want to visit. To draw visitors, you must first market your destination—why people should come to your community, what is unique about it, and what it offers. A DMO does exactly that.

Just because one attraction can market itself, doesn't mean it can take on the task of marketing the entire region. DMOs around the state have launched marketing and advertising campaigns using traditional and social media to promote their regions. Here are some examples:

Punta Gorda/Englewood Beach Visitor & Convention Center's *Are You Beach Ready?* campaign

was a post red tide campaign to show visitors that the region was safe and ready for visitation. Here are the campaign's results provided directly by the Punta Gorda/Englewood Beach Visitor & Convention Center:

- Attracted new visitors from the Northeast, Midwest, and Canada, and let visitors know the region was open for business and safe for visitation
- **\$1,009,357** Tourist Development Tax (TDT) in March 2019
- **5.43 percent** year-over-year increase in TDT
- Increased visitors in 2018 by **13.72 percent**

Visit St. Lucie's *Share Your Summer* social media campaign was created to increase off-season hotel occupancy. The DMO partnered with industry leaders to provide exclusive offers for locals to invite their friends and families via social media. In this campaign, the DMO effectively used local voices to attract new visitors to St. Lucie. Here are the results provided directly by Visit St. Lucie:

- Hotel occupancy was up **3.48 percent** in June 2017 and up **8.2 percent** in August 2017
- The impact of the campaign was felt in a community where tourism contributes more than **\$801 million in economic impact**²⁵
- According to a 2017 Visitor Tracking & Economic Impact study by Visit St. Lucie, **94 percent** of visitors reported they will return to St. Lucie²⁶

Both of these examples illustrate the power of the DMO to promote the destination as a whole. Other promotions might include a beach trip giveaway on a Chicago radio station during wintertime. The DMO can pull together transportation, lodging, meals, and attractions to create a complete package. A Chicago (or New York or Minneapolis) radio station won't be interested in a standalone hotel voucher. It is the DMO that can promote the entire destination and work with industry partners to provide a package that media will want to promote.

2 COORDINATION

Second, a DMO coordinates the many voices and messages of the tourism-reliant businesses within the community. Without a DMO promoting the destination with one coherent message, each hotel, restaurant, attraction, or other tourism-reliant company would be left to create its own messaging to describe the area's brand. The result of this would actually be no brand at all. Each description might be about the same few miles of the Florida coast or a natural camping area, but to the potential visitor it might sound like dozens of different locations. Consider what it would be like if every Publix grocery store created its own logo and branding. You wouldn't have a cohesive brand and you wouldn't know what to expect when you went there. That is why it is so important for the local DMO to serve as the community's brand ambassador to get everyone within the community on the same team in order to communicate with one voice and one message.

3 EXPERTISE

The third benefit the DMO offers to its community is expertise. The DMO understands who the target markets are for the community. The DMO researches and builds relationships with the important media within those markets. The DMO builds relationships with the online marketing companies and then works with local companies so they can take advantage of those relationships. The DMO is a great help to area businesses because individual companies and even their sales teams are often so busy dealing with the day-to-day that they don't have time to deal with marketing. They don't have the resources. They don't have the perspective the DMO has that allows it to understand each market and then tailor marketing messages to a specific market.



The DMO sells its community as a package—the DMO is the entity that connects visitors to the region. Tourism marketers connect local businesses, help build the destination’s brand, and are the conduit to creating value. A DMO is a part of the community so it can tell that community’s unique story in ways that attract visitors in various markets. Following are some examples.

INTERNATIONAL MARKETING



In addition to domestic marketing within Florida and the United States, DMOs are instrumental in promoting their destinations to visitors from around the world. The travel

industry is a global industry. Every destination competes with every other destination on the planet. Destinations need to promote themselves specifically to potential international visitors, which represent an important sector of Florida’s overall annual visitors. On average, international visitors stay longer and spend almost twice as much more per person than domestic visitors.²⁷

- **From VISIT FLORIDA:** In 2023, overseas visitation to Florida was estimated at 8.3 million – almost 6 percent of Florida’s visitors that year.²⁸
- **From the U.S. Travel Association:** “Just the failure to keep pace with global long-haul travel cost the U.S. 78 million lost visitors; \$606 billion in lost total travel and tourism output that could have supported 467,000 jobs annually; and \$37 billion in lost direct travel generated tax revenues. Imagine the economic benefits that might have accrued had the U.S. actually fought to increase market share, just as our travel competitors in Canada, Mexico, Australia and other nations did.”²⁹

The message is clear. To be competitive, Florida needs local DMOs to leverage their expertise in marketing to potential visitors around the world.



© VISIT FLORIDA

CONVENTION MARKETING

Another lucrative market that DMOs are in a position to tap for their communities is the conventions and meetings market. Large conventions can go anywhere. When Florida DMOs land them for their communities, those meetings have a tremendous economic impact, providing revenue for the tourism industry and tax revenue for the state. In Orlando, the Orange County Convention Center is known as the second largest convention facility in the United States, and attracts approximately 1.4 million attendees to 230 conventions and events each year contributing approximately \$2.4 billion to the area's economy each year.³⁰

While Florida is a highly attractive location for these large-scale events, the state has major competition from other states with equally attractive destinations and offerings, such as Nevada, California, Illinois, and New York, all vying for a meeting planner's attention. Meeting planners are busy people. They are trying to find the best destinations and the best deals. And they are trying to decide which destination will attract the most participants. Being a peninsula at one corner of the continent, Florida is a long drive or flight from the rest of the country. For a meeting planner to say, "Yes, I want to put my meeting in Florida," that meeting

planner must believe Florida is the location that is going to attract more attendees than any other, that there is pent-up demand among potential attendees to come to Florida. Being successful in this market requires traveling to where national organizations and associations are headquartered: Washington, D.C., New York City, Chicago, and Indianapolis (for train-industry related organizations), and competing with convention facilities either within those cities or nearby.

1.4M
ATTENDEES
TO MORE THAN
230
CONVENTIONS

DMOs have team members who can promote their cities as convention destinations to meeting planners. This requires knowing what conventions are happening around the country, which meeting planners move their events around to different cities throughout the country, which meeting planners are choosing to move their location soon, which conventions have the greatest return on investment, which ones bring the most attendees, which ones bring the most exhibitors, and which ones are going to have the greatest economic impact for the community as well as the state. DMOs are making calls on those meeting planners, giving them information about their community, and promoting their community's resources to host a convention.

One group, typically a DMO, needs to spearhead the process of obtaining a major convention for its city. It won't happen because one hotel talks to one caterer, an audio-visual company, and a facility that can accommodate a large group of people. You need a unifying organization, a DMO, to bring all the needed players together. Large events often use multiple hotels and a convention center, as well as several product and service suppliers, and it is really only the DMO that is able to pull each of the players together and create a proposal for the meeting planner to consider.

As an illustration of how this works, Discover The Palm Beaches created a campaign to bring in more conventions and events. Here is a summary:

Discover The Palm Beaches worked with the Palm Beach County Convention Center and hotel partners to launch an aggressive sales campaign to book conventions and events in Palm Beach County, with these results:

- **98 percent increase** in booking; highest booking year since 2014³¹
- **231,000 hotel nights** booked in 2018; double the 2014 number³²
- **\$7 billion economic impact** in Palm Beach County, spurring the need to expand the convention center and convention center district³³



Another important role the DMO can play is to help educate residents of the community about the benefits of having a large convention in town. Rather than focusing on the inconvenience of increased traffic or longer waits at restaurants, the DMO can tout the substantial boost to the local economy, which goes back to employing people, helping the environment, and maintaining a high quality of life for the area's residents.



© The Beaches of Fort Myers and Sanibel

SPORTS MARKETING

Sports marketing targets a growing niche market in our state. Florida's sports industry helps welcome visitors to the state who wouldn't normally come. According to a 2022 report by the Florida Sports Foundation,³⁴ Florida's sports industry:

- **Accounted for nearly 28.1 million** non-resident visitors to the State of Florida (representing 14 percent of all Florida tourism)
- **Attracted \$25.2 billion** in purchases of goods and services from out-of-state buyers and visitors
- **Generated \$71.7 billion** in direct sales across the Florida economy
- **Generated \$146.5 billion** in total sales across the Florida economy, including indirect and induced sales
- **Accounted for 978,200** jobs in Florida
- **Generated \$13.9 billion** in revenues for state and local government coffers

Many local economies depend on visitors coming in specifically for sports. For example, The Beaches of Fort Myers and Sanibel's *Spring Training Promotion* includes partnerships with the Boston

Red Sox and the Minnesota Twins to promote their Spring Training and brings visitors who wouldn't normally come to the region.

- **41 percent of visitors** surveyed said they were there just for Spring Training and shared they might not have come without it as an incentive
- **50 percent** said Spring Training was the primary reason for their visit
- **\$68.9 million** was spent by visitors³⁵

Tampa Bay is home to major sports programs in the NHL, NFL, MLB, and USL. It is also the home of the New York Yankees' spring training and the recent addition of the Tampa Bay Sun, Tampa's first women's professional soccer team.

The sports industry experienced a remarkable:

- **119.5% growth** from 2019 to 2023, with
- Over **\$1.2 million** in 2023
- Nearly a **5% increase since 2022**

Total overnight visitor **spending increased 6.5% in 2023**, building on the significant growth in 2022. This upward trend reflects increased demand across all sectors.✦

HOW DMOS ARE FUNDED

Tourist Development Taxes are how local communities support their area DMO/CVB/TDC and their own local tourism promotion efforts. Residents do not pay these taxes, but rather these taxes are paid *by visitors to attract more visitors*. Tourism promotion funding raised through Tourist Development Taxes is crucial to attracting and growing visitors throughout the state, including visitors to small and medium-sized destinations.

A significant percentage of Florida's visitors are returning visitors, so ongoing promotion is necessary to keep them coming back year after year. Without funds dedicated to tourism promotion, local communities won't be able to attract new visitors, or even retain their current customer base for future stays. As we learned from the case studies of Colorado, Pennsylvania, and Washington State, when funding to promote tourism is curtailed or eliminated, tourists find

other destinations to visit. Attracting fewer visitors means less work and fewer opportunities for the people who live in our communities.

It is critical to maintain the current permissible uses of Tourist Development Taxes and not view it as a pot of money that can be used for anything and everything. Lodging establishments voluntarily agreed to be taxed to promote tourism and visitation to their county. Expanding the use of this tax is a breach of that agreement. The voters approved the funding of local tourism promotion programs through Tourist Development Taxes because it provides the "seed money" necessary to stimulate the local tourism economy and keep visitors coming to the area. Diverting money away from tourism promotion, even for services such as public safety, reduces the positive economic support and opportunities visitors provide to local communities.



ABOUT TOURIST DEVELOPMENT TAXES

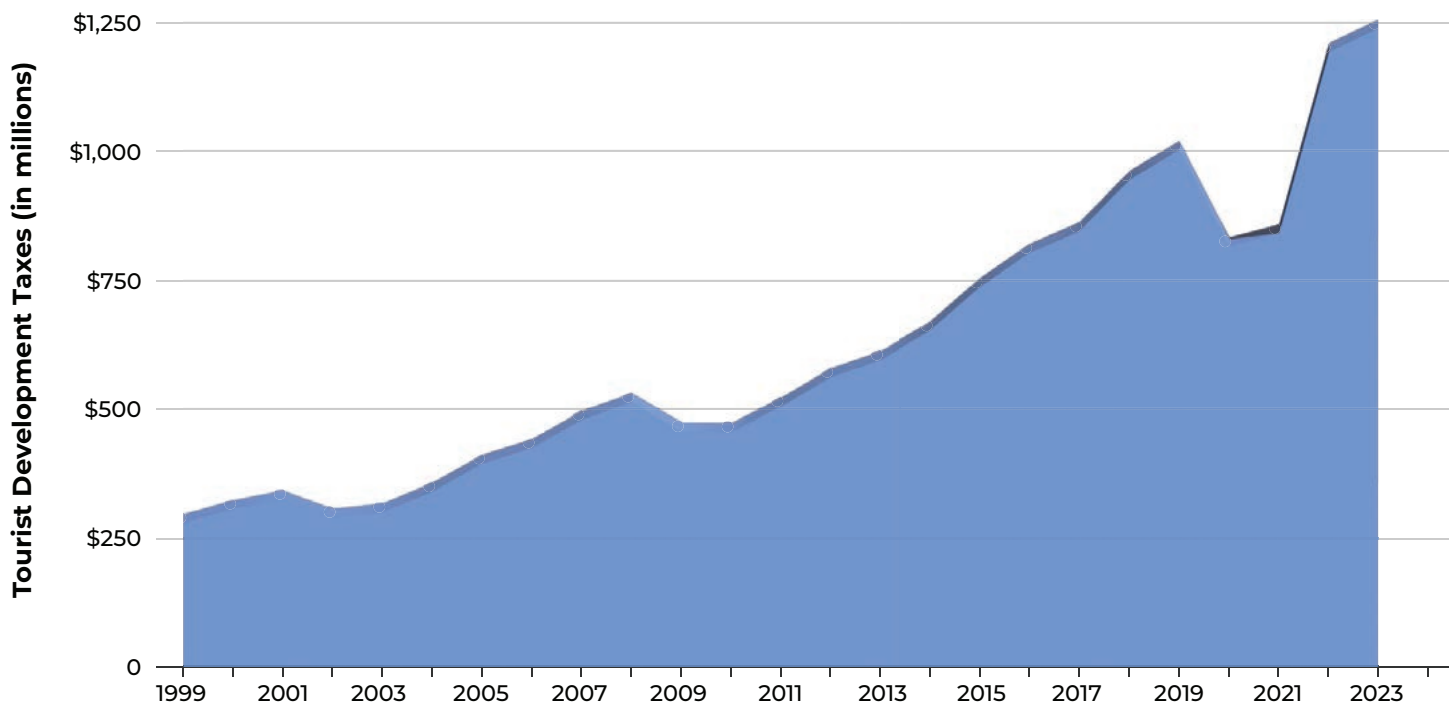
Tourist Development Taxes, commonly called “bed taxes,” are collected by counties on overnight stays at hotels and vacation rentals. These are levied in addition to state sales tax, any local option discretionary sales surtax, and any other local tourism tax.

To ensure there would always be funding for local tourism promotion, the hotel and lodging industry volunteered to have these taxes levied on themselves. In 1977, the Florida Legislature passed a state law allowing counties to levy Tourist Development Taxes and local voters approved them through a countywide referendum.

Currently, 62 of Florida's 67 counties have Tourist Development Taxes.

In addition to funding local tourism promotion, Tourist Development Taxes can be used for a variety of other purposes. Depending on the county, Tourist Development Taxes can be used for convention centers and other venues, sports stadiums and arenas, aquariums and museums, zoos, nature centers, fishing piers, and beach improvement projects.

25 YEARS OF TOURIST DEVELOPMENT TAXES COLLECTION³⁶



PERMISSIBLE USES OF FLORIDA'S



**Original Tax
1st & 2nd Penny
PASSED IN 1977**

**125.0104 (3)(c)
Referendum**



**Additional Tax
3rd Penny
PASSED IN 1986**

**125.0104 (3)(d)
Extraordinary vote**



**Professio
Fran
4th P
PASSED**

**125.010
Majori**




Authorized Uses: 125.0104 (5)

1. Promote and advertise tourism in the state, nationally and internationally.
2. Fund convention bureaus and tourist information centers.
3. Acquire, construct, extend, enlarge, remodel, repair, improve, maintain, operate, or promote: convention centers, sports stadiums, arenas, auditoriums and aquariums.
4. Promote publicly owned and operated zoos.
5. Finance beach park facilities or beach, channel, estuary or lagoon improvement, maintenance, renourishment, restoration and erosion control.
6. Acquire, construct, extend, enlarge, remodel, repair, improve, maintain, operate, or promote public facilities that are needed to increase tourist-related business activities in the county.

Au 1

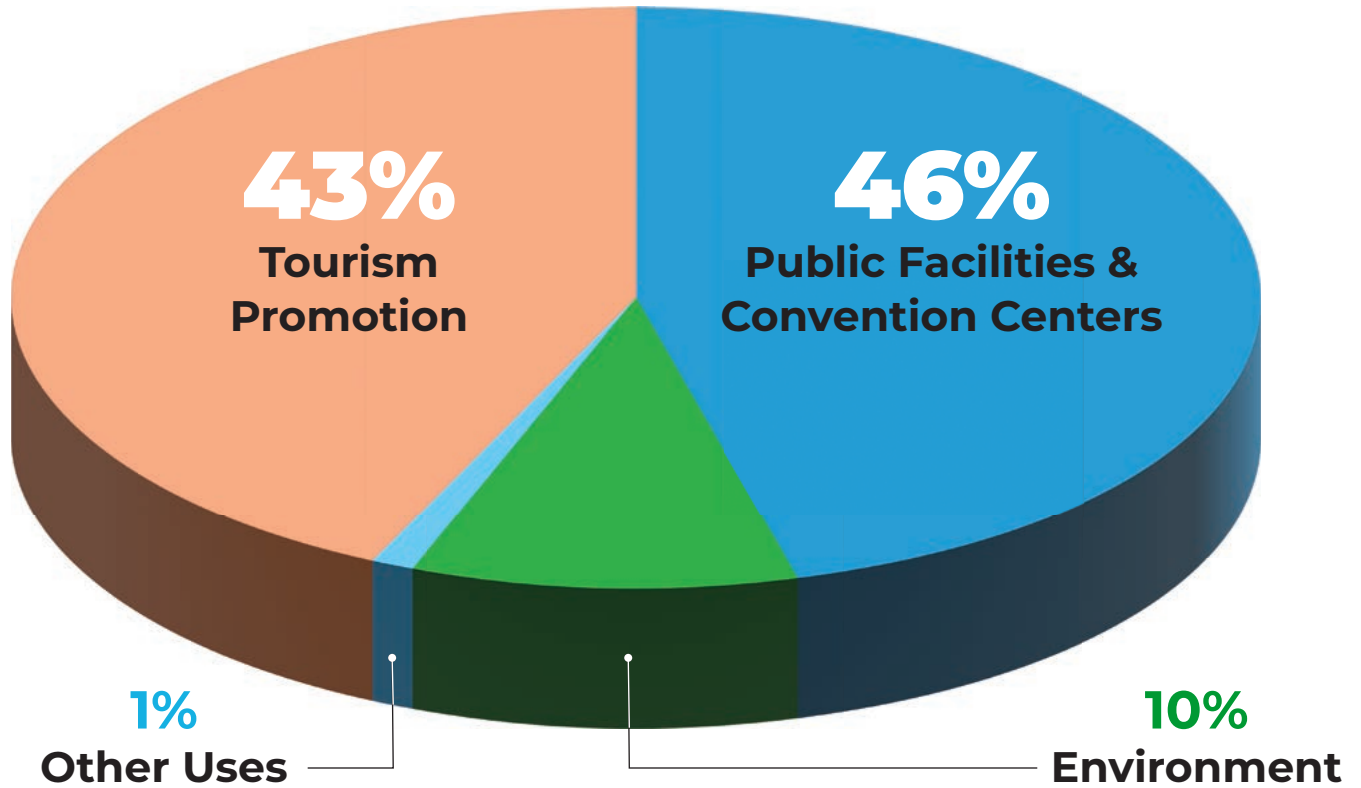
1. Promote an
state, nation
2. Pay the deb
construction
planning an
professiona
3. Acquisition,
or renovatio
for a retaine

TOURIST DEVELOPMENT TAXES

		
<p>Professional Sports Franchise 5th Penny* PASSED IN 1988</p>	<p>High Tourism Impact 5th Penny PASSED IN 1989</p>	<p>Add. Professional Sports Franchise 6th Penny PASSED IN 1994</p>
<p>125.0104 (3)(l) Majority vote</p>	<p>125.0104 (3)(m) Extraordinary vote*</p>	<p>125.0104 (3)(n) Majority vote plus one</p>
<p>Authorized Uses: 125.0104 (3)(l)</p> <p>Promote and advertise tourism in the state, nationally and internationally.</p> <p>Pay the debt on bonds issued to finance construction, reconstruction or renovation, planning and design costs for a new professional sports franchise</p> <p>Acquisition, construction, reconstruction or renovation, planning and design costs for a retained spring training franchise.</p>		<p>Authorized Uses: 125.0104 (3)(n)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Promote and advertise tourism in the state, nationally and internationally. Pay the debt on bonds issued to finance construction, reconstruction or renovation, planning and design costs for a new professional sports franchise Acquisition, construction, reconstruction or renovation, planning and design costs for a retained spring training franchise.

*Only for counties with TDT collections exceed \$600 million or at least \$200 million collected in lodging sales tax.

TOURIST DEVELOPMENT TAXES EXPENDITURES STATEWIDE IN 2022



Tourist Development Taxes are the “seed money” we use to attract visitors to Florida’s destinations and fund environmental preservation, restoration, and public facilities that benefit residents and visitors alike. Florida counties may levy Tourist Development Taxes of up to 6% on accommodations rented for six months or less. Over the years, there has been an increase in collections of Tourist Development Taxes, which shows this is a model that is working, and working well, for Florida. Not only are Florida counties able to recoup the costs of tourism promotion from visitors to the area, they are also able to fund projects that strengthen their communities and provide benefits to the people who live there.



DESTINATIONS FLORIDA MEMBERS ATTRACT VISITORS TO THEIR DESTINATIONS

Amelia Island Convention & Visitors Bureau

Bradenton Area CVB

Clay County Board of Commissioners

Daytona Beach Area Convention & Visitors Bureau

Destination Panama City (PCCDC)

Destin-Fort Walton Beach, Florida

Discover Crystal River Florida

Discover Lake County

Discover The Palm Beaches

Experience Kissimmee

Florida's Adventure Coast, Brooksville-Weeki Wachee

Florida's First Coast of Golf

Florida's Space Coast Office of Tourism

Florida's Sports Coast

Fort Myers-Islands, Beaches & Neighborhoods

Franklin County Tourist Development Council

Gilchrist County TDC

Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau

Gulf County Tourist Development Council

Hendry County Tourist Development Council

Jackson County Tourist Development Council

Levy County Visitors Bureau

Martin County Office of Tourism & Marketing

Mexico Beach Community Development Council

Naples, Marco Island, Everglades CVB

New Smyrna Beach Area Visitors Bureau

Ocala/Marion County Visitors & Convention Bureau

Okeechobee County Tourist Development Council

Orlando North, Seminole County Tourism

Palm Coast and the Flagler Beaches

Punta Gorda/Englewood Beach VCB

Santa Rosa County Tourist Development Office

St. Augustine, Ponte Vedra & The Beaches VCB

Suwannee County Tourist Development

Visit Central Florida

Visit Florida Keys

Visit Gainesville Alachua County

Visit Hardee

Visit Indian River County

Visit Jacksonville

Visit Lake City

Visit Lauderdale

Visit Orlando

Visit Panama City Beach

Visit Pensacola

Visit Sarasota County

Visit Sebring

Visit South Walton

Visit St Lucie

Visit St. Pete-Clearwater

Visit Tallahassee

Visit Tampa Bay

Wakulla County Tourist Development Council

West Volusia Tourism Advertising Authority

SECTION 6

VISIT FLORIDA PROMOTES FLORIDA'S BRAND





VISIT FLORIDA promotes the Florida brand, one of the strongest brands in the worldwide tourism industry. Through its efforts, VISIT FLORIDA is able to focus on the larger markets that represent a significant share of Florida's visitors. This increases visitors' interest in and demand for the state versus specific destinations or activities within the state. The tourism promotion conducted by VISIT FLORIDA has a direct impact on revenue generated for the state and the number of people the industry can put to work. By joining with VISIT FLORIDA, local businesses and tourism promotion programs gain significant exposure and participate in programs they might not otherwise afford, including trade events and domestic and international advertising opportunities. This enables local dollars to go further.

**1 IN EVERY 6
PRIVATE INDUSTRY
FLORIDA WORKERS
OWES HIS/HER JOB TO
DIRECT TOURISM ACTIVITY**



ABOUT

VISIT FLORIDA, the state's official tourism marketing corporation, serves as Florida's official source for travel planning to visitors across the globe. VISIT FLORIDA is not a government agency, but rather a not-for-profit corporation created as a public/private partnership by the Florida Legislature in 1996.

Florida's tourism industry was responsible for welcoming a record-setting 140.6 million visitors in 2023, an increase of 2.3% from 2022. In 2022, Florida visitors contributed \$121.5 billion to Florida's economy and supported 2 million Florida jobs. According to the Office of Economic and Demographic Research, for every \$1 the state invests in VISIT FLORIDA, \$3.30 in state tax revenue is generated.

Each year, the Florida Legislature appropriates public funding to be allocated for tourism marketing. VISIT FLORIDA is required to match those public funds dollar-for-dollar, which is done by actively recruiting the state's tourism industry to invest as Partners through cooperative advertising campaigns, promotional programs and many other marketing ventures. VISIT FLORIDA's public/private partnership works with tourism industry businesses across the state, including major strategic partnerships with Busch Gardens Tampa, Experience Kissimmee, LEGOLAND Florida Resort, SeaWorld Parks & Resorts Orlando, and Universal Orlando Resort.

VISIT FLORIDA facilitates tourism industry participation in domestic and international travel trade and consumer shows, as well as media missions to the top global visitor markets. VISIT FLORIDA also works closely with travel agents, tour operators, meeting and event planners, and is responsible for operating Florida's four Official Welcome Centers.

HISTORY

Prior to the creation of VISIT FLORIDA, local tourism promotion was often done by a local chamber of commerce and statewide tourism promotion through the then Florida Department of Commerce. To receive funding for tourism promotion, industry representatives would constantly have to lobby their county commissions and then the Florida Legislature.

Destinations would compete against one another for state tourism promotion dollars. This put many smaller destinations at a disadvantage because they did not have the same resources, visibility or clout as the larger destinations. Additionally, the Florida Department of Commerce was not solely dedicated to tourism promotion. The department oversaw other government functions and tourism promotion was not always the department's priority.

As tourism grew in Florida, tourism industry representatives agreed that there was a need for three things: 1) an organization dedicated solely to tourism promotion – an organization that would assist small, medium and large destinations alike; 2) private-sector/industry control of management and operation of this organization; and 3) a guaranteed funding source for tourism promotion.

After years of advocacy by tourism industry leaders, VISIT FLORIDA, a not-for-profit corporation, was created as a public-private partnership by the Florida Legislature in 1996.

MARKETING PLAN

VISIT FLORIDA's 2024 – 2025 marketing approach will always focus on both international and domestic visitors, with a special emphasis on specific audiences: winter travelers, families, those interested in outdoor and nature experiences, those interested in arts and culture and impulse travelers. Their international campaigns will focus on the top four international markets: Canada, United Kingdom, Latin America and Germany.

To drive demand, VISIT FLORIDA will create integrated campaigns in top domestic markets and markets with growth potential, develop and sustain marketing partnerships that support brand differentiation, and

build and sustain relations with global media and content creators.

To optimize yield, VISIT FLORIDA will focus on international markets through educational programming for travel trade, developing relationships with tour operators, and coordinating promotions featuring unique experiences.

To foster brand loyalty and connection, they will promote engagement with the #LoveFL brand and create experiences and programs that enhance pride among Floridians. To support and lead the industry, VISIT FLORIDA will provide educational programming to partners, enhance industry communications and offer valuable co-op programs.

2023:
A RECORD
140.6 MILLION
VISITORS

“Once again, Florida leads the nation as an unrivaled destination for tourists. These record-breaking numbers show that our work has made the free state of Florida even more attractive to visitors.”

- Governor Ron DeSantis

Top 10 Domestic Markets

1. New York, NY
2. Atlanta, GA
3. Philadelphia, PA
4. Chicago, IL
5. Washington, DC
6. Boston, MA
7. Dallas-Fort Worth, TX
8. Charlotte, NC
9. Los Angeles, CA
10. Cleveland-Akron, OH

Top 10 International Markets

1. Canada
2. United Kingdom
3. Brazil
4. Colombia
5. Mexico
6. Argentina
7. Germany
8. Ecuador
9. Chile
10. France



Read VISIT FLORIDA's full marketing plan at

<https://www.visitflorida.org/about-us/what-we-do/marketing-plan/>

APPENDIX


EXAMPLES OF MATERIALS EXPLAINING THE BENEFITS OF TOURISM PROMOTION

Tourism Works for Duval County




Not every Duval County resident works in tourism, but tourism works for every resident. As the heartbeat of Duval County, our vibrant tourism industry enhances citizens' day-to-day lives – and keeps more money in their paychecks, too. Students, young professionals and families all enjoy an improved quality of life thanks to our guests, and the revenue generated by tourism ensures future generations will enjoy living, working and playing in Duval County just as much as we do. Learn why tourism works for us:


Provides \$3.2 billion in economic impact¹




Generates \$47.9 million in local sales tax revenue paid by visitors²




Local Taxes from Tourism Help Pay for Programs Important to all Duval County Residents:



Pays \$939.7 million in compensation⁴



Creates 30,408 Jobs supported by tourism³



DESTINATIONS FLORIDA

downs & st. germain RESEARCH

1 Source: Visit Jacksonville
2 Calculated utilizing Florida Department of Revenue Data
3 Source: Visit Jacksonville
4 Source: Visit Jacksonville

Created for 2018 Florida Tourism Day;

Targets: State Legislators and Local Elected Officials

It All Starts with a Tourist...



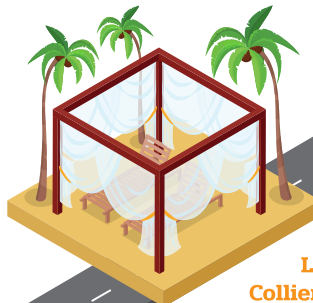
Naples, Marco Island and The Everglades

creates marketing campaigns to get tourists' attention, leading visitors to book a trip to our community rather than a competing destination.



A visitor checks into a hotel, paying a tax on their overnight stay.

The tourist may go to the grocery store, stop by a local farmer's market, try out a local restaurant or stop for dessert at a family-owned ice cream parlor.



Local attractions in Collier County all experience the economic benefits of this tourist.

Visitors also shop at local boutiques, visit specialty wine shops, rent cars, indulge at the spa and play a round of golf.



The promise of business from tourists inspires entrepreneurs to start their own business,

which spurs economic growth and development and also attracts even more tourists.



Many tourists fall in love with Collier County and decide to move here.

These new residents pay local taxes, and their family and friends come and visit, bringing even more tourism dollars. This cycle creates new job opportunities for residents, better schools for our children, stronger public safety, improved infrastructure and ultimately enhanced quality of life.



Millions of local residents are thankful for the wages their job in the tourism industry provides.

These employees spend their paychecks throughout Collier County, as well.



TOURISM WORKS FOR
*Naples, Marco Island
and The Everglades*

Created for 2018 Local "Tourism Works" Public Education Campaigns

Targets: Residents and Influencers in DMOs' Communities

Local Tourism Marketing Supports Your Local Community

Florida's tourism industry puts **1.4 million Floridians to work** and provides the state with revenue **eliminating the need for a state income tax**. Communities around the state rely on sales taxes paid by visitors to fund public education, support public safety, maintain parks, beaches and schools, and fund important infrastructure projects. While some parts of the state will always be meccas for tourists, many visitors only come to Florida because of the efforts of **local marketing and tourism bureaus** which work each day to promote their communities to out-of-state visitors. For a tourism-reliant state such as Florida,

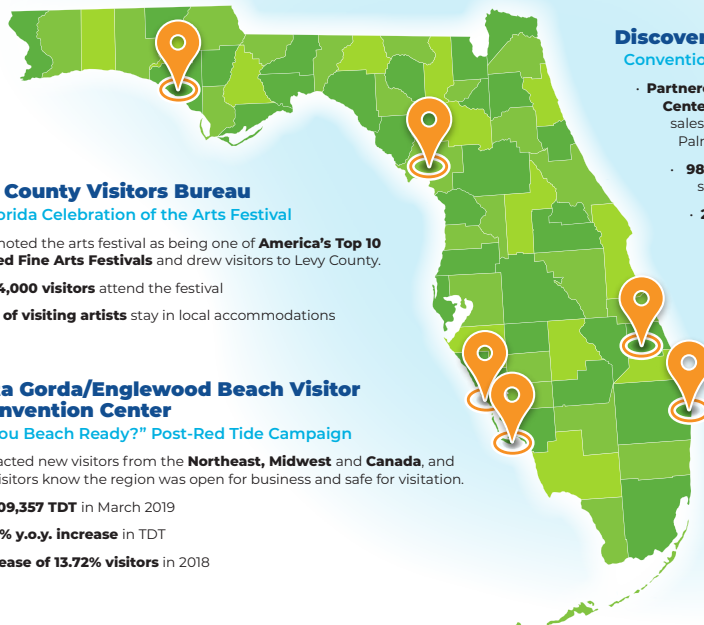
tourism promotion is not only necessary, but **critical to small and medium-sized destinations**. When tourism promotion gets the word out about Florida's less visited places, it generates visitors who wouldn't visit Florida without those efforts and provides relief for overwhelmed residents at more well-known tourism destination brands. There are a lot of choices for travelers planning their next trips, including taking no trip at all. **Thanks to destination promotion efforts, Florida remains a top choice for a family vacation to remember.**

Visit Panama City Beach UNwineD Food & Wine Festival

- Helped change the misconception that Panama City Beach is a spring break only destination by showcasing a more **family-friendly** side of Panama City Beach and demonstrated the lack of hurricane damage.
- Bed tax collected in March 2019 **increased 10.5% y.o.y.**

Visit St. Lucie "Share Your Summer" Social Media Campaign

- Provided exclusive offers** to engage local residents to invite their friends and families to visit the area via social media.
- Hotel occupancy up 3.48%** in June 2017 and up **8.2%** in August 2017
- More than **\$801,000,000 in economic impact**
- 94% of visitors** reported that they **will return** to St. Lucie



Levy County Visitors Bureau Old Florida Celebration of the Arts Festival

- Promoted the arts festival as being one of **America's Top 10 Juried Fine Arts Festivals** and drew visitors to Levy County.
- 18-24,000 visitors** attend the festival
- 80% of visiting artists** stay in local accommodations

Punta Gorda/Englewood Beach Visitor & Convention Center "Are You Beach Ready?" Post-Red Tide Campaign

- Attracted new visitors from the **Northeast, Midwest and Canada**, and let visitors know the region was open for business and safe for visitation.
- \$1,009,357 TDT** in March 2019
- 5.43% y.o.y. increase** in TDT
- Increase of 13.72% visitors** in 2018

Discover the Palm Beaches Convention Booking

- Partnered with the Palm Beach County Convention Center** and hotel partners to launch an aggressive sales campaign to book conventions and events in Palm Beach County.
- 98% increase in booking**; highest booking year since 2014
- 231,000 hotel nights booked** in 2018; double the 2014 number
- \$7 billion economic impact** in Palm Beach County

The Beaches of Fort Myers and Sanibel Spring Training Promotion

- Partnerships with the **Boston Red Sox** and **Minnesota Twins** to promote their Spring Training and brought visitors who wouldn't normally come to the region.
- 41% of visitors** surveyed said they were just there for **Spring Training** and shared they might not have come without it as an incentive
- 50%** said **Spring Training** was the primary reason for their visit
- \$68.9 million** was spent by visitors



Learn more about the value of tourism to Florida and why we must continue to advocate for tourism and marketing dollars at <https://www.destinationsflorida.org/value-of-tourism>

Created for 2020 Florida Legislative Session;
Targets: State Legislators

Florida Tourism Works for Your Daily Life

What does it mean to live in one of the world's top vacation destinations?

When travelers visit the Sunshine State, Floridians see positive impacts from the \$112 billion industry every single day.

Teachers, textbooks and field trips are funded in part by tax revenue from tourists



Florida's growth has created long commutes with traffic, but thanks to tourists we're able to fund road projects we never could have otherwise



Tourism generates 1.4 million jobs in Florida, creating year-round customers for businesses



Dozens of flight options in Florida means you can travel cheaper for business or pleasure

Tourism leaves more money in your paycheck because there's no Florida state income tax



Vibrant arts and culture scenes made possible by tourist revenue



Tourists help fund maintenance of all your favorite parks.



Take a shopping break with no shortage of local boutiques who stay in business thanks to tourists



Choices, choices – demand generated by travelers keep your favorite restaurants and bars open

Increased tourism is in everyone's best interest. Your local destination marketing organization does the heavy lifting, working daily to market your county, so you can sit back and reap the benefits.

Protect Current Uses of Florida Statute 125.0104 and Fund \$76MM for VISIT FLORIDA

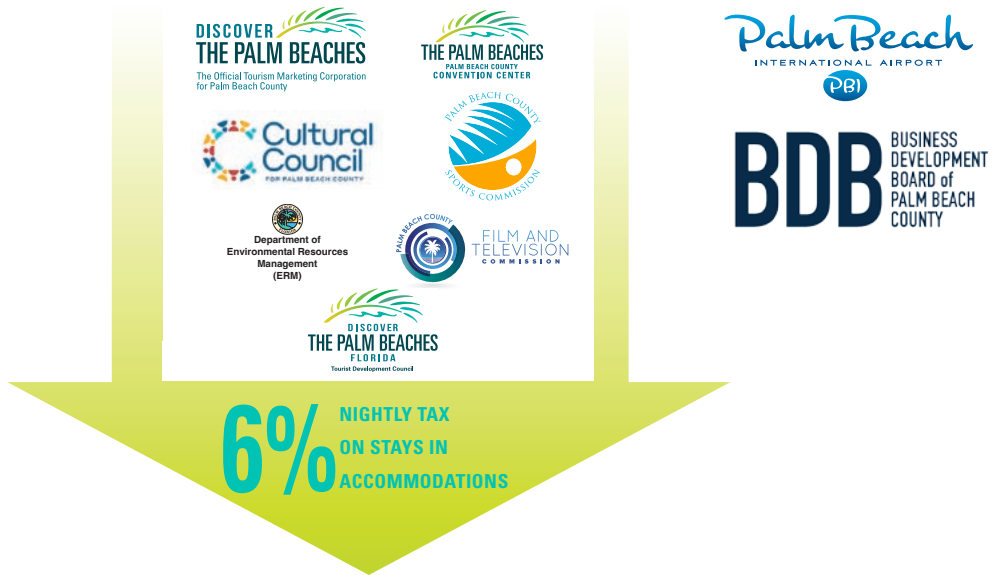
Created for 2019 Florida Tourism Day;

Targets: State Legislators

THE POWER OF TOURISM IN PALM BEACH COUNTY



DESTINATION TEAM



BED TAX INVESTMENT/GROWING THE TOURISM ECONOMY



ALLOCATION

- 30%** Discover The Palm Beaches
- 33%** Tourism Infrastructure
- 13%** Cultural Council
- 12%** ERM
- 5%** Sports Commission
- 3%** Film & TV Commission
- 3%** TDC / Special Projects
- 1%** Tax Collector

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