



Marion County

Tourist Development Council

Meeting Agenda

Friday, March 28, 2025

9:00 AM Tourist Development Conference Room

Microsoft Teams:

https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_NWU0N2MxZjUtYjUyOC00M2E1LTk3MjltMmU0MWFkMjMxMmU0%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%2225a1914d-7aca-40d5-91d5-cd84a5137a31%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%228b5f45ba-a0b4-4a92-af98-109ad26934b1%22%7d

Meeting ID: 272 367 453 042

Password: Tk6YT3aP

Phone Number: +1 321-245-5074

Phone Conference ID: 420 177 200#

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ARE ADVISED THAT THIS MEETING/HEARING IS A PUBLIC PROCEEDING, AND THE CLERK TO THE BOARD IS MAKING AN AUDIO RECORDING OF THE PROCEEDINGS, AND ALL STATEMENTS MADE DURING THE PROCEEDINGS, WHICH RECORDING WILL BE A PUBLIC RECORD, SUBJECT TO DISCLOSURE UNDER THE PUBLIC RECORDS LAW OF FLORIDA. BE AWARE, HOWEVER, THAT THE AUDIO RECORDING MAY NOT SATISFY THE REQUIREMENT FOR A VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT OF THE PROCEEDINGS, DESCRIBED IN THE NOTICE OF THIS MEETING, IN THE EVENT YOU DESIRE TO APPEAL ANY DECISION ADOPTED IN THIS PROCEEDING.

1. Roll Call

2. Meeting Materials

[Meeting Materials](#)

3. Motion: Approval of Minutes

[MOTION: Approval of January 2025 Tourist Development Council Minutes](#)

[MOTION: Approval of February 2025 Tourist Development Council Minutes](#)

4. Motion: Acknowledgement of Financials

[MOTION: Acknowledgement of Financials - February 2025](#)

5. Report from Chair

[MOTION: TDC Chairman/Vice-Chairman Vote](#)

[MOTION: Gateway Signage Update, Kimley-Horn](#)

[Reminder: Marion County Day - March 29th at McPherson Complex and Marion at the Capitol - April 10th in Tallahassee](#)

6. Funding Requests

[Fiscal Year 2025 Event Funding Allocations](#)

[MOTION: Cal Ripken T-Ball/Rookie B State Tournament - \\$10,500 \(Room Night Generating Events Funding\)](#)

[MOTION: Dixie Softball State Tournament - \\$12,012 \(Room Night Generating Events Funding\) ..Body](#)

[DESCRIPTION/BACKGROUND:](#)

[Recommended Action: Motion to approve funding for the Dixie Softball State Tournament for recommendation to the Marion County Board of County Commissioners.](#)

7. Staff Updates

[Update on Funding Programs](#)

[PRESENTATION: Quarterly Economic Impact/Visitor Tracking Report - October - December Data](#)

[PRESENTATION: Quarterly Public Relations and Analytics Reports - October - December Data](#)

[PRESENTATION: Florida Huddle and Encounter Recap](#)

[Marketing and Communications Update](#)

[Sales Update](#)

[TDT Collections/STR and Key Data Update](#)

[TDC Events Calendar](#)

8. Notation for Record

[Sales Report](#)

[TDC Attendance Report](#)

9. Old Business

10. New Business

11. Public Comment

If you would like to address the council during public comment you may submit your comments in advance to sales@marionfl.org by Tuesday, March 25, 2025, at 5:00PM.

The next Tourist Development Council Meeting will be held on April 24, 2025 at 9:00 AM.



Marion County Tourist Development Council

Agenda Item

File No.: 2025-18547

Agenda Date: 3/28/2025

Agenda No.:

SUBJECT:

Meeting Materials

DESCRIPTION/BACKGROUND:

Conflict of Interest

The 2024 Florida Statutes

By-Laws

Sunshine Notice

Teams Sunshine Notice



Marion County Board of County Commissioners

Visitors and Convention Bureau

109 W Silver Springs Blvd.
Ocala, FL 34475
Phone: 352-438-2800
Fax: 352-438-2801



CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

All members of the Tourist Development Council (TDC), including general members and the Board of Directors, shall comply with applicable Florida law in their dealings with the TDC. In addition, all members shall declare any and all conflicts of interest and refrain from voting on any issue involving such conflicts.

Under Section. 112.3143, Fla. Stat. (2012) Voting conflicts. –

(1) As used in this section:

(a) “Public officer” includes any person elected or appointed to hold office in any agency, including any person serving on an advisory board.

...

(3)(a) No county, . . . or other local public officer shall vote in an official capacity upon any measure which would inure to his or her special private gain or loss; which he or she knows would inure to the special private gain or loss of any principal by whom he or she is retained or to the parent organization or subsidiary of a corporate principal by which he or she is retained, . . . or which he or she knows would inure to the special private gain or loss or a relative or business associate of the public officer. Such public officer shall, prior to the vote being taken, publicly state to the assembly the nature of the officer’s interest in the matter from which he or she is abstaining from voting, and, within 15 days after the vote occurs, disclose the nature of his or her interest as a public record in a memorandum filed with the person responsible for recording the minutes of the meeting, who shall incorporate the memorandum in the minutes.

Under subsection (4), an appointed public officer shall not participate in any matter which would inure to the officer’s special private gain or loss (and those other persons and entities listed above), without first disclosing the nature of his or her interest in the matter. Under (4)(a), this disclosure is a written memorandum filed with the person keeping the minutes before the meeting in which the matter will be discussed or voted on. “Participate” does not mean “vote” – it means “any attempt to influence the decision by written or oral communication, whether made by the officer or at the officer’s direction.” See (4)(c). That is, you cannot “participate” in the discussion of the matter unless you comply with the requirements of the statute. But, even if you comply with these requirements to “participate,” you still cannot vote if you have a conflict.

The 2024 Florida Statutes

[Title XI](#)[Chapter 125](#)[View Entire Chapter](#)

COUNTY ORGANIZATION AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS COUNTY GOVERNMENT

125.0104 Tourist development tax; procedure for levying; authorized uses; referendum; enforcement.—

(1) SHORT TITLE.—This section shall be known and may be cited as the “Local Option Tourist Development Act.”

(2) APPLICATION; DEFINITIONS.—

(a) *Application.*—The provisions contained in chapter 212 apply to the administration of any tax levied pursuant to this section.

(b) *Definitions.*—For purposes of this section:

1. “Promotion” means marketing or advertising designed to increase tourist-related business activities.

2. “Tourist” means a person who participates in trade or recreation activities outside the county of his or her permanent residence or who rents or leases transient accommodations as described in paragraph (3)(a).

3. “Retained spring training franchise” means a spring training franchise that had a location in this state on or before December 31, 1998, and that has continuously remained at that location for at least the 10 years preceding that date.

(3) TAXABLE PRIVILEGES; EXEMPTIONS; LEVY; RATE.—

(a)1. It is declared to be the intent of the Legislature that every person who rents, leases, or lets for consideration any living quarters or accommodations in any hotel, apartment hotel, motel, resort motel, apartment, apartment motel, roominghouse, mobile home park, recreational vehicle park, condominium, or timeshare resort for a term of 6 months or less is exercising a privilege which is subject to taxation under this section, unless such person rents, leases, or lets for consideration any living quarters or accommodations which are exempt according to the provisions of chapter 212.

2.a. Tax shall be due on the consideration paid for occupancy in the county pursuant to a regulated short-term product, as defined in s. [721.05](#), or occupancy in the county pursuant to a product that would be deemed a regulated short-term product if the agreement to purchase the short-term right were executed in this state. Such tax shall be collected on the last day of occupancy within the county unless such consideration is applied to the purchase of a timeshare estate. The occupancy of an accommodation of a timeshare resort pursuant to a timeshare plan, a multisite timeshare plan, or an exchange transaction in an exchange program, as defined in s. [721.05](#), by the owner of a timeshare interest or such owner’s guest, which guest is not paying monetary consideration to the owner or to a third party for the benefit of the owner, is not a privilege subject to taxation under this section. A membership or transaction fee paid by a timeshare owner that does not provide the timeshare owner with the right to occupy any specific timeshare unit but merely provides the timeshare owner with the opportunity to exchange a timeshare interest through an exchange program is a service charge and not subject to taxation under this section.

b. Consideration paid for the purchase of a timeshare license in a timeshare plan, as defined in s. [721.05](#), is rent subject to taxation under this section.

(b) Subject to the provisions of this section, any county in this state may levy and impose a tourist development tax on the exercise within its boundaries of the taxable privilege described in paragraph (a), except that there shall be no additional levy under this section in any cities or towns presently imposing a municipal resort tax as authorized under chapter 67-930, Laws of Florida, and this section shall not in any way affect the powers and existence of any tourist development authority created pursuant to chapter 67-930, Laws of Florida. No county authorized to levy a convention development tax pursuant to s. [212.0305](#), or to s. 8 of chapter 84-324, Laws of Florida, shall be allowed to levy more than the 2-percent tax authorized by this section. A county may elect to levy and impose the tourist development tax in a subcounty special district of the county. However, if a county so elects to levy and impose the tax on a subcounty special district basis, the district shall embrace all or a significant contiguous portion of the county, and the county shall assist the Department of Revenue in identifying the rental units subject to tax in the district.

(c) The tourist development tax shall be levied, imposed, and set by the governing board of the county at a rate of 1 percent or 2 percent of each dollar and major fraction of each dollar of the total consideration charged for such lease or

rental. When receipt of consideration is by way of property other than money, the tax shall be levied and imposed on the fair market value of such nonmonetary consideration.

(d) In addition to any 1-percent or 2-percent tax imposed under paragraph (c), the governing board of the county may levy, impose, and set an additional 1 percent of each dollar above the tax rate set under paragraph (c) for the purposes set forth in subsection (5) by referendum of the registered electors within the county or subcounty special district pursuant to subsection (6). A county may not levy, impose, and set the tax authorized under this paragraph unless the county has imposed the 1-percent or 2-percent tax authorized under paragraph (c) for a minimum of 3 years before the effective date of the levy and imposition of the tax authorized by this paragraph. Revenues raised by the additional tax authorized under this paragraph may not be used for debt service on or refinancing of existing facilities as specified in subparagraph (5)(a)1. unless approved by referendum pursuant to subsection (6). If the 1-percent or 2-percent tax authorized in paragraph (c) is levied within a subcounty special taxing district, the additional tax authorized in this paragraph shall only be levied therein. The provisions of paragraphs (4)(a)-(d) shall not apply to the adoption of the additional tax authorized in this paragraph. The effective date of the levy and imposition of the tax authorized under this paragraph is the first day of the second month following approval of the ordinance by referendum or the first day of any subsequent month specified in the ordinance. A certified copy of such ordinance shall be furnished by the county to the Department of Revenue within 10 days after approval of such ordinance.

(e) The tourist development tax shall be in addition to any other tax imposed pursuant to chapter 212 and in addition to all other taxes and fees and the consideration for the rental or lease.

(f) The tourist development tax shall be charged by the person receiving the consideration for the lease or rental, and it shall be collected from the lessee, tenant, or customer at the time of payment of the consideration for such lease or rental.

(g) The person receiving the consideration for such rental or lease shall receive, account for, and remit the tax to the Department of Revenue at the time and in the manner provided for persons who collect and remit taxes under s. 212.03. The same duties and privileges imposed by chapter 212 upon dealers in tangible property, respecting the collection and remission of tax; the making of returns; the keeping of books, records, and accounts; and compliance with the rules of the Department of Revenue in the administration of that chapter shall apply to and be binding upon all persons who are subject to the provisions of this section. However, the Department of Revenue may authorize a quarterly return and payment when the tax remitted by the dealer for the preceding quarter did not exceed \$25.

(h) The Department of Revenue shall keep records showing the amount of taxes collected, which records shall also include records disclosing the amount of taxes collected for and from each county in which the tax authorized by this section is applicable. These records shall be open for inspection during the regular office hours of the Department of Revenue, subject to the provisions of s. 213.053.

(i) Collections received by the Department of Revenue from the tax, less costs of administration of this section, shall be paid and returned monthly to the county which imposed the tax, for use by the county in accordance with the provisions of this section. They shall be placed in the county tourist development trust fund of the respective county, which shall be established by each county as a condition precedent to receipt of such funds.

(j) The Department of Revenue is authorized to employ persons and incur other expenses for which funds are appropriated by the Legislature.

(k) The Department of Revenue shall promulgate such rules and shall prescribe and publish such forms as may be necessary to effectuate the purposes of this section.

(l) In addition to any other tax which is imposed pursuant to this section, a county may impose up to an additional 1-percent tax on the exercise of the privilege described in paragraph (a) by ordinance approved by referendum pursuant to subsection (6) to:

1. Pay the debt service on bonds issued to finance the construction, reconstruction, or renovation of a professional sports franchise facility, or the acquisition, construction, reconstruction, or renovation of a retained spring training franchise facility, either publicly owned and operated, or publicly owned and operated by the owner of a professional sports franchise or other lessee with sufficient expertise or financial capability to operate such facility, and to pay the planning and design costs incurred prior to the issuance of such bonds.

2. Pay the debt service on bonds issued to finance the construction, reconstruction, or renovation of a convention center, and to pay the planning and design costs incurred prior to the issuance of such bonds.

3. Pay the operation and maintenance costs of a convention center for a period of up to 10 years. Only counties that have elected to levy the tax for the purposes authorized in subparagraph 2. may use the tax for the purposes enumerated in this subparagraph. Any county that elects to levy the tax for the purposes authorized in subparagraph 2. after July 1, 2000, may use the proceeds of the tax to pay the operation and maintenance costs of a convention center for the life of the bonds.

4. Promote and advertise tourism in the State of Florida and nationally and internationally; however, if tax revenues are expended for an activity, service, venue, or event, the activity, service, venue, or event shall have as one of its main purposes the attraction of tourists as evidenced by the promotion of the activity, service, venue, or event to tourists.

The provision of paragraph (b) which prohibits any county authorized to levy a convention development tax pursuant to s. 212.0305 from levying more than the 2-percent tax authorized by this section, and the provisions of paragraphs (4)(a)-(d), shall not apply to the additional tax authorized in this paragraph. The effective date of the levy and imposition of the tax authorized under this paragraph is the first day of the second month following approval of the ordinance by referendum or the first day of any subsequent month specified in the ordinance. A certified copy of such ordinance shall be furnished by the county to the Department of Revenue within 10 days after approval of such ordinance.

(m)1. In addition to any other tax which is imposed pursuant to this section, a high tourism impact county may impose an additional 1-percent tax on the exercise of the privilege described in paragraph (a) by ordinance approved by referendum pursuant to subsection (6). The tax revenues received pursuant to this paragraph shall be used for one or more of the authorized uses pursuant to subsection (5).

2. A county is considered to be a high tourism impact county after the Department of Revenue has certified to such county that the sales subject to the tax levied pursuant to this section exceeded \$600 million during the previous calendar year, or were at least 18 percent of the county's total taxable sales under chapter 212 where the sales subject to the tax levied pursuant to this section were a minimum of \$200 million, except that no county authorized to levy a convention development tax pursuant to s. 212.0305 shall be considered a high tourism impact county. Once a county qualifies as a high tourism impact county, it shall retain this designation for the period the tax is levied pursuant to this paragraph.

3. The provisions of paragraphs (4)(a)-(d) shall not apply to the adoption of the additional tax authorized in this paragraph. The effective date of the levy and imposition of the tax authorized under this paragraph is the first day of the second month following approval of the ordinance by referendum or the first day of any subsequent month specified in the ordinance. A certified copy of such ordinance shall be furnished by the county to the Department of Revenue within 10 days after approval of such ordinance.

(n) In addition to any other tax that is imposed under this section, a county that has imposed the tax under paragraph (l) may impose an additional tax that is no greater than 1 percent on the exercise of the privilege described in paragraph (a) by ordinance approved by referendum pursuant to subsection (6) to:

1. Pay the debt service on bonds issued to finance:

a. The construction, reconstruction, or renovation of a facility either publicly owned and operated, or publicly owned and operated by the owner of a professional sports franchise or other lessee with sufficient expertise or financial capability to operate such facility, and to pay the planning and design costs incurred prior to the issuance of such bonds for a new professional sports franchise as defined in s. 288.1162.

b. The acquisition, construction, reconstruction, or renovation of a facility either publicly owned and operated, or publicly owned and operated by the owner of a professional sports franchise or other lessee with sufficient expertise or financial capability to operate such facility, and to pay the planning and design costs incurred prior to the issuance of such bonds for a retained spring training franchise.

2. Promote and advertise tourism in the State of Florida and nationally and internationally; however, if tax revenues are expended for an activity, service, venue, or event, the activity, service, venue, or event shall have as one of its main purposes the attraction of tourists as evidenced by the promotion of the activity, service, venue, or event to tourists.

A county that imposes the tax authorized in this paragraph may not expend any ad valorem tax revenues for the acquisition, construction, reconstruction, or renovation of a facility for which tax revenues are used pursuant to subparagraph 1. The provision of paragraph (b) which prohibits any county authorized to levy a convention development tax pursuant to s. 212.0305 from levying more than the 2-percent tax authorized by this section shall not apply to the additional tax authorized by this paragraph in counties which levy convention development taxes pursuant to s. 212.0305(4)(a). Subsection (4) does not apply to the adoption of the additional tax authorized in this paragraph. The effective date of the levy and imposition of the tax authorized under this paragraph is the first day of the second month following approval of the ordinance by referendum or the first day of any subsequent month specified in the ordinance. A certified copy of such ordinance shall be furnished by the county to the Department of Revenue within 10 days after approval of the ordinance.

(4) ORDINANCE LEVY TAX; PROCEDURE.—

(a) The tourist development tax shall be levied and imposed pursuant to an ordinance containing the county tourist development plan prescribed under paragraph (c), enacted by the governing board of the county. The ordinance levying and

imposing the tourist development tax shall not be effective unless the electors of the county or the electors in the subcounty special district in which the tax is to be levied approve the ordinance authorizing the levy and imposition of the tax, in accordance with subsection (6). The effective date of the levy and imposition of the tax is the first day of the second month following approval of the ordinance by referendum or the first day of any subsequent month specified in the ordinance. A certified copy of the ordinance shall be furnished by the county to the Department of Revenue within 10 days after approval of such ordinance. The governing authority of any county levying such tax shall notify the department, within 10 days after approval of the ordinance by referendum, of the time period during which the tax will be levied.

(b) At least 60 days before the enactment or renewal of the ordinance levying the tax, the governing board of the county shall adopt a resolution establishing and appointing the members of the county tourist development council, as prescribed in paragraph (e), and indicating the intention of the county to consider the enactment or renewal of an ordinance levying and imposing the tourist development tax.

(c) Before a referendum to enact or renew the ordinance levying and imposing the tax, the county tourist development council shall prepare and submit to the governing board of the county for its approval a plan for tourist development. The plan shall set forth the anticipated net tourist development tax revenue to be derived by the county for the 24 months following the levy of the tax; the tax district in which the enactment or renewal of the ordinance levying and imposing the tourist development tax is proposed; and a list, in the order of priority, of the proposed uses of the tax revenue by specific project or special use as the same are authorized under subsection (5). The plan shall include the approximate cost or expense allocation for each specific project or special use.

(d) The governing board of the county shall adopt the county plan for tourist development as part of the ordinance levying the tax. After enactment or renewal of the ordinance levying and imposing the tax, the plan for tourist development may not be substantially amended except by ordinance enacted by an affirmative vote of a majority plus one additional member of the governing board.

(e) The governing board of each county which levies and imposes a tourist development tax under this section shall appoint an advisory council to be known as the “_(name of county)_ Tourist Development Council.” The council shall be established by ordinance and composed of nine members who shall be appointed by the governing board. The chair of the governing board of the county or any other member of the governing board as designated by the chair shall serve on the council. Two members of the council shall be elected municipal officials, at least one of whom shall be from the most populous municipality in the county or subcounty special taxing district in which the tax is levied. Six members of the council shall be persons who are involved in the tourist industry and who have demonstrated an interest in tourist development, of which members, not less than three nor more than four shall be owners or operators of motels, hotels, recreational vehicle parks, or other tourist accommodations in the county and subject to the tax. All members of the council shall be electors of the county. The governing board of the county shall have the option of designating the chair of the council or allowing the council to elect a chair. The chair shall be appointed or elected annually and may be reelected or reappointed. The members of the council shall serve for staggered terms of 4 years. The terms of office of the original members shall be prescribed in the resolution required under paragraph (b). The council shall meet at least once each quarter and, from time to time, shall make recommendations to the county governing board for the effective operation of the special projects or for uses of the tourist development tax revenue and perform such other duties as may be prescribed by county ordinance or resolution. The council shall continuously review expenditures of revenues from the tourist development trust fund and shall receive, at least quarterly, expenditure reports from the county governing board or its designee. Expenditures which the council believes to be unauthorized shall be reported to the county governing board and the Department of Revenue. The governing board and the department shall review the findings of the council and take appropriate administrative or judicial action to ensure compliance with this section.

(5) AUTHORIZED USES OF REVENUE.—

(a) All tax revenues received pursuant to this section by a county imposing the tourist development tax shall be used by that county for the following purposes only:

1. To acquire, construct, extend, enlarge, remodel, repair, improve, maintain, operate, or promote one or more:
 - a. Publicly owned and operated convention centers, sports stadiums, sports arenas, coliseums, or auditoriums within the boundaries of the county or subcounty special taxing district in which the tax is levied;
 - b. Auditoriums that are publicly owned but are operated by organizations that are exempt from federal taxation pursuant to 26 U.S.C. s. 501(c)(3) and open to the public, within the boundaries of the county or subcounty special taxing district in which the tax is levied; or
 - c. Aquariums or museums that are publicly owned and operated or owned and operated by not-for-profit organizations and open to the public, within the boundaries of the county or subcounty special taxing district in which the tax is levied;

2. To promote zoological parks that are publicly owned and operated or owned and operated by not-for-profit organizations and open to the public;

3. To promote and advertise tourism in this state and nationally and internationally; however, if tax revenues are expended for an activity, service, venue, or event, the activity, service, venue, or event must have as one of its main purposes the attraction of tourists as evidenced by the promotion of the activity, service, venue, or event to tourists;

4. To fund convention bureaus, tourist bureaus, tourist information centers, and news bureaus as county agencies or by contract with the chambers of commerce or similar associations in the county, which may include any indirect administrative costs for services performed by the county on behalf of the promotion agency;

5. To finance beach park facilities, or beach, channel, estuary, or lagoon improvement, maintenance, renourishment, restoration, and erosion control, including construction of beach groins and shoreline protection, enhancement, cleanup, or restoration of inland lakes and rivers to which there is public access as those uses relate to the physical preservation of the beach, shoreline, channel, estuary, lagoon, or inland lake or river. However, any funds identified by a county as the local matching source for beach renourishment, restoration, or erosion control projects included in the long-range budget plan of the state's Beach Management Plan, pursuant to s. 161.091, or funds contractually obligated by a county in the financial plan for a federally authorized shore protection project may not be used or loaned for any other purpose. In counties of fewer than 100,000 population, up to 10 percent of the revenues from the tourist development tax may be used for beach park facilities; or

6. To acquire, construct, extend, enlarge, remodel, repair, improve, maintain, operate, or finance public facilities within the boundaries of the county or subcounty special taxing district in which the tax is levied, if the public facilities are needed to increase tourist-related business activities in the county or subcounty special district and are recommended by the county tourist development council created pursuant to paragraph (4)(e). Tax revenues may be used for any related land acquisition, land improvement, design and engineering costs, and all other professional and related costs required to bring the public facilities into service. As used in this subparagraph, the term "public facilities" means major capital improvements that have a life expectancy of 5 or more years, including, but not limited to, transportation, sanitary sewer, solid waste, drainage, potable water, and pedestrian facilities. Tax revenues may be used for these purposes only if the following conditions are satisfied:

a. In the county fiscal year immediately preceding the fiscal year in which the tax revenues were initially used for such purposes, at least \$10 million in tourist development tax revenue was received;

b. The county governing board approves the use for the proposed public facilities by a vote of at least two-thirds of its membership;

c. No more than 70 percent of the cost of the proposed public facilities will be paid for with tourist development tax revenues, and sources of funding for the remaining cost are identified and confirmed by the county governing board;

d. At least 40 percent of all tourist development tax revenues collected in the county are spent to promote and advertise tourism as provided by this subsection; and

e. An independent professional analysis, performed at the expense of the county tourist development council, demonstrates the positive impact of the infrastructure project on tourist-related businesses in the county.

Subparagraphs 1. and 2. may be implemented through service contracts and leases with lessees that have sufficient expertise or financial capability to operate such facilities.

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

(c) A county located adjacent to the Gulf of Mexico or the Atlantic Ocean, except a county that receives revenue from taxes levied pursuant to s. 125.0108, which meets the following criteria may use up to 10 percent of the tax revenue received pursuant to this section to reimburse expenses incurred in providing public safety services, including emergency medical services as defined in s. 401.107(3), and law enforcement services, which are needed to address impacts related to increased tourism and visitors to an area. However, if taxes collected pursuant to this section are used to reimburse emergency medical services or public safety services for tourism or special events, the governing board of a county or municipality may not use such taxes to supplant the normal operating expenses of an emergency medical services department, a fire department, a sheriff's office, or a police department. To receive reimbursement, the county must:

- 1.a. Generate a minimum of \$10 million in annual proceeds from any tax, or any combination of taxes, authorized to be levied pursuant to this section;
 - b. Have at least three municipalities; and
 - c. Have an estimated population of less than 275,000, according to the most recent population estimate prepared pursuant to s. 186.901, excluding the inmate population; or
2. Be a fiscally constrained county as described in s. 218.67(1).

The board of county commissioners must by majority vote approve reimbursement made pursuant to this paragraph upon receipt of a recommendation from the tourist development council.

(d) The revenues to be derived from the tourist development tax may be pledged to secure and liquidate revenue bonds issued by the county for the purposes set forth in subparagraphs (a)1., 2., and 5. or for the purpose of refunding bonds previously issued for such purposes, or both; however, no more than 50 percent of the revenues from the tourist development tax may be pledged to secure and liquidate revenue bonds or revenue refunding bonds issued for the purposes set forth in subparagraph (a)5. Such revenue bonds and revenue refunding bonds may be authorized and issued in such principal amounts, with such interest rates and maturity dates, and subject to such other terms, conditions, and covenants as the governing board of the county shall provide. The Legislature intends that this paragraph be full and complete authority for accomplishing such purposes, but such authority is supplemental and additional to, and not in derogation of, any powers now existing or later conferred under law.

(e) Any use of the local option tourist development tax revenues collected pursuant to this section for a purpose not expressly authorized by paragraph (3)(l) or paragraph (3)(n) or paragraphs (a)-(d) of this subsection is expressly prohibited.

(6) REFERENDUM.—

(a) An ordinance enacted or renewed by a county levying the tax authorized by this section may not take effect until the ordinance levying and imposing the tax has been approved in a referendum held at a general election, as defined in s. 97.021, by a majority of the electors voting in such election in the county or by a majority of the electors voting in the subcounty special tax district affected by the tax.

(b) The governing board of the county levying the tax shall arrange to place a question on the ballot at a general election, as defined in s. 97.021, to be held within the county, which question shall be in substantially the following form:

FOR the Tourist Development Tax

AGAINST the Tourist Development Tax

(c) If a majority of the electors voting on the question approve the levy, the ordinance shall be deemed to be in effect.

(d) In any case where an ordinance levying and imposing the tax has been approved by referendum pursuant to this section and 15 percent of the electors in the county or 15 percent of the electors in the subcounty special district in which the tax is levied file a petition with the board of county commissioners for a referendum to repeal the tax, the board of county commissioners shall cause an election to be held for the repeal of the tax which election shall be subject only to the outstanding bonds for which the tax has been pledged. However, the repeal of the tax shall not be effective with respect to any portion of taxes initially levied in November 1989, which has been pledged or is being used to support bonds under paragraph (3)(d) or paragraph (3)(l) until the retirement of those bonds.

(e) A referendum to reenact an expiring tourist development tax must be held at a general election occurring within the 48-month period immediately preceding the effective date of the reenacted tax, and the referendum may appear on the ballot only once within the 48-month period.

(7) AUTOMATIC EXPIRATION ON RETIREMENT OF BONDS.—Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, if the plan for tourist development approved by the governing board of the county, as amended pursuant to paragraph (4)(d), includes the acquisition, construction, extension, enlargement, remodeling, repair, or improvement of a publicly owned and operated convention center, sports stadium, sports arena, coliseum, or auditorium, or museum or aquarium that is publicly owned and operated or owned and operated by a not-for-profit organization, the county ordinance levying and imposing the tax automatically expires upon the later of:

(a) The retirement of all bonds issued by the county for financing the acquisition, construction, extension, enlargement, remodeling, repair, or improvement of a publicly owned and operated convention center, sports stadium, sports arena, coliseum, or auditorium, or museum or aquarium that is publicly owned and operated or owned and operated by a not-for-profit organization; or

(b) The expiration of any agreement by the county for the operation or maintenance, or both, of a publicly owned and operated convention center, sports stadium, sports arena, coliseum, auditorium, aquarium, or museum. However, this does not preclude that county from amending the ordinance extending the tax to the extent that the board of the county determines to be necessary to provide funds to operate, maintain, repair, or renew and replace a publicly owned and operated convention center, sports stadium, sports arena, coliseum, auditorium, aquarium, or museum or from enacting an ordinance that takes effect without referendum approval, unless the original referendum required ordinance expiration, pursuant to the provisions of this section reimposing a tourist development tax, upon or following the expiration of the previous ordinance.

(8) PROHIBITED ACTS; ENFORCEMENT; PENALTIES.—

(a) Any person who is taxable hereunder who fails or refuses to charge and collect from the person paying any rental or lease the taxes herein provided, either by himself or herself or through agents or employees, is, in addition to being personally liable for the payment of the tax, guilty of a misdemeanor of the first degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082 or s. 775.083.

(b) No person shall advertise or hold out to the public in any manner, directly or indirectly, that he or she will absorb all or any part of the tax, that he or she will relieve the person paying the rental of the payment of all or any part of the tax, or that the tax will not be added to the rental or lease consideration or, when added, that it or any part thereof will be refunded or refused, either directly or indirectly, by any method whatsoever. Any person who willfully violates any provision of this subsection is guilty of a misdemeanor of the first degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082 or s. 775.083.

(c) The tax authorized to be levied by this section shall constitute a lien on the property of the lessee, customer, or tenant in the same manner as, and shall be collectible as are, liens authorized and imposed in ss. 713.67, 713.68, and 713.69.

(9) COUNTY TOURISM PROMOTION AGENCIES.—In addition to any other powers and duties provided for agencies created for the purpose of tourism promotion by a county levying the tourist development tax, such agencies are authorized and empowered to:

(a) Provide, arrange, and make expenditures for transportation, lodging, meals, and other reasonable and necessary items and services for such persons, as determined by the head of the agency, in connection with the performance of promotional and other duties of the agency. However, entertainment expenses shall be authorized only when meeting with travel writers, tour brokers, or other persons connected with the tourist industry. All travel and entertainment-related expenditures in excess of \$10 made pursuant to this subsection shall be substantiated by paid bills therefor. Complete and detailed justification for all travel and entertainment-related expenditures made pursuant to this subsection shall be shown on the travel expense voucher or attached thereto. Transportation and other incidental expenses, other than those provided in s. 112.061, shall only be authorized for officers and employees of the agency, other authorized persons, travel writers, tour brokers, or other persons connected with the tourist industry when traveling pursuant to paragraph (c). All other transportation and incidental expenses pursuant to this subsection shall be as provided in s. 112.061. Operational or promotional advancements, as defined in s. 288.35(4), obtained pursuant to this subsection, shall not be commingled with any other funds.

(b) Pay by advancement or reimbursement, or a combination thereof, the costs of per diem and incidental expenses of officers and employees of the agency and other authorized persons, for foreign travel at the current rates as specified in the federal publication “Standardized Regulations (Government Civilians, Foreign Areas).” The provisions of this paragraph shall apply for any officer or employee of the agency traveling in foreign countries for the purposes of promoting tourism and travel to the county, if such travel expenses are approved and certified by the agency head from whose funds the traveler is paid. As used in this paragraph, the term “authorized person” shall have the same meaning as provided in s. 112.061(2)(c). With the exception of provisions concerning rates of payment for per diem, the provisions of s. 112.061 are applicable to the travel described in this paragraph. As used in this paragraph, “foreign travel” means all travel outside the United States. Persons traveling in foreign countries pursuant to this subsection shall not be entitled to reimbursements or advancements pursuant to s. 112.061(6)(a)2.

(c) Pay by advancement or reimbursement, or by a combination thereof, the actual reasonable and necessary costs of travel, meals, lodging, and incidental expenses of officers and employees of the agency and other authorized persons when meeting with travel writers, tour brokers, or other persons connected with the tourist industry, and while attending or traveling in connection with travel or trade shows. With the exception of provisions concerning rates of payment, the provisions of s. 112.061 are applicable to the travel described in this paragraph.

(d) Undertake marketing research and advertising research studies and provide reservations services and convention and meetings booking services consistent with the authorized uses of revenue as set forth in subsection (5).

1. Information given to a county tourism promotion agency which, if released, would reveal the identity of persons or entities who provide data or other information as a response to a sales promotion effort, an advertisement, or a research

project or whose names, addresses, meeting or convention plan information or accommodations or other visitation needs become booking or reservation list data, is exempt from s. 119.07(1) and s. 24(a), Art. I of the State Constitution.

2. The following information, when held by a county tourism promotion agency, is exempt from s. 119.07(1) and s. 24(a), Art. I of the State Constitution:

- a. Booking business records, as defined in s. 255.047.
- b. Trade secrets and commercial or financial information gathered from a person and privileged or confidential, as defined and interpreted under 5 U.S.C. s. 552(b)(4), or any amendments thereto.
- (e) Represent themselves to the public as convention and visitors bureaus, visitors bureaus, tourist development councils, vacation bureaus, or county tourism promotion agencies operating under any other name or names specifically designated by ordinance.

(10) LOCAL ADMINISTRATION OF TAX.—

(a) A county levying a tax under this section or s. 125.0108 may be exempted from the requirements of the respective section that:

1. The tax collected be remitted to the Department of Revenue before being returned to the county; and
2. The tax be administered according to chapter 212,

if the county adopts an ordinance providing for the local collection and administration of the tax.

(b) The ordinance shall include provision for, but need not be limited to:

1. Initial collection of the tax to be made in the same manner as the tax imposed under chapter 212.
2. Designation of the local official to whom the tax shall be remitted, and that official's powers and duties with respect thereto. Tax revenues may be used only in accordance with the provisions of this section.
3. Requirements respecting the keeping of appropriate books, records, and accounts by those responsible for collecting and administering the tax.
4. Provision for payment of a dealer's credit as required under chapter 212.
5. A portion of the tax collected may be retained by the county for costs of administration, but such portion shall not exceed 3 percent of collections.

(c) A county adopting an ordinance providing for the collection and administration of the tax on a local basis shall also adopt an ordinance electing either to assume all responsibility for auditing the records and accounts of dealers, and assessing, collecting, and enforcing payments of delinquent taxes, or to delegate such authority to the Department of Revenue. If the county elects to assume such responsibility, it shall be bound by all rules promulgated by the Department of Revenue pursuant to paragraph (3)(k), as well as those rules pertaining to the sales and use tax on transient rentals imposed by s. 212.03. The county may use any power granted in this section to the department to determine the amount of tax, penalties, and interest to be paid by each dealer and to enforce payment of such tax, penalties, and interest. The county may use a certified public accountant licensed in this state in the administration of its statutory duties and responsibilities. Such certified public accountants are bound by the same confidentiality requirements and subject to the same penalties as the county under s. 213.053. If the county delegates such authority to the department, the department shall distribute any collections so received, less costs of administration, to the county. The amount deducted for costs of administration by the department shall be used only for those costs which are solely and directly attributable to auditing, assessing, collecting, processing, and enforcing payments of delinquent taxes authorized in this section. If a county elects to delegate such authority to the department, the department shall audit only those businesses in the county that it audits pursuant to chapter 212.

(11) INTEREST PAID ON DISTRIBUTIONS.—

(a) Interest shall be paid on undistributed taxes collected and remitted to the Department of Revenue under this section. Such interest shall be included along with the tax proceeds distributed to the counties and shall be paid from moneys transferred from the General Revenue Fund. The department shall calculate the interest for net tax distributions using the average daily rate that was earned by the State Treasury for the preceding calendar quarter and paid to the General Revenue Fund. This rate shall be certified by the Chief Financial Officer to the department by the 20th day following the close of each quarter.

(b) The interest applicable to taxes collected under this section shall be calculated by multiplying the tax amounts to be distributed times the daily rate times the number of days after the third working day following the date the tax is due and payable pursuant to s. 212.11 until the date the department issues a voucher to request the Chief Financial Officer to issue the payment warrant. The warrant shall be issued within 7 days after the request.

(c) If an overdistribution of taxes is made by the department, interest shall be paid on the overpaid amount beginning on the date the warrant including the overpayment was issued until the third working day following the due date of the payment

period from which the overpayment is being deducted. The interest on an overpayment shall be calculated using the average daily rate from the applicable calendar quarter and shall be deducted from moneys distributed to the county under this section.

History.—ss. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, ch. 77-209; s. 3, ch. 79-359; s. 72, ch. 79-400; s. 4, ch. 80-209; s. 2, ch. 80-222; s. 5, ch. 83-297; s. 1, ch. 83-321; s. 40, ch. 85-55; s. 1, ch. 86-4; s. 76, ch. 86-163; s. 61, ch. 87-6; s. 1, ch. 87-99; s. 35, ch. 87-101; s. 1, ch. 87-175; s. 5, ch. 87-280; s. 4, ch. 88-226; s. 6, ch. 88-243; s. 2, ch. 89-217; ss. 31, 66, ch. 89-356; s. 2, ch. 89-362; s. 1, ch. 90-107; s. 1, ch. 90-349; s. 81, ch. 91-45; s. 230, ch. 91-224; s. 3, ch. 92-175; s. 1, ch. 92-204; s. 32, ch. 92-320; s. 4, ch. 93-233; s. 1, ch. 94-275; s. 3, ch. 94-314; s. 37, ch. 94-338; s. 3, ch. 94-353; s. 1, ch. 95-133; s. 1434, ch. 95-147; s. 3, ch. 95-304; s. 1, ch. 95-360; s. 1, ch. 95-416; ss. 44, 46, ch. 96-397; s. 43, ch. 96-406; s. 15, ch. 97-99; s. 1, ch. 98-106; s. 58, ch. 99-2; s. 1, ch. 99-287; ss. 6, 11, 14, ch. 2000-312; s. 11, ch. 2000-351; s. 14, ch. 2001-252; s. 10, ch. 2002-265; s. 1, ch. 2003-34; s. 1, ch. 2003-37; s. 2, ch. 2003-78; s. 145, ch. 2003-261; s. 1, ch. 2005-96; s. 1, ch. 2009-133; s. 1, ch. 2012-180; s. 1, ch. 2013-168; s. 2, ch. 2016-6; s. 1, ch. 2016-220; s. 1, ch. 2017-36; s. 5, ch. 2018-118; s. 1, ch. 2020-10; s. 3, ch. 2022-5; s. 1, ch. 2022-214; s. 45, ch. 2023-8; s. 2, ch. 2023-157; s. 9, ch. 2024-2.



Ocala/Marion County Tourist Development Council By-Laws

LEGAL AUTHORITY:

Legal authority for the Marion County Tourist Development Council (the "Council") is found under Section 125.0104, Florida Statutes, known as "The Local Option Tourist Development Act", as subsequently amended, and Resolution No. 04-R-44 establishing the Council and stating the intent to levy a Tourist Development Tax (the "Act"). As an appointed Advisory Board, the Council is bound by State and County Laws, ordinances, and procedures governing the Council members and their activities, as well as procedures for reviewing expenditures of tourist development tax revenues.

OVERALL RESPONSIBILITIES:

The Ocala/Marion County Tourist Development Council's (TDC) primary responsibility is to advise and make recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners on matters related to tourism sales, marketing, and advertising in order to help increase overall visitation and lodging facility occupancy. The Council shall advise and make recommendations to the Board for the effective operation of the special projects and for uses of the Tourist Development Tax revenues to ensure conformity with the provisions of Section 125.0104, Florida Statutes.

The TDC members may not conduct the following: (i) attempt to authorize any form of distributions or purchases; (ii) attempt to approve the dissolution, merger, sale, pledge or transfer of any TDC assets; or (iii) attempt to elect, appoint or remove members or fill vacancies on the TDC.

1. The Council shall be composed of nine (9) members. One (1) member of the council shall be the Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners of Marion County, Florida, or any other member of the Board of County Commissioners as designated by the Chairman. The Council shall elect its Chairman. The remaining eight (8) members of the council shall be appointed by the Board of County Commissioners and shall have the following representative classifications:

(1) Two (2) members who are elected municipal officials, one of whom shall be from the most populous municipality in the County.

(2) Three (3) members who are owners or operators of motels, hotels, or other tourist accommodations in Marion County and subject to the tourist development tax.

(3) Three (3) members who are involved in the tourist industry and who have demonstrated an interest in tourist development, but who are not owners or operators of motels, hotels, or other tourist accommodations in Marion County and subject to the tax.

All members of the council shall be electors of Marion County. The members of the council shall serve staggered terms of four (4) years. Members of the council may be reappointed, provided they continue to meet the qualifications of membership. A vacancy on the council not occurring by expiration of term shall be filled by the Board of County Commissioners by appointment to fill the unexpired term.

2. **Terms.** All Council members shall serve for staggered terms of four (4) years, with the exception of the members of the municipalities and the Board who serve as appointed by their respective governing bodies. Their terms are subject to re-appointment or term expiration, whichever comes first. Board may designate the Council Chairman or allow the Council to elect a Chairman. Terms for the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council shall be for one (1) year and they may be reappointed.
3. **Orientation.** For each term appointed, Council members shall participate in an orientation process, which shall include, but is not limited to, an overview of Sunshine Law, Public Records, Ethics (financial disclosure, gifts law, conflicts of interest) and relevant statutes, ordinances and operating policies. From time-to-time, the Council shall participate in a refresher briefing on the topics included in the orientation.
4. **Vacancies.** Should any seat on the Council become vacant, a replacement to serve the remainder of that term shall be appointed in the same manner as the appointment of the person whose absence created the vacancy.
5. **Removal/Resignation.** If any member fails to attend three (3) successive meetings without prior approval of the Chairman of Council or if any member fails to attend forty percent (40%) or more of all meetings within any calendar year, such fact shall reported to the Board of County Commissioners. Special consideration/leniency will be given for any absences due to Acts of God, personal illness/medical, and/or family emergencies. If one of the elected municipal or county officials on the Council is removed for this reason, the applicable governing entity shall be required to appoint another elected representative as their replacement. In the event a Council member no longer wishes to serve or no longer conforms to the criteria listed in in Florida Statute 125.0104 to hold the seat to which they were appointed, said Council member shall forward a letter to the Council and the Board stating these facts and shall additionally tender a letter of resignation along with this submittal.
6. **Agenda.** There shall be an official agenda for every Council meeting, which shall determine the order of business conducted at the meeting. The agenda will be prepared for each Council meeting by the Director. Individuals or entities wishing to place an item on an upcoming agenda for Council action must submit a written request to the Director at least two (2) weeks prior to a regularly scheduled meeting along with any supporting documentation. Department staff, and the County Attorney's Office if necessary, shall provide background information on each agenda item and such information shall be available to Council members at least two (2)

business days prior to a scheduled meeting. Except as otherwise provided for herein, non-agenda matters shall be confined to items that are informational only.

7. **Minutes.** Written minutes shall be kept of each Council meeting. A written summary of each meeting shall be presented at the next Council meeting for approval by Council members and signed by the Council Chairman. Minutes will then be sent to the Clerk's Office to be placed on the next BCC Agenda under Notation for Record. Such written summary shall include the Council members in attendance, major items of discussion, formal action taken at such meetings, and items presented during public comments. The Council shall abide by Florida Statutes in regard to minutes and public participation.
8. **Voting.** TDC members *must* recuse themselves and abstain from voting or recommending any marketing activities, expenditures or funding from which they, their business or their employer will directly benefit. Any member that abstains from voting must complete Form 8B – Memorandum of Voting Conflict for County, Municipal, and Other Local Public Officers within 15 calendar days of when the vote occurred for the voting record maintained by VCB staff. Roll call will be taken on each vote relating to financial recommendations. Items will be voted on individually, rather than collectively.
9. **Council Meetings.** The TDC will meet at least once a quarter, with additional meetings or workshops set up by a vote of its members.
10. **Notice.** All meetings are open to the public, must adhere to State of Florida Sunshine Laws and must be publicly advertised in advance, in keeping with County policy.

These By-Laws may be amended from time to time by the Board of County Commissioners. The Council may provide recommendations to the Board as to proposed modifications.

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Marion County
Board of County Commissioners



Marion County Public Relations

601 SE 25th Ave., Ocala, FL

www.MarionFL.org

Immediate release
December 27, 2024

Media contact:
Public Relations
Office: 352-438-2311 • Cell: 352-789-2152
Email: PublicRelations@MarionFL.org

Sunshine Notice

In accordance with Florida’s Sunshine Laws, Marion County Public Relations will send “Sunshine Notices” to alert citizens of public meetings. Per state statute 286.0105, “...if a person decides to appeal any decision made by the board...with respect to any matter considered at such meeting or hearing, he or she will need a record of the proceedings, and that, for such purpose, he or she may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.”

Two or more commissioners may attend the following:

2025 Board of County Commissioners and associated meetings

Board of County Commissioners

All meetings take place in the McPherson Governmental Campus auditorium, 601 SE 25th Ave., Ocala. Meetings are held at 9 a.m. on the first and third Tuesday* of each month. For more information, contact the commission office at 352-438-2323.

Jan. 21	Feb. 4	Feb. 18	Mar. 5	Mar. 18	
Apr. 1	Apr. 15	May 6	May 20	June 3	June 17
July 1	July 15	Aug. 5	Aug. 19	Sept. 3	Sept. 16
Oct. 7	Oct. 21	Nov. 4	Nov. 18	Dec. 2	Dec. 16

Board of County Commissioners Zoning, final hearing

All meetings take place at 1:30 p.m. on the third Monday, and 2 p.m. on the third Tuesday of each month in the McPherson Governmental Campus Auditorium, 601 SE 25th Ave., Ocala. First Tuesdays are as needed. For more information, contact Growth Services at 352-438-2600.

Jan. 13*	Jan. 21	Feb. 17	Feb. 18	Mar. 17	Mar. 18
Apr. 14	Apr. 15	May 19	May 20	June 16	June 17
July 15	July 21	Aug. 18	Aug. 19	Sept. 15	Sept. 16
Oct. 20	Oct. 21	Nov. 17	Nov. 18	Dec. 15	Dec. 16

Code Enforcement Board

Marion County's Code Enforcement Board meets at 9 a.m. on the second Wednesday of each month* in the Growth Services Training Room, 2710 E. Silver Springs Blvd., Ocala. For more information, contact Code Enforcement at 352-671-8901.

Jan. 8	Feb. 12	Mar. 12	Apr. 9	May 14	June 11
July 9	Aug. 13	Sept. 10	Oct. 8	Nov. 12	Dec. 10

Planning & Zoning Commission, first hearing

The Planning & Zoning Commission conducts hearings are held at 5:30 p.m. on the last Monday of each month* in the McPherson Governmental Campus Auditorium, 601 SE 25th Ave., Ocala. For more information, contact Autumn Williams at 352-438-2600.

Jan. 27	Feb. 24	Mar. 31	Apr. 28	May 28 *	June 30
July 28	Aug. 25	Sept. 29	Oct. 27	Nov. 24	Dec. 29

*Altered schedule (Date/Time)

Local Mitigation Strategy

All meetings take place at 10:00 a.m. on the third Wednesday quarterly in the Growth Services Training Room, 2710 E. Silver Springs Blvd., Ocala, FL 34470. For more information, contact Kelly Hill at 352-438-2622.

Jan. 15	Apr. 16	July 16	Oct. 15
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Board of Adjustment Variances

The Board of Adjustment Variances meets at 2 p.m. on the first Monday* of each month in the Growth Services Training Room, 2710 E. Silver Springs Blvd., Ocala. For more information, contact Kelly Hill at 352-438-2622.

Jan. 6	Feb. 3	Mar. 3	Apr. 7	May 5	June 2
July 7	Aug. 4	Sept. 8*	Oct. 6	Nov. 3	Dec. 1

*Altered schedule (Date/Time)

Tourist Development Council

The Tourist Development Council meets at 9 a.m. on the following dates in the Visitors and Convention Bureau Conference Room, 109 W. Silver Springs Blvd., Ocala. For more information, contact Candace Shelton 352-438-2800.

Jan. 16	Feb. 27
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Land Development Regulation Committee

The Land Development Regulation Committee will hold workshops at 5:30 p.m.

Services at 352-438-2600.

Jan. 15	Feb. 5	Feb. 19	Mar. 5	Mar. 19	
Apr. 2	Apr. 16	May 7	May 21	June 4	June 18
July 2	July 16	Aug. 6	Aug. 20	Sept. 3	Sept. 17
Oct. 1	Oct. 15	Nov. 5	Nov. 19	Dec. 3	Dec. 17

Historical Commission

Meetings are held at 6 p.m. on the second Monday of each month in the Growth Services Training Room, 2710 E. Silver Springs Blvd., Ocala. For more information, contact Jennifer Clark at 352-438-2300.

Jan. 13	Feb. 10	Mar. 10	Apr. 14	May 12	June 9
July 14	Aug. 11	Sept. 8	Oct. 13	Nov. 10	Dec. 8

Parks & Recreation Advisory Council

The Marion County Parks & Recreation Advisory Council meets at 3 p.m. on the third Wednesday of the month in the Parks & Recreation Conference Room, 111 SE 25th Ave., Ocala. For more information, contact Parks & Recreation at 352-671-8560.

Jan. 15	Feb. 19	Mar. 19	Apr. 16	May 21	June 18
July 16	Aug. 20	Sept. 17	Oct. 15	Nov. 19	Dec. 17

Housing Finance Authority of Marion County

The Housing Finance Authority of Marion County will meet at 12 p.m. on the third Wednesday of each month, excluding December. Meetings will be held at the McPherson Governmental Campus, Conference Room A, 601 SE 25th Avenue, Ocala. For more information, please call 352-322-1987.

Jan. 15	Feb. 19	Mar. 19	Apr. 16	May 21	June 18
July 16	Aug. 20	Sept. 17	Oct. 15	Nov. 19	

Central Florida Community Land Trust

The Central Florida Community Land Trust will meet at 1:30 p.m. on the dates listed below, meetings will be held at the McPherson Governmental Campus, Conference Room A, 601 SE 25th Avenue, Ocala. For more information, please call 352-322-1987.

Jan. 15	Apr. 16	July 16	Oct. 15
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Development Review Committee (DRC)

The Development Review Committee meets at 9 a.m. on Mondays in the Office of the County Engineer, Building 1, Conference Room, 412 SE 25th Ave., Ocala. For more information, contact the Office of the County Engineer at 352-671-8686.

Jan. 6	Jan. 13	Jan. 20*	Jan. 27	Feb. 3	Feb. 10
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May 12	May 19	May 26*	June 2	June 9	June 16
June 23	June 30	July 7	July 14	July 21	July 28
Aug. 4	Aug. 11	Aug. 18	Aug. 25	Sept. 1*	Sept. 8
Sept. 15	Sept. 22	Sept. 29	Oct. 6	Oct. 13	Oct. 20
Oct. 27	Nov. 3	Nov. 10	Nov. 17	Nov. 24	Dec. 1*
Dec. 8	Dec. 15	Dec. 22	Dec. 29		

*Indicates no meeting

MSTU Advisory Boards

Hills of Ocala MSTU for Recreation Advisory Council

The Hills of Ocala MSTU for Recreation will meet at 6 p.m. quarterly on the first Monday, every 3 months in the Hills of Ocala Clubhouse, 10475 SW 136th Terrace, Dunnellon. For more information, call Peter Hodges at 352-438-2650.

Feb. 3 May 5 Aug. 4 Nov. 3

Marion Oaks MSTU for General Services Advisory Board

The Marion Oaks MSTU for General Services Advisory Board meets at 10:30 a.m. on the second Tuesday of the following months in the Annex Building, 294 Marion Oaks Lane, Ocala. For more information, please call 352-307-1037.

Jan. 14 Feb. 11 May 13 Sept. 9 Oct. 14

Marion Oaks MSTU for Recreation Services and Facilities Advisory Board

The Marion Oaks MSTU for Recreation Services and Facilities Advisory Board helps determine the budget and projects for the Marion Oaks Community Center. The board meets at 9:30 a.m. on the second Tuesday of the following months in the Annex Building, 294 Marion Oaks Lane, Ocala. For more information, please call 352-438-2828.

Jan. 14 Feb. 11* Apr. 8 July 15 Oct. 14

*Advisory Board Pre Budget Workshop at 9:30 a.m.

Pine Run Estate Public Advisory Board

Advisory Board Meetings are held at 10 a.m. on the third Thursday of every month, excluding December. The meetings are held at Clubhouse 1, located at 10379 SW 88th Terrace, Ocala. For more information, please call 352-438-2828.

Jan. 16 Feb. 20 Mar. 20 Apr. 17 May 15 June 19
July 17 Aug. 21 Sept. 18 Oct. 16 Nov. 20

Rainbow Lakes Estates Public Advisory Board

The Rainbow Lakes Estates Public Advisory Board meets at 6:30 p.m. on the

Pamela Spicuzza at 352-489-4280.

Jan. 16 Feb. 20 Mar. 11* Mar. 20 Apr. 17 May 15
June 19** July 17 Aug. 21 Sept. 18 Oct. 16 Nov. 20

* 10:00 a.m. budget workshop

** 10:00 a.m. BCC budget hearing. Date subject to change

Silver Springs Shores Tax Advisory Council

The Silver Springs Shores Tax Advisory Council meets at 6 p.m. on the second Tuesday of the following months in the Silver Springs Shores Community Center, 590 Silver Road, Ocala. For more information, call 352-438-2810.

Jan. 14 Mar. 11 May 13 July 8 Sept. 9 Nov. 11

Member and Appointee Participation

Soil & Water Conservation District Board

The Marion County Soil and Water Conservation District Board will meet 9 a.m. on the second Monday of every month in Growth Services, 2710 E. Silver Springs Blvd., Ocala. For more information, contact the district office at 352-438-2475.

Jan. 13 Feb. 10 Mar. 10 Apr. 14 May 12 June 9
July 14 Aug. 11 Sept. 8 Oct. 13 Nov. 10 Dec. 8

East Central Florida Regional Planning Council

The East Central Florida Regional Planning Council will meet at 9:30 a.m. on the third Wednesday of the months listed at 455 N. Garland Ave., Orlando (unless otherwise noted). For more information, call 407-245-0300.

Feb. 19* Apr. 16 May 21** Aug. 20** Sept. 17** Nov. 19**

*Location: Lake Mary Events Center, 260 N. Country Club Rd, Lake Mary, FL

**Location: To be determined

Ocala Metro Chamber & Economic Partnership

The Ocala Metro Chamber & Economic Partnership will hold its exCEptional Breakfast at 7:30 a.m. on the third Wednesday of every month at the Reilly Arts Center, 500 NE 9th St, Ocala. For more information, contact the CEP at 352-629-8051.

Jan. 15 Feb. 19 Mar. 19 Apr. 16 May 21 June 18
July 16 Aug. 20 Sept. 17 Oct. 15 Nov. 19 Dec. 17

Central Florida MPO Alliance

All scheduled meetings begin at 10 a.m. on the below dates at MetroPlan

Feb. 14 Apr. 11 Oct. 10

SW Florida Water Management District Springs Coast Steering Committee

The schedule meetings begin at 2 p.m. on the below dates at the Brooksville office, 2379 Broad St., Brooksville. For more information, contact 352-796-7211 ext. 4400.

Jan. 22 Mar. 5 Jul 23

Withlacoochee Regional Water Supply Authority

All scheduled meeting begin at 3:30 p.m. on the following Wednesdays in the Lecanto Government building, room 166, 3600 W. Sovereign Path, Lecanto. For more information, contact the office at 32-527-5795 or visit wrwsa.org

Jan. 15 Mar. 19 May 21 July 9 Sept. 17

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Marion County
Board of County Commissioners



Marion County Public Relations 601 SE 25th Ave., Ocala, FL www.MarionFL.org

Immediate release
January 29, 2025

Media contact:
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Office: 352-438-2311 • Cell: 352-789-2152
Email: PublicRelations@MarionFL.org

Sunshine Notice

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Two or more commissioners may attend the following:

DATE TIME	MEETING PURPOSE	LOCATION	CONTACT
February 27 9:00 a.m.	Tourist Development Council	<p>in person</p> <p>Visitors & Convention Bureau Conference Room 109 W. Silver Springs Blvd Ocala, FL 34475</p> <p>send evidence/comments to: Candace.Shelton@marionfl.org OR 109 W. Silver Springs Blvd. Ocala, FL 34475</p>	<p>Candace Shelton 352-438-2800</p>
March 28 9:00 a.m.	Tourist Development Council	<p>in person</p> <p>Visitors & Convention Bureau Conference Room 109 W. Silver Springs Blvd Ocala, FL 34475</p> <p>send evidence/comments to:</p>	<p>Candace Shelton 352-438-2800</p>

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			109 W. Silver Springs Blvd. Ocala, FL 34475	
April 24 9:00 a.m.	Tourist Development Council		<p>in person</p> <p>Visitors & Convention Bureau Conference Room 109 W. Silver Springs Blvd Ocala, FL 34475</p> <p>send evidence/comments to: Candace.Shelton@marionfl.org</p> <p>OR</p> <p>109 W. Silver Springs Blvd. Ocala, FL 34475</p>	Candace Shelton 352-438-2800
May 21 9:00 a.m.	Tourist Development Council		<p>in person</p> <p>Visitors & Convention Bureau Conference Room 109 W. Silver Springs Blvd Ocala, FL 34475</p> <p>send evidence/comments to: Candace.Shelton@marionfl.org</p> <p>OR</p> <p>109 W. Silver Springs Blvd. Ocala, FL 34475</p>	Candace Shelton 352-438-2800
June 26 9:00 a.m.	Tourist Development Council		<p>in person</p> <p>Visitors & Convention Bureau Conference Room 109 W. Silver Springs Blvd Ocala, FL 34475</p> <p>send evidence/comments to: Candace.Shelton@marionfl.org</p> <p>OR</p> <p>109 W. Silver Springs Blvd. Ocala, FL 34475</p>	Candace Shelton 352-438-2800
August 20 9:00 a.m.	Tourist Development Council		<p>in person</p> <p>Visitors & Convention Bureau Conference Room 109 W. Silver Springs Blvd Ocala, FL 34475</p>	Candace Shelton 352-438-2800

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			<p>Candace.Shelton@marionfl.org OR 109 W. Silver Springs Blvd. Ocala, FL 34475</p>	
<p>September 25 9:00 a.m.</p>	<p>Tourist Development Council</p>		<p>in person Visitors & Convention Bureau Conference Room 109 W. Silver Springs Blvd Ocala, FL 34475</p> <p>send evidence/comments to: Candace.Shelton@marionfl.org OR 109 W. Silver Springs Blvd. Ocala, FL 34475</p>	<p>Candace Shelton 352-438-2800</p>
<p>October 23 9:00 a.m.</p>	<p>Tourist Development Council</p>		<p>in person Visitors & Convention Bureau Conference Room 109 W. Silver Springs Blvd Ocala, FL 34475</p> <p>send evidence/comments to: Candace.Shelton@marionfl.org OR 109 W. Silver Springs Blvd. Ocala, FL 34475</p>	<p>Candace Shelton 352-438-2800</p>
<p>November 20 9:00 a.m.</p>	<p>Tourist Development Council</p>		<p>in person Visitors & Convention Bureau Conference Room 109 W. Silver Springs Blvd Ocala, FL 34475</p> <p>send evidence/comments to: Candace.Shelton@marionfl.org OR 109 W. Silver Springs Blvd. Ocala, FL 34475</p>	<p>Candace Shelton 352-438-2800</p>

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Marion County
Board of County Commissioners



Marion County Public Relations 601 SE 25th Ave., Ocala, FL www.MarionFL.org

Immediate release
March 3, 2025

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Marion County Tourist Development Council

Agenda Item

File No.: 2025-18548

Agenda Date: 3/28/2025

Agenda No.:

SUBJECT:

MOTION: Approval of January 2025 Tourist Development Council Minutes

DESCRIPTION/BACKGROUND:

Recommended Action: To approve the Tourist Development Council Minutes from January 16, 2025.

Tourist Development Council Regular Meeting

Ocala/Marion County Visitor & Convention Bureau

109 W Silver Springs Blvd.

Ocala, FL 34475

Thursday, January 16, 2025

9:03 a.m.

The regularly scheduled meeting for the Tourist Development Council was held both in person and via Teams.

Mr. Jeff Bailey read into the record, members of the public are advised that this meeting/hearing is a public proceeding, and the clerk to the board is making an audio recording of the proceedings, and all statements made during the proceedings, which recording will be a public record, subject to disclosure under the public records law of Florida. Be aware, however, that the audio recording may not satisfy the requirement for a verbatim transcript of the proceedings, described in the notice of this meeting, in the event you desire to appeal any decision adopted in this proceeding.

Roll Call

Present:

Victoria Billig, Christopher Fernandez, Danny Gaekwad, Commissioner Ron Livsey and Jeff Bailey

Staff:

Loretta Shaffer, Sky Wheeler, DeeDee Busbee, Bryan Day, Jessica Heller, Corry Locke, Samantha Solomon, Heidi Villagomez, Keleab Spencer, Candace Shelton

Guests:

Paresh Chhatu, Hilton Garden Inn; Lea Brayton, World Equestrian Center; Isiah Lewis, Downs & St. Germain

Notice of Publication

Notice was published on the County Website on December 27, 2024 and subsequently updated to include Teams information on January 06, 2025.

Due to lack of quorum, Mr. Jeff Bailey requested the council discuss items which did not require a motion. He requested the attending members and staff review Staff Updates until additional council members arrived and quorum was met.

Staff Updates

Loretta Shaffer, Tourist Development Director introduced Mr. Isiah Lewis with Downs and St.

Germain to discuss the current economic impact research.

Quarterly Economic Impact/Visitor Tracking Report – July – September Data

Mr. Lewis advised he would present the July to September 2024 quarterly report. Mr. Lewis stated that 550 surveys were collected. He then proceeded to discuss an increase in TDT collections which was up 2.3% from July to September compared to 2023 for the same time period. There was also an increase in room nights but decrease in occupancy, ADR and RevPAR. Mr. Lewis explained, there were more rooms available this year but there was also an increase in paid visitors this quarter that lead to an increase in room nights and TDT collections. Mr. Lewis further advised there was a significant decrease in visitors who stayed in unpaid accommodations and day trippers but there was an increase in paid accommodations. He then clarified and advised, visitors who stayed in paid accommodations increased while visitors who stayed in unpaid accommodations and/or took day trips decreased.

Mr. Danny Gaekwad requested to know if the survey results for hotels was inclusive AirBnBs or rentals.

Mr. Lewis explained when looking at the overall calculations, the number of lodging units in the county, inclusive of vacation rentals and hotels, were included. Mr. Lewis then noted there was an increase in supply from July to September 2023 until July to September 2024.

Mr. Gaekwad requested clarification as to the type of lodging units included in the survey.

Mr. Lewis advised he did not have the information available at this time but that he would obtain it and provide it to the council.

Mr. Gaekwad advised the information was imperative so the council would be informed regarding the supply of rentals in the county because the Tax Collector would be looking for the information. He requested that Downs and St. Germain provide specific information on the supply and demand.

Mr. Lewis advised that he would provide the requested information. He further advised the increase of visitors staying in paid accommodations and decrease in day trippers was in alignment with the Long-Range Tourism Plan metrics. Therefore, the metrics the staff wanted to increase such as TDT and room nights were increasing.

Mr. Gaekwad indicated that occupancy was at 54% and that when supply increased, other metrics decrease.

Mr. Bailey advised that RevPAR decreasing by 5% was difficult for hoteliers assuming costs to operate had not gone down 5%.

Mr. Bailey advised that he was aware that TDT collections increased which was the goal of the council but that TDT collections were heavily funded by hoteliers.

Mr. Lewis then advised that spending per travel party had decreased which fell in line with

national trends and was not an issue solely for Marion County.

Ms. Sky Wheeler advised that the data provided does not only assess hotels, but that all Key Data short term rental information was reported which was why the increase appeared to be drastic. Though the data was beginning to “normalize”, for the running 12 months, nights available had increased 18% in market. Ms. Wheeler advised the data provided pertained to short-term rentals, hotels and accommodations. She then stated the VCB could provide data that spoke to hotel growth, hotels which opened and the number of rooms which have come into the county during this timeframe, but the report discussed at this time focused on economic impact.

Mr. Bailey clarified the aforementioned and advised the statistics that Mr. Gaekwad wanted would be provided by Ms. Wheeler during her presentation.

Ms. Wheeler affirmed.

Mr. Gaekwad stated the organization which conducted the feasibility research indicated that a 300-room hotel was needed in Marion County. Mr. Gaekwad requested to see information which explained how the County could sustain a hotel of that size.

Mr. Bailey advised it’s the lowest quarter of the year.

Mr. Lewis stated the post-COVID normalization of the tourism industry, and as cruise ships and international travel resumes, competition would increase. He further advised tourism numbers peaked in 2022 -2023 and the increased numbers were not sustainable. The numbers were now starting to normalize across the state of Florida.

Mr. Gaekwad advised the peak in tourism numbers was due to a term called “vengeance travel”.

Mr. Lewis advised the length of stay decreased from 4.0 nights to 3.7 a slight decrease in the number of nights travelers stayed in the destination. He further stated there was also a slight decrease in the travel party size from 3.2 travelers to 2.9. The percentage of visitors visiting Ocala/Marion County increased by 7% points with a sizeable increase in first time visitation of 8%. Mr. Lewis advised the destination had more first-time visitors from July to September 2024 compared on a percentage basis. There was a decrease in the number of visitors by 3.5% with the greatest decline being in unpaid visitors and day trippers. There was a 10% decrease in direct expenditures and a 12% decrease in total economic impact which aligned with the national trend of a decrease in spending. Occupancy, ADR and RevPAR were down while there was an increase in room nights and TDT.

During the trip planning cycle, more than half of visitors plan trips to Ocala Marion County less than a month in advance, this declined 10% year to year leading to a 4 day longer trip planning cycle up to 53 days compared to 49 days previously observed. There has been an increase in the length of the trip planning cycle throughout July to September. Pulling data from the top trip planning sources over half of visitors are travelling to see friends or family and over half use search sites with 15% using this destination’s social media and 7% using the OcalaMarionCounty.com website. The top trip planning sources align with the top reasons for visiting. Visiting friends and relatives is the top trip planning source. This data aligns with statewide trends as people are coming to visit friends and family in Florida due to warmer

weather. Good thing is seeing an increase of people staying in paid accommodations versus unpaid accommodations, not all visitors are staying with friend and family.

Mr. Gaekwad inquired if this number is similar to other counties.

Mr. Lewis advises it's pretty similar across most destinations but to be specific not those attending horse shows, sporting tournaments and events along with the springs, as those are specific to the location here but visiting friends and family is the top reason for visiting nationally.

Mr. Bailey assumes the percentage of business travel is lower than some other counties.

Mr. Lewis advises it is in some counties, but not all. The next slide shows 23% (1 in 4) visitors remember some form of advertising for the county. That's down slightly from year to year and it makes sense that day trippers are down, as day trippers are more likely to see advertising on their way into the destination which is a trend across all clients. Three in four visitors who recall advertising were influenced by that information to visit the area. Advertising isn't specific to Ocala Marion County VCB advertising, but includes all advertisement to the Ocala Marion County area. The sources of advertising recall at 31% are using social media and another 29% are online advertising. There is a strong increase up 5+% year to year in those whom report their sources of advertising recall of television ads. The top regions of visitor origin are similar year to year with a slight increase in those visiting from Florida and showing a steady hold of 4% of those visiting internationally. The quarter showed less visitors overall and more in paid accommodations with more international visitors staying in paid accommodations. 17% of visitors are coming from the south, 10% from Northeast and 6% from mid-west and 2% from the West. The top states of origin are familiar with Florida, Georgia, Texas, and Kentucky is new to the top 5 potentially due to the horse related events. The top origin markets are Orlando and Tampa Bay historically, then Jacksonville and Gainesville, West Palm Beach, Atlanta and Miami/Ft. Lauderdale. There is slight decrease in travel party size from 3.2 to 2.9 people on average but we are seeing a similar amount of people traveling with children so that number hasn't changed significantly this quarter as compared to last quarter of the same time period. Median age of visitor is 49 years old with a household income of \$82,500 per year that is an increase up from approximately \$77,000 year over year. First time visitors are up there and a slight decrease in loyal visitors described as those who have visited 10 plus times to the area.

Mr. Lewis indicated that Ocala/Marion County is a drive destination as 84% of visitors drove to the Ocala Marion County area which is the same year over year but we are seeing an increase in the visitors whom drove to the Orlando International Airport at 10% and it was at 4% last year. There was a decrease in nights stayed, it was 4 nights and now down to 3.7 nights. 7 in 10 visitors were only visiting Marion County during their trip which is up 7% percentage point from year to year which falls in line with your first-time visitors. There is an increase in the percentage of visitors staying in hotel/motel as mentioned we saw a decrease in unpaid visitors and day trippers.

Mr. Bailey asked for percentages year over year versus quarter after quarter.

Mr. Lewis advised there is a comparison breakout at the back of his report but he can include in the executive summary for October to December next time.

Mr. Lewis advised that dining out is a top activity. Nearly 2 in 5 visitors that are visiting friends and family polled are visiting the downtown and area springs as well as attending horse shows, relax and unwind, shopping and attending sporting events which is new to our top 8 list. Top draws are visiting friends and family and horse events, midlevel draws are sporting events, visiting area springs, relax and unwind and business conferences from July to September. Activity trip enhancers include visiting restaurants in downtown Ocala. The main drivers from July to September are horse related events, visiting the springs, visiting friends and relatives and canoeing and kayaking which are being done often and exceeding expectations of visitors. Things being done less frequently but exceeding expectations and room to grow areas are biking, hiking and running and other horse related activities like sales. Travel party spending as a whole is down from \$356 a day to \$319. As total during trip we are showing \$1148 being spent down from \$1424 that coincides with national trends. In post-trip evaluations 99% of visitor's expectations were met or exceeded. 48% of visitor's expectations were exceeded and visitors who said they would definitely return is slightly down this year over year. First time visitors are notoriously harder to have a positive sentiment versus your loyal visitors whom return time and time again. Visitors were asked to describe Ocala Marion County as a place to visit and stated "Ocala is a neat place, we used to live here and it's grown a lot since then definitely for the better", "We were unable to book a room in Gainesville for the game so we settled for Ocala fortunately and surprisingly and we fell in love with this small town, there is a great atmosphere here and friendly people and a lot to do" and finally "Ocala is beautiful, our old friends moved here last year and we are thinking about joining them, not too large of a town and people are super friendly".

Mr. Gaekwad inquires how the survey is done and requested a copy of the questionnaire, as well as clarity on if interviewers are local and how other counties do it.

Mr. Lewis advised the survey is distributed a couple different ways, a multi-modal approach which is also used with other clients, a combination of email, in-person and social media. Receiving 550 responses the last quarter. 85-90% are in person responses, 10 to 20% is online data collection. The county has a higher in person data collection ratio than other client's due partners allowing them to be onsite for data collection. There are 2-3 local based interviewers rotating daily across different locations, day of week and events including hotels, events, downtown, Silver Springs to collect data from different types of visitors. The interviewers with a questionnaire are in the field as much as possible, dependent on budget, to collect data. He can provide QR codes for hotels and will provide business card to obtain more partners.

Mr. Bailey advises that the Hilton and IHG are not going to give the guest list/email to them which limits the information.

Mr. Lewis advises that QR codes are gaining popularity as they had tried pre-COVID and they would be interested in providing hotel with that.

Mr. Gaekwad requested paper questionnaires.

Ms. Wheeler explained the structure of the questionnaire changes with responses, so digitally would be the best solution and re-trying QR code would be optimal.

Mr. Lewis advises that the QR codes subject will be brought up in research plan discussion

scheduled with Ms. Wheeler and Ms. Shaffer as they would like to increase the amount of partner locations.

Ms. Shaffer requested the council advise if there was a sentiment of a need for additional research, especially high impact signature events that we are funding to as Downs and St. Germain to quantify them.

Mr. Lewis advises that he and Mr. Locke have a shared event document of events in Marion County that is reviewed weekly to schedule out interviewers.

Quarterly Public Relations and Analytics Reports – July – September Data

Ms. Shaffer introduced Ms. Jessica Heller, Marketing and Communications Supervisor, to talk about PR and great analytics the team continually brings us. With reference to the July through September timeframe PR analytics report starts on page 141. On page 143 shows the public relations efforts we set a lot of press links in this time frame like the gateway project update, tourism exchange information sent out, hurricane information in September and Visit Florida requested multiple editorial leads for opportunities that included holiday happenings, manatee season. Visit Florida in turn sends them to their distribution lists of their media contacts.

With reference to pages 144 and 145 which show media exposure and public relations pick up, that's information on what is being talked about regarding our destination on a global scale, like what the media is interested in and kind of information is being picked up. The quarter shows the top 3 topics are events and venues, equestrian in general news and then outdoor adventure. Page 145 shows the geographical pickup of Florida being the most popular and California, Virginia, Ohio, and New York. From an international standpoint we have Canada, UK, India, Turkey, New Zealand and Malaysia, which we have seen previously.

Page 146 is a summary of a partnership with Visit FL for a Brazilian FAM trip that we hosted in this time period consisting of two couples, 4 people total, with their own Instagram and travel blogs with a combined reach of nearly a 1 million. Ms. Heller expounded on the wonderful hotel, attraction, and restaurant partners that help ensure a great return on investment. The recent trip was from an RV angle, by renting an RV and stayed at campgrounds doing different activities in the area including outdoor adventures, going out to eat. One couple is pregnant, so it gave a family aspect of international trip taking while planning for a family. She advised there would be additional reporting at a later date on recent German and Canadian FAM trips. The next couple pages, comprises additional earned media, highlighting articles in Travel and Leisure and The Knot.

Mr. Bailey requested details on the media value.

Ms. Heller advised media value was \$170,000 for Travel and Leisure.

Mr. Gaekwad inquired as to where this information was in the document.

Ms. Heller advises page 152 and The Knot article highlighted a wedding venue in the area with a reach of 18.4 million. This was a return of investment with keeping up with information requests. Page 157 of the report has the total print and digital earned media which are different items, not

covered due to timeframe, that were also earned media are over \$516,479.28 with a total reach of over \$43 million. There was also a AAA article that was published from a journalist that was hosted in partnership with Visit FL.

Mr. Bailey inquired about The Knot article and its reach.

Ms. Heller explained that that figure is the potential reach. A combination of average viewership for that article online and their print publication.

Ms. Heller explains the promotion of being a wedding destination helps to fill up hotels.

Mr. Gaekwad inquired if The Knot is a publication or online and requested for a copy.

Ms. Heller advises The Knot is both online and published and will reach out for a copy. She further explained the popularity of The Knot for wedding planning.

On page 158 of the report Social Media overview of different platforms. From July to September 2024, there were over 7.8 million impressions, over 91,000 engagements and over 9,00 post-link clicks. On page 165 is the Instagram specific information and the top post of the quarter was a reel of things to do in the area in the fall, which had 756 engagements, over 400 likes and 200 shares. Page 173 shows the top performing posts on Facebook with International Cat Day being number 1, showing you how social media works in virality. The metrics show that this was the highest performing post by far with over 42,000 reactions, 55,000 engagements and over 1200 shares. It was a video acquired through our user generated program. The wildlife photographer used a game camera to capture images of a bobcat with kittens in Ocala National Forest. On page 185 is where app date starts for the time period, there is a map for global downloads including Australia, Canada, Asia, a lot in Europe, US and South America. The number of downloads was 664. The total number of page views was 2,873. Total number of app downloads is over 4,000.

Mr. Gaekwad inquired as to the name of the app.

Ms. Heller advised that it is the "OcalaMarion Travel Guide" available on Apple App Store and Google Play. International visitors can also now download.

She further explained that the Website data begins on page 187 with comparisons as to last year's figures. There were 294,000 visitors for the quarter with 290,000 of those were new users. Average engagement on the website is 48 seconds. On page 188 shows events, Google Analytics is now called GA4, which is when user on the website acts of significance. The data shows 795,000 pageviews which means users were engaging in multiple pages on site. User engagement of 294,000. Page 189 shows data on blogs, we work with Tempest agency to generate new content and optimize keywords words in blogs that are popular at the time to gain organic traffic.

Mr. Bailey inquired about some of the most Instagram-able spots in Ocala.

Ms. Heller replied with a list inclusive of with Silver Springs, Silver Glen, Rainbow Springs, Shalom Park, Juniper Springs, Santos and downtown for art and murals.

Mr. Gaekwad inquired as to how many visitors Silver Springs get now?

Ms. Heller advises that last year they provided figures of about 1,000 a day during the week and 3,000 on the weekends.

Mr. Bailey and Mr. Gaekwad inquire as to Cronos' Cradle.

Ms. Heller explained that it's a beautiful, sustainable-based farm in Citra area that does ag tours and instructions on beekeeping and composting.

Ms. Heller advises the Top Visited Pages on the site as the Home page, the Events page which is updated daily, and as it was still summer time during the quarter a blog describing the springs was popular. On page 194, visitation broken out by month as provided by the website agency. There were 193 newsletter sign-ups for the quarter, 1,643 visitor guide requests through the website specifically. The monthly email newsletter showed 6,599 total open emails. Lastly, for the website there were 151,084 visits to partner directory page views and of those visits 43,272 clicked onto the partner's actual website.

VISIT FLORIDA Florida Huddle and Florida Encounter

Mr. Bailey moves the meeting into Florida Huddle discussion.

Mr. Locke advises he will give a quick overview and then jump into some of the special invitations. The Marion County Huddle is scheduled for February 3 through the 5th at World Equestrian Center. Registrations are at about 600 total for Encounter and Huddle. Florida Huddle is international travel trade association so everyone from all over the county in the travel trade business that are interested in doing business in Florida will be here. The total registrants 175 or so. On the Encounter side, that is everyone looking to source Florida meetings, meeting planner, and there is about 75 of those. The rest are all suppliers from other destinations in Florida trying to seek the same business we are. The team has been planning this for 3 years and are excited in 3 weeks to host for the first time. The opening reception is hosted by the Ocala Marion County VCB and the World Equestrian Center at the Stirrups terrace on February 3, 2025, Monday 6:30-9 PM. The County, the City, the legislative delegates will be attending this huge event in partnership with WEC making a fantastic event. The TDC is also encouraged to attend and he advised they will need a badge to enter.

Mr. Gaekwad inquired as to the expected attendance of the opening reception and if there will be a presentation for Ocala/Marion County.

Mr. Locke responds with 550 to 600 attendants.

Ms. Shaffer advised that there is great interest as this event is normally in Tampa, Miami or Orlando so people are really wanting to experience the new venue. Ms. Dana Young with Visit Florida will be opening up as it's her final event and then Ms. Shaffer will do a quick introduction and then Chair Bryant will speak then Commissioner Zalak. On Tuesday a lot of the conferences are trade show format and the team will be there taking appointments. On Tuesday the lunch and keynote will have an equine panel including Ms. Tammy Gantt, from the Florida Thoroughbred Breeders' and Owners' Association, as moderator and Mr. Jason Reynolds from the TDC with the topic will be a discussion being The Horse Capital of the World. Tuesday evening is an open evening for the conference so the sales team is taking the opportunity to have

a special event for invitees only at the Pavilion at Green Gaits.

Mr. Locke advised the location is a beautiful venue on 40 close WEC, it is a hay distributor and at night they have firepits, a nice pavilion with live music, drinks, food, etc. He believes it's Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights. The closing evening event ceremony will be downtown at Bank Street Patio where they anticipate 350-400 attendees.

Ms. Shaffer reiterated Tourism Exchange and focusing on international tour operators, explain the work that Ms. Candace Shelton has been doing to sign partners within the destination.

Mr. Locke advised that there was a Tourism Exchange workshop in September and that Tourism Exchange can help if the business does not have an online booking system.

Mr. Locke advised the system caters to both international and domestic tour operators.

Mr. Gaekwad advised that Florida Huddle and Florida Encounter used to be done by a private company and his 2nd year with Visit Florida they bought and instituted the program.

Ms. Shaffer explained that Visit Florida is also looking at taking over World Travel Mart and Tourism Exchange will help us in that.

Mr. Gaekwad asked to be added to list to attend Huddle.

Tourism Day 2025

Ms. Shaffer explained that it is March 26, 2025 showcasing Florida's Natural Wonder and being the Horse Capital of the World. She invites the councilmembers to attend.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Mr. Danny Gaekwad, seconded by Ms. Victoria Billig, to adopt the minutes from the October 2024 Tourist Development Council Workshop Meeting as presented. The motion was unanimously approved by the council (5-0).

Acknowledgement of Financials –

A motion was made by Mr. Chris Fernandez, seconded by Commission Ron Livsey, to review and approve November and December 2024 Financials. The motion was unanimously approved by the council (5-0).

Mr. Gaekwad asked if there were any financials that were of the normal spending.

Ms. Wheeler advised no and that any unplanned expenses would have been brought to board for conversation and recommendation.

Proposed Tourist Development Council Meeting Dates 2025

Ms. Wheeler explains that historically the TDC meeting is held the 4th Thursday of the month but that is not always possible due to Thanksgiving plus staff schedules and obligations of committee members. March and August present staff conflicts. She presented two options for alternative

meeting date schedule.

A motion was made by Mr. Danny Gaekwad, seconded by Mr. Christopher Fernandez, to accept the proposed tourist development council meeting dates for April, July, September and December as presented. The motion was unanimously approved by the council (5-0).

A motion was made by Mr. Danny Gaekwad, seconded by Commissioner Ron Livsey, to accept the proposed tourist development council meeting date for March as presented. The motion was unanimously approved by the council (5-0).

A motion was made by Ms. Victoria Billig, seconded by Commissioner Ron Livsey, to accept the proposed tourist development council meeting date for August as presented. The motion was unanimously approved by the council (5-0).

A motion was made by Commissioner Ron Livsey, seconded by Mr. Danny Gaekwad, to accept the proposed tourist development council meeting date for May as presented. The motion was unanimously approved by the council (5-0).

A motion was made by Mr. Danny Gaekwad, seconded by Mr. Christopher Fernandez, to accept the proposed tourist development council meeting date for June as presented. The motion was unanimously approved by the council (5-0).

A motion was made by Commissioner Ron Livsey, seconded by Ms. Victoria Billig, to accept the proposed tourist development council meeting date for October as presented. The motion was unanimously approved by the council (5-0).

A motion was made by Commissioner Ron Livsey, seconded by Mr. Danny Gaekwad, to accept the proposed tourist development council meeting date for November 20, 2025 as presented. The motion was unanimously approved by the council (5-0).

Sales Update

Ron Livsey out at 10:46 AM.

Mr. Locke advised they were reviewing page 199 and presented Major League Fishing as a professional fishing league comparable to Bass Masters and they are essentially an all-star tournament creating the model comparable to major league baseball and national basketball association where they are taking a mid-season break and the top anglers of the previous year are invited to attend the Heavy Hitters which is a smaller quaint event with the biggest prizes. There is more media coverage. Comparable to the all-star baseball game with a homerun derby and actual all-star game and major league fishing does the same in the spring. Potentially at Orange Lake in May of 2026. Orange Lake is rated as one of the top 5 bass fisheries. Marion County Parks and Recreation had a capital improvement already in place to improve that park and add a new boat ramp and parking opportunities for trailers. He advised there is a site visit planned in February.

Mr. Gaekwad asked for details on the attendance at that event.

Mr. Locke advised that it's the top 30 anglers so room night production won't be as much as other

larger tournaments, but media reach is where this really comes into play. Mr. Locke advised there will most likely be a Bid Fee request coming next month for \$75,000.00. There is a lot more media and levels to it that will be explained next month.

Ron Livsey in at 10:48 AM.

Mr. Gaekwad inquired if we would be paying the \$75,000.00.

Mr. Locke advises that yes, it would be part of the bid fee program and that they were at Kissimmee last year and that he would have further discussion next month.

Mr. Bailey advises he looks forward to discussion next month.

Mr. Locke explained that the next opportunity is the American Darters Association which would take place in July.

Ms. Victoria Billig requested to know what type of darts.

Mr. Locke explained it is regular darts and there is an association of skilled individuals that require a minimum of 18,000 square feet of space to do this event so we are pursuing that event.

Mr. Gaekwad asks if we would be paying any fees to them.

Mr. Locke advises there is a Bid Fee being discussed and currently this is just a lead with more information to coming in later meetings. He advised that ongoing leads didn't have much of an update., but there was an addition of two more fishing leagues owned by the same company that would have be consecutive weeks as well as UpDog International Finals which is another opportunity that was presented previously for March or April 2026.

Mr. Gaekwad asked for an explanation of UpDog.

Mr. Locke explains it as a Frisbee dog competition in a field which you liken to a football field in which the dogs have different areas on which they catch the frisbee with precision. He advised that it is a very complex sport brings in a lot of people. He indicated that Mr. Bryan Day pursued the opportunity and they have some other events that they are looking to bring our way. Florida Horse Park hosted the state championship. The last ongoing lead is USA Roller Sports National Championship though we lost the bid for 2025 we are still in the running for 2026. The association went to the West Coast for 2025 so the possibility to come to east coast in 2026 is high.

Mr. Gaekwad asks if there is a bid fee associated with that.

Mr. Locke advises there is a \$200,000.00 bid fee.

Mr. Bailey advises it's July to August business.

Mr. Locke's last piece of business is that in the previous sales update the Florida tourist development tax conference went to Cocoa Beach.

Mr. Bailey asked Mr. Locke to create a 2025 pace report for a future meeting.

Mr. Locke advised of the sales report and the definite business all the way through 2027.

Mr. Bailey advised he would like to be able to compare to past years to understand where we are as we add more supply.

Mr. Locke explains that a lot of the events book a year to two years out that's why a lot of these are running into the future but in 2025 we already have a lot of business secured. The sale report is fully in the packet.

TDT Collections/STR and Key Data Update

Ms. Wheeler then presented the collections update for both November and December which covers the revenue period of the previous month. For the reporting period of November, which covered October revenues, collections totaled \$558,579.61 and that was an increase of \$208,835.63 or 59.71% year over year. She reminded the group that was the hurricane time frame in October when generally there was not a hotel room to be had for that period of time so that had a great impact obviously and during that time period only 2.39% were from late taxes and penalties so roughly \$13,300 so the vast majority was new money generated in that month.

Mr. Bailey advises it certainly nice to be able to help people during a rough time that brought in \$100,000 more than the best previous year ever which is very remarkable.

For the reporting period of December, which covered November's revenues, collections total \$462,549.20 that was an increase as well up \$63,654.28, 15.96% year over year and only .78% were from late collection and penalties so that's \$3,610.96. Again, that's new money coming into the market. She reminded that as we move over into STR and key data, showing the trend graph, addressing when you go the RevPar portion of the chart, the red part doesn't have a huge swing and the low line on the chart is key data. The Marion County portion is the blue showing stable numbers. The Key Data which is the short-term rental numbers, these numbers can be manipulated with a click of the mouse, so that is why you will see great swings in that. Visit Florida seasonally across the state has much larger impacts than here in Marion County as there were some questions about that last time I did want to let you know that I went back and confirmed that the data was accurate. I will walk you through the numbers for November specifically now.

Mr. Bailey advised that one of the big problems when he joined was that there was a huge disparage between high season to off season and now when you look at that it's relatively flat which is good in a lot of ways.

Ms. Wheeler advised that now we just need to push it all up at once. As to what the chairman just noted that is we are looking to further fine tune through the funding revisions that Mr. Locke and his team will bring back. She advised that the team has really looked at how to stabilize throughout the year using the monies that are available to incentivize business to come into Marion County. For November the STR data with travel research, the traditional accommodations data, occupancy was at 66.2% that was up year over year.

Mr. Gaekwad advises it was due to two hurricanes.

Ms. Wheeler advised ADR was \$130.29 that was up 7.7% from last year. RevPAR was \$86.21 that is where the hurricanes certainly had an impact, that was up 22.4% from last year and then for the running 12 months occupancy was down 3.8% and ADR was up 1.9% and RevPAR was down

1.9%. Looking at the Visit Florida numbers occupancy statewide for November was at 70.8% which was up 8%, ADR was at \$178.07 which was up 3.7% from last year and RevPAR was \$126.12 which was up 12%. The November Key Data showed that Occupancy was at 42.7% and that was flat from last year, ADR was \$129.00 that was a decrease of \$14.00 from last year and RevPAR was \$37.00 which is a decrease of \$9.00 from last year and nights available was 5,541 and that was an increase of 11%.

Mr. Gaekwad advised that this is what needs to be provided to the Commissioners to show the increase up and down.

Ms. Wheeler advised that we will looking at is determining the partner internet side behind your log thru IDSS what we can provide you that has a little bit more robust information, not just for the council, it's anyone with an account. Then the information can be refreshed. Smith Travel Research and CoStar doesn't want to cannibalize their business base by just saying the DMO's can give it all away to everybody so that's where we are trying to be careful with them with also being transparent that if there is a request we can also met that. One last thing for key data for the running twelve months, occupancy was down 4%, ADR was down 7% and RevPAR was down 11% but nights available increased by 18% and 66,999 were in the running twelve months of nights available up from 56,658.

Mr. Gaekwad believes she should present a real picture rather than all the riding high of we need this and we need that. The county should not be in the business to build.

Mr. Bailey advised that there is a challenge there that when looking at our collections very much on pace for a record year which is great for our collections standpoint.

Mr. Gaekwad advises the visitation is up, but the hotels are down because short-term rentals are killing the entire state.

Mr. Bailey advises it comes down to the business and making sure that it also makes the investor in the property if a property cannot do well enough to survive with the occupancies then it won't matter.

Ms. Wheeler offered to go into depth with anyone whom was interested and is now on her way to getting STR certified.

Ms. Shaffer mentioned that there will be two meetings, a 9 AM joint workshop on March 13th at the BCC auditorium for follow up conversation between the city, the county and March 29 is the TDC meeting. Meeting invites will be sent.

TDC Events Calendar

Mr. Bailey advises that the TDC events calendar is within the packet so you know what we are supporting and advised to talk to staff if you like anything.

Staff Updates

Ms. Shaffer introduced staff members, Heidi Villagomez and Keleab Spencer.

Ms. Shaffer advised that when the packet went out we didn't have a ribbon cutting date.

Ms. Wheeler advised that after the packet was created they solidified a date of April 7th Monday at 10 am for gateway ribbon cutting as that time of day the lighting will look the nicest on the features. It should only run about an hour.

Ms. Shaffer reiterated that Business After Hours is this evening at the World Equestrian Center so there are new leadership members there at WEC, Mr. Doug Spencer and Ms. Sara Thacker are new to the operations and the sales team.

Old Business

Mr. Bailey called for any old business and none was brought forth.

New Business

Mr. Bailey called for any new business and advised that elections for chair and vice-chair come up in March for those interested.

The meeting adjourned at 11:03 a.m.

Report from Chair

Notation for Record

Mr. Bailey advised the Sales Report was in the packet.

Mr. Bailey advised the TDC Attendance Report was in the packet.

Public Comment

Upcoming Meeting

Mr. Bailey stated, that the next TDC meeting will be on Thursday, February 27, 2025.

The meeting adjourned at 11:01 a.m.

Jeff Bailey, Chairman



Marion County Tourist Development Council

Agenda Item

File No.: 2025-18549

Agenda Date: 3/28/2025

Agenda No.:

SUBJECT:

MOTION: Approval of February 2025 Tourist Development Council Minutes

DESCRIPTION/BACKGROUND:

Recommended Action: To approve the Tourist Development Council Minutes from February 27, 2025.

Tourist Development Council Regular Meeting

Ocala/Marion County Visitor & Convention Bureau

109 W Silver Springs Blvd.

Ocala, FL 34475

Thursday, February 27, 2025

9:00 a.m.

The regularly scheduled meeting for the Tourist Development Council was held both in person and via Teams.

Mr. Jeff Bailey read into the record, members of the public are advised that this meeting/hearing is a public proceeding, and the clerk to the board is making an audio recording of the proceedings, and all statements made during the proceedings, which recording will be a public record, subject to disclosure under the public records law of Florida. Be aware, however, that the audio recording may not satisfy the requirement for a verbatim transcript of the proceedings, described in the notice of this meeting, in the event you desire to appeal any decision adopted in this proceeding.

Roll Call

Present:

Rus Adams, Victoria Billig, Danny Gaekwad, Commissioner Ron Livsey, Councilmember Barry Mansfield, Jason Reynolds, Commissioner Carl Zalak and Jeff Bailey

Staff:

Loretta Shaffer, Sky Wheeler, DeeDee Busbee, Bryan Day, Jessica Heller, Corry Locke, Samantha Solomon, Heidi Villagomez, Candace Shelton, Keleab Spencer, Coleen Robinson

Guests:

Dana Olesky, Chief Assistant County Attorney; Richard Busche, Principle Engineer, Senior Vice President – Kimley Horn; Kevin Milak, Florida Aquatics Swimming and Training (FAST), Isiah Lewis, Downs & St. Germain Research; Michael Osbourne, ARK Hospitality; Derrick Kimbaugh, Marion County Parks & Recreation Dept.; Eric Boyle, Marion County Parks & Recreation Dept.; Mary Hutchcraft, Hilton Ocala; Chis Hoover, Major League Fishing; Breanna Dacks, Visit Florida; Lea Brayton, World Equestrian Center; Rodney Guitierrez, World Equestrian Center; Sarah Thacker, World Equestrian Center; Maven Photo + Film

Notice of Publication

Notice was published on the County Website on December 27, 2024 and subsequently updated to include Teams information on February 20, 2025.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Rus Adams, seconded by Councilmember Barry Mansfield, to adopt the minutes from the November 21, 2024 Tourist Development Council Meeting as presented. The motion was unanimously approved by the council (7-0).

Commissioner Carl Zalak in at 9:03am

Acknowledgement of Financials – January 2025

A motion was made by Jason Reynolds, seconded by Councilmember Barry Mansfield, to review and approve January 2025 Financials. The motion was unanimously approved by the council (8-0).

Mr. Bailey advised the council would review and discuss Funding Requests prior to discussing new Program Guidelines.

Funding Requests

Fiscal Year 2025 Event Funding Allocations

Mr. Cory Locke, Group Sales Supervisor, discussed Fiscal Year 2025 Event Funding Allocations. He explained that the last four (4) items on the spreadsheet were current proposed Bid Fee requests. If those items were approved, the available funding amount would be reduced to \$75,000 for the remainder of the year.

Mr. Rus Adams requested the line entitled “Available to Fund Bid Fee Events” be updated to explain that if the current funding requests were approved, the amount noted would be the remaining balance to fund future events through the end of the fiscal year, September 2025.

USA Swimming Speedo Sectionals – June 2025 (date change)

Mr. Locke then discussed a date change request for a previously approved event entitled the USA Swimming Speedo Sectionals. Mr. Locke advised this event was approved in 2024 for event dates of May 22-25, 2025 with a request of \$25,000. The event organizer has since moved the date to June 26-29, 2025 but all other details remained the same.

A motion was made by Rus Adams, seconded by Victoria Billig, to approve the recommendation to move the event date for the USA Swimming Speedo Sectionals

from May 2025 to June 26-29, 2025 to the Board of County Commissioners. The motion was unanimously approved by the council (8-0).

USA Swimming Futures Meet - \$25,000 (Bid Fee)

Mr. Locke then addressed a Bid Fee funding request in the amount of \$25,000 for the USA Swimming Futures Meet Championships to be held at the World Equestrian Center from July 23-26, 2025. He advised the economic impact would exceed \$2.1 million with an ROI of 121% based on the \$25,000 Bid Fee.

Mr. Gaekwad requested to know the number of anticipated room nights the event would generate.

Mr. Locke advised the estimated room nights were noted as 2,500. He further advised this was a huge event for USA Swimming as it would be a competitive meet. Mr. Locke indicated the event would host approximately nine-hundred aspiring Olympians, coaches and spectators and provide them an opportunity to experience Ocala/Marion County.

Mr. Kevin Milak, General Manager of Florida Aquatic, Swimming and Training advised there would be approximately 800-1000 athletes in attendance for 30 of 42 days between the last week of June and the first week of August.

Mr. Bailey clarified the funding allocations discussed earlier. He reiterated that \$500,000 was approved and budgeted for the year, the funding requests the council would vote on during this meeting would total \$155,000 which, in turn, meant the council had approved approximately \$275,000 in funding within the first four (4) months of the year. Mr. Bailey then advised, if the current funding was approved, it would leave \$75,000 in available funds for the remaining seven (7) months of the year.

Ms. Loretta Shaffer, Tourism Development Director, clarified the aforementioned and stated the Tourism Development's fiscal year budget started on October 1.

Commissioner Carl Zalak posed a question to Mr. Bailey and requested to know if the council was comfortable spending funds in the beginning of the year for upcoming events. He further requested to know if events booked their dates in advance and then requested to know if the staff wanted to have the funds expended ahead of the actual event date.

Mr. Bailey advised there had been previous discussion regarding the accounting of Bid Fees. He then reiterated that if an event was approved as a Bid Fee but was scheduled to occur two (2) years from now, the money would be encumbered in this year's budget.

Commissioner Zalak requested to know if the council should consider being more critical of the ROI (return on investment) when the Bid Fee request was in the range of \$50,000 or more and if they should be more cognizant of seasonality.

Mr. Bailey advised the Tourist Development Council may have voted differently, as it related to funding approvals, if they were presented with the Funding Allocation

spreadsheet during the October 2024 meeting.

Ms. Shaffer advised once the new funding guidelines were presented, some of the questions the council had may no longer be an issue. She further advised after the guidelines were reviewed by the council, they would be presented to the Board of County Commissioners for approval. Ms. Shaffer stated if an extraordinary funding opportunity presented itself, the Visitors and Convention Bureau had funds in reserve which could fund the event.

Mr. Gaekwad advised the new funding guideline requiring an event organizer to apply for funding 120 days prior to the event date was the best addition to the program.

Ms. Shaffer stated the Visitor and Convention Bureau staff had never exceeded the budgeted funding allotment. She further advised that numerous funding opportunities were presented to Marion County so it was imperative that parameters were set so the council could be strategic moving forward.

A motion was made by Danny Gaekwad, seconded by Jason Reynolds, to approve the recommendation for the requested Bid Fee funding amount of \$25,000 for the USA Swimming Futures Meet to the Board of County Commissioners. The motion was unanimously approved by the council (8-0).

Commissioner Zalak advised the opportunities that Ocala/Marion County has had to host potential Olympians at the Florida Aquatics Swimming & Training Center (FAST) or World Equestrian Center (WEC) should not be overlooked. He further stated that Marion County should highlight these athletes as they journey to the Olympics and showcase their training at FAST or WEC. This would showcase Ocala's "hometown" feel and the elaborate training facilities available to athletes.

Mr. Locke advised that FAST created a press-release last year which showcased all of the Olympians who have trained at that facility over the past two-years.

Cal Ripken Rookie World Series - \$5,000 (Bid Fee)

Mr. Locke then discussed a funding request for the Cal Ripken 8U Rookie World Series to be held at the Rotary Sportsplex from August 1-9, 2025. He advised 2025 would be the 5th year Marion County had hosted the World Series. The event organizer requested a Bid Fee in the amount of \$5,000 with an estimated economic impact of \$898,265 and total ROI of 334%. Mr. Locke stated the anticipated room night total was 800 rooms with an anticipated total attendance of 300 people. He further advised that a number of International teams had committed to attend the World Series, such as, Colombia and Bonaire (by Aruba).

A motion was made by Rus Adams, seconded by Jason Reynolds, to approve the recommendation for the requested Bid Fee funding amount of \$5,000 for Cal Ripken Rookie World Series to the Board of County Commissioners. The motion was unanimously approved by the council (8-0).

Babe Ruth 16-18 World Series - \$50,000 (Bid Fee)

Mr. Locke then advised of a Bid Fee funding request presented by Babe Ruth 16-18 World Series in the amount of \$50,000. This event would be held at the Rotary Sportsplex from August 1-9, 2025. Mr. Locke further advised this would be the first-year the Babe Ruth World Series was held in Marion County. He also noted the Bid Fee amount was higher than that of the Cal Ripken World Series but that twice as many teams would be participating. Mr. Locke stated the estimated economic impact for this event would total \$1,814,844 with an ROI of -14%. The estimated room night total was noted as 1,400 rooms and 500 people were expected to attend. Mr. Locke advised the event organizer guaranteed 16 teams to attend, thus far, and they would be traveling from Canada, China, Australia, Mexico, United Kingdom, Philippines and Nigeria. This event would bring an elite level of baseball to Marion County.

Mr. Bailey advised a Bid Fee should not solely be based on anticipated room nights but the marketing aspect of the event should also be considered.

Mr. Locke interjected and advised that all of the games would be live-streamed.

Mr. Bailey advised these teams were flying in from other countries and if a team were eliminated from the series, the participants would not travel home immediately. The players and their families would stay in Marion County for the duration of their trip due to pre-scheduled flights.

Mr. Locke advised the Babe Ruth game model involved three-days of pool play and then two-days of elimination. This would create the need for each team to be in Marion County for at least four-days. The series would also host championship games and an Awards Ceremony on the final day of the event.

Commissioner Zalak directed a question to the hoteliers on the council and requested to know if the potential of securing room nights in August would outweigh the negative ROI.

Mr. Bailey responded and advised securing room nights in August was important for hoteliers.

Mr. Rus Adams advised this was the first time the council was presented with a negative ROI in a long time and requested clarification as to what it represented.

Mr. Locked explained the negative ROI was based on information obtained from the Economic Impact Report which compiled all local taxes, including any new approved taxes. To calculate the ROI, the program subtracted the investment (\$50,000 Bid Fee) from the profit (\$43,134 in taxes) which totaled -\$6,866 or -14% (\$6,866/\$50,000).

Mr. Adams then stated the -14% ROI was relatively minimal which indicated the county was reimbursed its investment via taxes.

Commissioner Zalak noted when the two events were reviewed together, since they would run concurrently, the ROI from Cal Ripken World Series of 334% would make a big

impact on the negative ROI of the Babe Ruth World Series.

Mr. Adams stated the combination of both events would zero out the negative ROI.

Mr. Locke stated the total investment for both events would be \$55,000 (\$5,000 for Cal Ripken World Series & \$50,000 for Babe Ruth World Series) and would generate over 2000 room nights.

Mr. Locke indicated the staff made the decision to treat each series as a stand-alone event to alleviate losing one of them to another destination. This decision enabled Marion County to secure both events.

A motion was made by Jason Reynolds, seconded by Rus Adams, to approve the recommendation for the requested Bid Fee funding amount of \$50,000 for Babe Ruth 16-18 World Series to the Board of County Commissioners. The motion was unanimously approved by the council (8-0).

MLF Heavy Hitters - \$75,000 (Bid Fee)

Mr. Locke then discussed a request from Major League Fishing, LLC for MLF Heavy Hitters presented by Bass Pro Shops. Mr. Locke advised this event would showcase “The Best of The Best” anglers from all over the country. This event would take place at Heagy-Burry Boat Ramp in Orange Lake. The event dates were not secured but it would be either May 16-22, 2026 (preferred) or May 9-15, 2026 or May 2-8, 2026. The event organizers requested a Bid Fee of \$75,000 which would include extensive media coverage. Mr. Locke stated that everything connected to the event would be live-streamed on their website (Majorleaguefishing.com), including but not limited to, every cast and every fish caught. The event would also be showcased in a tape-delayed broadcast on Discovery Channel and the Outdoor Channel. The event planner guaranteed Marion County (the destination and fishery) would be mentioned at least five (5) times each during the broadcast. Mr. Locke advised this would be a six (6) day event, Saturday – Friday, with the top thirty (30) anglers competing. The broadcast would include 42-hours of coverage on Majorleaguefishing.com, Discovery Channel and the Outdoor Channel. He further advised the event was held at Lake Kissimmee Florida last year and the live-stream secured 842,000 total views which calculated to 25.1 average minutes watched per view or 21.1 million total minutes watched. The event also secured 9.7 million social media impressions and media value equivalency (based on articles produced) of \$1.2 million. Mr. Locke reiterated that the organization requested a \$75,000 Bid Fee and advised the total economic impact for the event would be \$564,610 with a ROI of -80%. The organization anticipated 560 room nights which included rooms for the anglers, officials, staff and camera crew.

Commissioner Zalak out at 9:28 am

Commissioner Zalak in at 9:28 am

Mr. Jason Reynolds requested someone clarify whether the \$1.2 million was strictly related to social media.

Mr. Locke advised the \$1.2 million included any/all media coverage. He further advised there were 133 million total impressions from last year's coverage. There were more than one-hundred articles written about the event in publications such as Sports Illustrated.

Mr. Danny Gaekwad requested to know who would profit from the event.

Mr. Bailey requested that question be directed to Chris Hoover with Major League Fishing who appeared via the online TEAMS meeting.

Mr. Hoover introduced himself and then advised the event was the organization's All-Star event. He further discussed the payouts awarded to the winning anglers.

Mr. Gaekwad re-iterated and provided clarification to his previous question. He requested to know more about the organization, whether a profit would be made from the event and if so, the gross revenue.

Mr. Hoover advised the organization would produce an original broadcast which would air during the third-quarter and re-air during the fourth-quarter on the Discovery Channel. It would also be re-broadcasted on the Outdoor Channel. He further advised the organization was an LLC (Limited Liability Company) and a for-profit company.

Mr. Gaekwad then requested to know who owned the company.

Mr. Hoover advised the parent-company was Outdoor Sportsman Group which also owned the Outdoor Channel and their parent-company was Kroenke Sports and Entertainment which owned the Los Angeles Rams and Denver Nuggets.

Mr. Gaekwad advised he was not comfortable approving a \$75,000 Bid Fee.

Commissioner Zalak requested to know if there was a way to elevate the presence of Marion County during the event by showcasing the Marion County logo on boats or hats.

Mr. Hoover advised the destination would be mentioned at least five (5) times daily during the broadcast on livestream and the television broadcast. As they discuss the destination and highlight Orange Lake, there would be a map which showcased the host logo. Mr. Hoover stated during one-day of the livestream, there would also be a one-minute feature on the host community. He advised that Orange Lake was a world-class fishery, but it was not large enough to host major events. He stated this event would be a media buy for Marion County, as much as it would be a way to secure room nights. He stated Orange Lake was a fishery that was unknown by most anglers but this event would provide exposure for the location and showcase it as a world-class fishery which would provide future dividends to Marion County.

Mr. Locke advised that Marion County invested a significant amount of money to revitalize Orange Lake as it was voted the 8th best place to fish in the US.

Commissioner Zalak advised Orange Lake was a great fishery which would provide the anglers with an enjoyable experience.

Mr. Gaekwad reiterated that 15% of the budget was not producing room nights and the goal of the TDC was to secure room nights for the county not media coverage. He further advised the contract should be re-negotiated to provide more value for Marion County.

Sarah Thacker with World Equestrian Center affirmed.

Mr. Gaekwad advised he was in favor of the event occurring in Marion County but felt the terms needed to be re-negotiated to provide more exposure to the county.

Ms. Shaffer requested that Mr. Locke discuss the potential of placing the Marion County logo on the side of the boats since the county was considered a Platinum Sponsor.

Mr. Hoover advised the placement of logos on the boats was reserved for Corporate Sponsors who pay a significant amount of money, such as Toyota, Bass Pro Shops and Yeti. He further stated their organization would produce a six-day event with over 24-hours of Discovery Channel time that their organization would pay for. The Discovery Channel footage would showcase Ocala/Marion County and Orange Lake as a location for recreation and vacation. He advised he could pose the question to the organization but he was not confident they would agree because the amount of money Bass Pro Shop paid to brand the boats significantly exceeded the \$75,000 Bid Fee. He then reiterated the \$1.2 million in media value the county would benefit from when Orange Lake and Marion County were showcased.

Mr. Adams requested to know the amount of money Toyota or Bass Pro Shops invested to have their brand on the boats.

Mr. Hoover declined and advised that was confidential and proprietary information.

Mr. Bailey advised he was excited that Major League Fishing was interested in hosting their event in Marion County and then reiterated to the council that approval of this Bid Fee request would leave \$75,000 in the budget for the remainder of the fiscal year.

Mr. Gaekwad stated he had voiced, on several occasions, that other entities who would benefit from these events should also contribute to the Bid Fee. He further stated this was a great event for Marion County but the fact that it would not produce room nights made it difficult to justify the investment.

Mr. Bailey reiterated the council must consider the media value the event would bring to Marion County as that was also a goal of the Bid Fee.

Ms. Jessica Heller, Communications and Marketing Supervisor, advised she researched all of last year's data for this event via Meltwater, a system designed to track media value, and found hundreds of articles pertaining to the event. She then advised the \$1.2 million in media value only included published articles and Discovery.com coverage but did not include the additional value produced via social media coverage.

Ms. Victoria Billig then requested to know if the county's investment of \$75,000 would be enough money to purchase \$1.2 million in media coverage.

Ms. Heller advised it would not.

Commissioner Zalak requested to know how the ROI would be affected if the \$1.2 million in media coverage was included in the calculation.

Mr. Locke advised the ROI calculated by the county only considered taxes (profit) vs Bid Fee (investment).

Commissioner Zalak indicated he understood but that he wanted to know how the value of the event would change if \$1.2 million in media value was considered.

Mr. Gaekwad requested to know what the event organizer could include with their Bid Fee request to increase the value of hosting the event in Marion County.

Commissioner Zalak then requested to know how likely it would be for Marion County to receive an opportunity to host an event such as MLF Heavy Hitters in future years.

Mr. Locke advised that approximately twelve different National Touring Fishing Companies existed and they all worked via the bid process. There were instances when a tour would return to an area, if the fishing and market was favorable.

Commissioner Zalak then requested to know how likely it was for this event to return to Marion County within the next five (5) years.

Mr. Locke advised highly likely.

Commissioner Zalak then requested to know what other locations hosted the event.

Mr. Hoover advised Major League Fishing, LLC had other events which were too large to host at Orange Lake but they had taken MLF Heavy Hitters to Monroe, Louisiana and Smith Mountain, Virginia as well as Kissimmee, Florida. He then advised the Heavy Hitters event created over nine-million social media impressions, in addition to, the \$1.2 million in media value.

Mr. Locke circled back to Commissioner Zalak's question regarding whether there would be a change in the negative ROI when \$1.2 million in media value was included. He then advised if the county invested \$75,000 and received \$1.2 million in media value, it would increase the ROI to 1500%.

Danny Gaekwad out at 9:50am

Danny Gaekwad in at 9:50 am

Ms. Sky Wheeler, Tourist Development Manager, advised she did not include the traditional ROI calculation, she only included media value.

Danny Gaekwad out at 9:51am

Danny Gaekwad in at 9:51 am

Mr. Locke advised that the cost of showcasing Marion County on The Discovery Channel

would be significantly more than the \$75,000 Bid Fee requested. He also advised the exposure that Marion County would receive on the Discovery Channel could encourage anglers and possibly their families to travel to Marion County to experience Orange Lake.

Mr. Reynolds advised the council must consider the potential long-term benefit Marion County could gain by tapping into the fishing industry. He further stated he was not in favor of the ROI unless the media value was included but he believed this would be a huge opportunity for Marion County to bring something different and unique to the area.

Mr. Adams reiterated that the county may not receive another opportunity to host the event for another five or seven years, unless the event organizers really love the area. He further advised the only way to know whether the event organizers love the experience of Marion County would be to host the event and make the investment. Mr. Adams then added that room nights for this event would generate more than \$75,000 in revenue for the county so the council should not be discouraged by the amount of taxes received but focus on the overall benefit to the county.

Mr. Gaekwad then advised he would like to proceed with an approval but still wanted the event organizers to offer something that would increase the value of hosting the event to Marion County.

Commissioner Zalak agreed.

Mr. Locke advised he was in negotiations with the event organizers regarding 2026 and they could discuss including something in the contract to make sure Marion County was highlighted more.

Mr. Adams requested to know if any media coverage would occur prior to the event or whether the \$1.2 million in media value only considered of media exposure during the event.

Mr. Hoover advised their website would include a daily news release which would start approximately two-weeks prior to the event. He then acknowledged the request to add additional opportunities for Marion County to be showcased. Mr. Hoover subsequently offered 100,000 banner ad impressions starting a month and a half prior to the event to provide more brand exposure for Marion County. He advised Orange Lake was a world-class fishery that was unknown to the angler community and the media exposure from the Heavy Hitters event would spotlight Marion County as a "must-see" experience and a recommended detour when these anglers travel to larger, well-known fisheries. Mr. Hoover stated, once an angler had the opportunity to experience Orange Lake they would definitely return.

Mr. Gaekwad requested an explanation of what banner ads were.

Ms. Heller explained that banner ads were either animated or static advertisements which showed up vertically or horizontally on webpages.

Mr. Gaekwad then requested clarification on the timeframe in which the banner ads would be displayed and advertisement would occur before the event.

Mr. Hoover advised the banner ads could be displayed approximately 2-3 weeks prior to the event and continue 2-3 weeks after the event. He stated the links would be clickable and showcase "Visit Ocala or Visit Marion County". The link would then lead the viewer to the OcalaMarion.com website.

Mr. Gaekwad out at 9:57am

Mr. Gaekwad in at 9:58 am

Ms. Shaffer requested to know if the event organizers could double the number of times Ocala/Marion County was mentioned from 5 to 10 or allow the logo to be placed on the hats of the fisherman and/or cameramen.

Mr. Hoover advised that Ocala/Marion County would most likely be mentioned more often than five (5) times. The number provided was a minimum guarantee. He advised what was allowed on the hats was exclusive to their Corporate Sponsors.

Mr. Reynolds stated he believed the potential was worth the risk and he was ready to extend a motion to approve.

A motion was made by Jason Reynolds, seconded by Rus Adams, to approve the recommendation for the requested Bid Fee funding amount of \$75,000 for MLF Heavy Hitters, including 100,000 website banner ad impressions to provide additional brand exposure for Marion County, to the Board of County Commissioners. The motion was unanimously approved by the council (8-0).

Victoria Billig out at 10:01 am

Barry Mansfield out at 10:01 am

Commissioner Zalak then directed Mr. Locke to include a statement advising that the TDC requested the ROI be re-calculated to include media value when the recommendation was presented to the Board of County Commissioners.

Mr. Locke agreed.

Commissioner Zalak out at 10:02 am

Rus Adams out at 10:03 am

Report from Chair

Meeting Rewards Program Guidelines

Mr. Corry Locke then discussed the Meeting Rewards Program Guidelines, a new program which derived from a pre-COVID program. This program would offer up to \$2,500 for smaller events which may not generate significant reach but would benefit from funding assistance. To qualify for funding through the Meeting Rewards Program,

the event planner must submit a hotel RFP through the Ocala/Marion County Visitors and Convention Bureau, the meeting must be held in Marion County and a minimum of fifty (50) room nights must be anticipated. A funding scale was provided which specified the amount of funding available based on the room nights secured. The scale also included specific funding amounts available for repeat events which was noted as less than that offered to new events. Mr. Locke further advised this program would only be offered during the April-December.

Rus Adams in at 10:04 am

Commissioner Ron Livsey requested to know if any events that would qualify for this program had already been in existence for three consecutive years. *(this question was posed based on the definition of a new meeting which was provided on the handout and stated: "To qualify as a new meeting, the specific meeting must not have been held in Ocala/Marion County over the previous three consecutive years.")*

Mr. Locke advised he was not aware of any events/meetings that would be excluded from funding based on that guideline.

Mr. Bailey requested to know if an event/meeting would qualify for funding if it had been held in Marion County for the past three years, consecutively, but the VCB staff was unaware of it.

Mr. Locke advised an event would not be defined as "new" just because they submitted their first funding application but had hosted the event in Marion County for the past three years. If the event was hosted in Marion County the year prior, it would then be defined as a "repeat event".

Commissioner Livsey requested to know if the program needed to include dates specifying the calendar year of eligibility.

Mr. Locke advised eligibility would be based on funds available. The staff would budget \$30,000 per fiscal year for this program. All programs would be re-evaluated annually.

A motion was made by Commissioner Ron Livsey, seconded by Commissioner Carl Zalak, to approve the recommendation for the Meeting Rewards Program Guidelines to the Board of County Commissioners. The motion was unanimously approved by the council (6-0).

Room Night Generating Event Funding Program Guidelines

Mr. Locke discussed the Room Night Generating Event Funding Program Guidelines and advised the feedback that was provided in the workshop was included in the revised guidelines. One of the main decisions made at the previous meeting was to break the funding up based on specific times of year. The following was determined:

Quarter 1 (Q1): January – March *\$5.00 rebate per verified room night with a maximum funding amount of \$10,000*

Quarter 2 (Q2): April - June *\$10.00 rebate per verified room night with a maximum funding amount of \$25,000*

Quarter 3 (Q3): July – September *\$15.00 rebate per verified room night with a maximum funding amount of \$25,000*

Quarter 4 (Q4) October – December *\$10.00 rebate per verified room night with a maximum funding amount of \$25,000*

Mr. Locke further advised to be eligible to apply for funding, an event must anticipate producing a minimum of 250 room nights and submit their funding application at least 120 days prior to the event. He then advised there was no change to the eligible or ineligible expenses. Lastly, he stated a marketing plan would be required for an event to receive funding.

Mr. Reynolds requested to know if this funding program was restricted to new events.

Mr. Locke advised it was not. He further stated any event that met the criteria was eligible to apply.

Mr. Bailey requested to know how the staff would determine which funding quarter an event fell in if the event dates spanned over multiple quarters.

Ms. Wheeler advised the quarter in which the majority of the event dates occurred would determine the funding quarter and eligible reimbursement. She further clarified that it would defer to the lower rebate if there was an even split.

A motion was made by Danny Gaekwad, seconded by Commissioner Carl Zalak, to approve the recommendation for the Room Night Generating Event Funding Program Guidelines to the Board of County Commissioners. The motion was unanimously approved by the council (6-0).

Bid Fee Funding Program Guidelines

Lastly, Mr. Locke discussed the revised Bid Fee Funding Program Guidelines. He thanked the legal department and Internal Auditor for their assistance with reviewing the guidelines. The bid process would include an RFP (Request for Proposal) packet that would be presented to several destinations. The body of the packet would then outline the dates of the event, the requirements to host the event as well as any other pertinent information. Mr. Locke advised the event must have an economic impact that would be favorable to the county. He further advised the media value would also be taken into consideration when reviewing a Bid Fee submission. The event must provide the potential for substantial media exposure and marketing opportunities for Marion County which may result in the county considering the value of media exposure in lieu of ROI. Mr. Locke stated the staff wanted to encourage events to host in Marion County during the shoulder season and Bid Fee funding provided the opportunity to secure events during that time of year. He then went on to discuss the Legacy Impact that Bid Fee funding provided by inspiring repeat visitation to Marion County. The revised guidelines

indicated there may be an inclination to support a bid fee for events that had the potential to return on an annual basis. Mr. Locke advised another change to the Bid Fee guidelines included the requirement for an organization to submit either a Letter of Intent or a complete RFP (Request for Proposal) packet. Lastly, he advised that Bid Fee funding would not be provided to events not previously funded via Bid Fee.

Mr. Bailey requested clarification and requested to know if an event which was previously approved for and received funding through the Room Night Generating Funding Program could move over to the Bid Fee Funding Program in an effort to request more money.

Mr. Locke advised they could not. The events could not bounce from one funding program to the other. They must stick with the funding program with which they originated.

Mr. Adams requested to know if exceptions would be made for organizations which have a change to the format of their event.

Ms. Wheeler advised the event would have to be established with Bid Fee as a part of their process. She further advised a local event which would have occurred without assistance from the Tourist Development Department, would not qualify as a Bid Fee eligible event. Ms. Wheeler stated if an RFP was placed on a national register and Marion County decided to bid on it, it would mean there was a competitive bid process.

Commissioner Zalak advised that Rock the County (which was now funded via the Room Night Generating program) would be a great example of an event which could grow in future years and benefit from a Bid Fee process. He further stated if Marion County does not have an exception which would allow a Room-Night Generating event to transition to a Bid Fee Funding event, we may lose them.

Mr. Adams requested to know if an event such as Rock the County would fall into a "special exception" category.

Commissioner Zalak stated a "special exception" category wasn't necessary but that he wanted to be informed if Rock the Country requested to transition from Room Night Generating Event Funding to a Bid Fee.

Mr. Gaekwad stated the VCB staff created guidelines which set parameters for funding but the TDC had the authority to amend the guidelines as they deem necessary.

Mr. Bailey advised the staff along with the TDC must find events that generate additional revenue for Marion County through increased visitation so additional funds would be available to invest in future events.

Mr. Gaekwad advised the staff needed firm guidelines that specify which months funding would be available. He advised the guidelines should indicate the months which qualified as peak season and which months qualified as shoulder season based on information from the Tax Collectors Office.

Ms. Wheeler advised Bid Fees provided the VCB staff the framework in which to operate to seek business that fulfilled the goals of the department. It is not a passive application process like the Room Night Generating Funding Program. She further advised the staff would review an organization's Bid Fee package to determine if it mirrored the goals of the destination and Strategic Plan.

Mr. Reynolds pointed out that if the revised guidelines were implemented, the council would not have had the opportunity to review and approve the last two events presented (Babe Ruth 16-18 World Series and MLF Heavy Hitters). Mr. Reynolds then requested to know how the media value of an event would be determined.

Mr. Locke advised the Bid packet presented by an event organizer would include the anticipated media value. He further stated that a requirement could be added to the guidelines that required a positive ROI for any event to be funded but that he believed media value should be considered in the calculation of the return on investment. Mr. Locke then advised the direct ROI does not include media value at this time.

Mr. Bailey advised he does not want media value to be included in the calculation of ROI because it would become too convoluted. He stated the goal of the staff was to increase visitation, increase revenue via taxes and in turn, increase the ROI for the county. If the ROI was revised to include taxes plus media value, the staff would need to determine the type and amount of marketing included, as well as, whether it provided value to the destination.

Mr. Locke stated the current economy along with Marion County hotel rates should also be considered when reviewing the Bid Fee amount vs the ROI. He advised if an event was hosted in Orlando or Miami (which have higher hotel rates) but the same Bid Fee amount was requested, the ROI may have resulted in a positive percentage for those destinations.

Mr. Gaekwad advised he does not believe the staff should use Orlando as a comparison because their annual budget was significantly greater than Marion County.

Mr. Bailey stated he agreed with some aspects of the aforementioned and disagreed with others. He further stated Marion County was blessed to have some private investors who brought two World-Class facilities to the destination, FAST and World Equestrian Center. Therefore, although Marion County was a smaller destination than others, it was imperative for the council to think on a larger scale as it related to the acquisition of events.

Mr. Gaekwad advised that when private investors build venues they do so to make a profit not to support Marion County and its government agencies.

Mr. Bailey agreed but also advised that some investors build passion projects which were not based on ROI. He then requested a motion be presented.

Mr. Adams extended a motion to approve as presented.

Mr. Gaekwad interjected and requested to know if Mr. Reynolds wanted the language regarding ROI and marketing amended.

Mr. Reynolds declined.

Mr. Adams advised the council had a year to review the program as there was only \$75,000 left in the budget for funding through the end of the fiscal year.

Ms. Wheeler clarified that the guidelines would only be reviewed annually. The staff and council would not revisit the guidelines at the end of the fiscal year.

Mr. Bailey again requested a motion be presented.

Mr. Adams reiterated a motion to approve.

Mr. Bailey requested a second motion be presented.

Mr. Gaekwad interjected and advised he would like to discuss the matter further. He then circled back to Mr. Reynolds comment and stated the VCB staff should have clear instructions which stated not to base their acquisition of events on an ROI inclusive of media value. Mr. Gaekwad stated a conversation should commence among the council to determine how to proceed if an event such as the MLF Heavy Hitters was presented for funding. He then requested to know if the motion should be amended.

Mr. Bailey advised the motion was presented to approve the guidelines, as written, by Rus Adams and seconded by Commissioner Livsey.

Mr. Gaekwad then requested the staff consider amending the guidelines as stated above.

Mr. Bailey advised his request could be presented when Mr. Gaekwad voted. He further advised that Mr. Gaekwad's comments were noted on the record.

A motion was made by Rus Adams, seconded by Commissioner Ron Livsey, to approve the recommendation for the Bid Fee Funding Guidelines, as presented, to the Board of County Commissioners. The motion was unanimously approved by the council (6-0).

Staff Updates

Introduction of Coleen Robinson

Ms. Loretta Shaffer introduced the newest employee to the Ocala/Marion County Visitors and Convention Bureau, Coleen Robinson, and welcomed her to the team. Ms. Robinson replaced Candace Shelton as Visitor Relations Representative.

Gateway Signage

Mr. Richard Busche, Principle Engineer, Senior Vice President - Kimley Horn, presented an update on the South Gateway Project. Mr. Busche advised the last update was presented in November 2024. He further advised the pillars were built at the county-lines and the North Gateway was forthcoming. Mr. Busche presented a rendering of the

flyover construction (42nd Street and Osceola Avenue bypass roadway) from 2012 which was designed to relieve traffic on State Road 200. The next slide showed the flyover in 2020. Mr. Busche then presented several South Gateway concept designs from 2012-2017. Many concepts were reviewed by the TDC and none were sufficient until the design was remastered in 2018. The design was refined by the TDC and recommended to the Board of County Commissioners who approved the concept. The design was redefined to include the appropriate letter size for O.C.A.L.A. Next, colors were selected and approved which then allowed for construction drawings. The final rendering was prepared from the construction drawings and approved in February 2024. The next slide showed photos of the South Gateway, over a thirteen-month period, as it was constructed. Mr. Busche then showed photos of the South Gateway as the letters for O.C.A.L.A. were installed. Lastly, a slide was shown which depicted the South Gateway at substantial completion. He advised construction was not at final completion as landscaping, removal of construction equipment and removal of Interstate signage was needed. Mr. Busche advised the team made sure the integrity of the original concept was not lost as the Gateway was constructed.

Commissioner Zalak requested to know if the color of the Gateway would remain grey.

Mr. Busche affirmed and stated the colors were a shade of brown and grey, creating a silhouette, which were from the original concept.

Commissioner Zalak voiced concerns about the Gateway.

Mr. Bailey advised there were many discussions and renderings of how the Gateway would look as someone drove northbound (coming from the south end) but never considered how it would look as someone drove southbound (coming from the north end) but felt the Gateway looked good from both views.

Mr. Busche advised a picture had not been presented which truly conveyed the size or scope of the Gateway as someone drove under it. He further advised there was 275 feet between the two towers.

Mr. Bailey stated the photo presented showed a tree to the right of the pillar which blocked the view of the pillar.

Mr. Busche then moved to the next slide and stated there were several items the construction team needed to address such as the blue logo sign (pending relocation), green city limits sign (pending relocation) and the Date Palm Trees (pending removal).

Ms. Shaffer requested that Mr. Busche discuss the glare caused by vehicles traveling on the highway.

Mr. Busche requested to know if Ms. Shaffer was referring to the panels being powder-coated and the fact that a number of the panels were replaced because they did not meet specifications.

Ms. Shaffer then requested to know if the color of the Gateway was of concern.

Commissioner Zalak affirmed and advised he was not in favor of the color grey on the Gateway.

Mr. Busche advised the panels show as different colors during different times of the day. He stated when it was sunny, the panels were lighter in color and if it was a cloudy or later in the day, the panels looked darker. He further advised the panels looked darker in-person when traveling under the Gateway than in the pictures. Mr. Busche stated the design concept was created so the panels would appear to show silhouettes of trees and horses.

Mr. Bailey asked Commissioner Zalak what color he thought the panels were going to be.

Commissioner Zalak requested that Mr. Busche go back a few slides to show the design concept previously presented. *(the slides were reversed and paused at the Final Rendering)*. Commissioner Zalak advised he only saw one consistent dark grey color across the entire Gateway.

Mr. Bailey requested to know if Commissioner Zalak thought the Gateway color would be monochrome.

Commissioner Zalak affirmed and advised the light grey panels resembled unfinished, primed panels when viewed next to the darker grey panels.

Mr. Gaekwad requested to know why the color was changed.

Mr. Busche requested the slides be reversed.

Commissioner Zalak requested to know if the internal beams would be painted.

Mr. Busche advised the panels were always two-toned but the rendering did not adequately show variation in color.

Commissioner Zalak advised the plans did show the color variation but stated the renderings the TDC was shown over the past couple years did not show the lighter grey color.

Mr. Adams stated he had a video of the Gateway and the color variation was not as prevalent at car level. He further advised he was "Wowed" when he drove under the Gateway.

Mr. Reynolds agreed and advised he did not notice the color variation.

Commissioner Zalak referred to the graphic used for the tentative Ribbon Cutting and stated the lighter grey was not visible in that artwork.

Mr. Gaekwad agreed with Commissioner Zalak.

Commissioner Zalak advised the Gateway looked unfinished and residents had requested to know when painting of the Gateway would be finalized.

Mr. Bailey advised the council had a couple of years to re-evaluate the Southbound Gateway.

Commissioner Zalak requested that the two-toned color variation not be included in the North Gateway design.

Mr. Gaekwad requested that any renderings presented be actual representations of the Gateway design to include actual color samples.

Mr. Busche advised the council had time to revise the Southbound Gateway renderings, if they chose.

Commissioner Zalak stated he would like them revised.

Mr. Gaekwad agreed.

Mr. Busche advised some people indicated they could not see the O.C.A.L.A lettering at night. He further noted the Gateway lighting was completely functional but was only utilized during construction. He advised the lights could be permanently activated when the council was ready.

Some members of the council requested the lights be activated immediately and others requested to wait until the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony.

Mr. Adams presented the option of a soft-opening.

Mr. Bailey advised the lights should be activated after the meeting, at sunset.

Mr. Busche advised the lights were functional and ready to be activated but the contractor had a "punch list" which denoted some items that needed completing. Therefore, construction spotlights may still be utilized in the evenings.

Mr. Gaekwad requested clarification as to whether the lights would be activated or not.

Ms. Shaffer provided the option to wait until substantial completion was finalized and work with Florida Department of Transportation to facilitate an evening lane closure to allow the Board of County Commissioners and Tourist Development Council the opportunity to activate the lighting.

Commissioner Zalak advised an event involving the community should be organized.

Ms. Shaffer requested that Mr. Busche assist in the coordination of an event to activate the lights, once substantial completion was achieved.

Ms. Wheeler advised some corrections were needed before the staff would be comfortable permanently activating the lighting.

Mr. Busche advised the contractor still had a final inspection pending.

Mr. Adams stated he worked with Mr. Busche over the past twelve years in an effort to bring the Gateway project to fruition. He further stated that he would like Mr. Busche

to bring back costs related to making the South Gateway monochrome.

Mr. Gaekwad advised it would be costly.

Mr. Adams confirmed that may be the case, but advised there were a number of members who were not in favor of the Gateway's current appearance therefore, he felt it would be in the best interest of the council to know the potential cost to make changes. This would allow the TDC to decide whether they should invest in the changes.

Commissioner Zalak advised the Gateway looked amazing but he was uncomfortable with the color variation. He further advised he would also like to know how much the changes would cost.

Mr. Busche advised the cost to change the color variation to monochrome could be obtained. He further advised the Interstate 75 signage would be moved prior to the Grand Opening event.

Commissioner Zalak requested to view renderings of the street-level view of the Gateway, as one travels over the bridge, so he would be well informed on what to expect regarding color, finish, etc. He further advised anyone traveling on the bridge, behind the panels, would have an up-close view of the construction materials.

Mr. Busche advised he did not have those renderings available. He further advised the structure required to hold the Gateway together was significant to insure the safety of those traveling on Interstate 75. Mr. Busche stated panels were placed on both sides of the bridge which created the southbound view of the Gateway. He then stated when the structure was viewed from the side, the supporting structures were visible. Mr. Busche then advised the support structures were nearly impossible to conceal but construction was still underway. A black fence was being erected which should help shield the supports. Mr. Busche stated some of the metal would become dull over time and would not be as noticeable in the future.

Commissioner Zalak requested to know if the metal would be painted.

Mr. Busche advised it would not be painted.

Commissioner Zalak then requested to know if the supports would be contained or boxed in.

Mr. Busche advised they would not be boxed in.

Ms. Shaffer advised a quote to enclose the supports could be obtained.

Mr. Adams advised painting the aluminum was not recommended as it would present a recurring maintenance expense.

Mr. Busche advised the only time the metal was visible was when viewed from the side in the eastbound direction of the flyover. He further advised the metal supports could not be hidden from someone walking over the flyover.

Commissioner Zalak requested that the changes discussed be taken into consideration for the next Gateway project so people traveling over the bridge headed to Buc-ee's would be greeted with something that showcased Ocala/Marion County.

Mr. Busche advised the North Gateway project was out for procurement with FDOT and the staff hoped to have a contractor secured to negotiate contracts in June 2025. He further advised if adjustments were needed for the North Gateway, the council had time to request them. Mr. Busche advised the design for the North Gateway was very similar to the South Gateway but the bridge would be longer and would not be curved.

Commissioner Zalak requested to see the actual plans for the North Gateway to alleviate any future issues.

Mr. Busche again advised if the color variation needed to be adjusted for the next project, the council had time to implement the changes.

Due to extensive discussion regarding Funding and the Gateway Signage project, all other agenda items were tabled until the March 28, 2025 meeting.

Quarterly Economic Impact/Visitor Tracking Report – October – December Data

Presentation postponed until March 28, 2025 meeting

Quarterly Public Relations and Analytics Reports – October – December Data

Presentation postponed until March 28, 2025 meeting

Florida Huddle and Encounter Recap

Presentation postponed until March 28, 2025 meeting

Sales Update

Presentation postponed until March 28, 2025 meeting

Marion County Board of County Commissioners and City of Ocala Joint Workshop – March 13, 2025 at 9am

TDT Collections/STR and Key Data Update

Presentation postponed until March 28, 2025 meeting

TDC Events Calendar

Ms. Wheeler advised the TDC Events Calendar was in the packet.

Notation for Record

Mr. Bailey advised the Sales Report was in the packet.

Mr. Bailey advised the TDC Attendance Report was in the packet.

Old Business

Mr. Bailey called for any old business and none was brought forth.

New Business

Mr. Bailey called for any new business and none was brought forth.

Public Comment

Upcoming Meeting

Mr. Bailey stated, that the next TDC meeting will be on Friday, March 28, 2025.

The meeting adjourned at 11:01 a.m.

Jeff Bailey, Chairman

DRAFT



Marion County Tourist Development Council

Agenda Item

File No.: 2025-18550

Agenda Date: 3/28/2025

Agenda No.:

SUBJECT:

MOTION: Acknowledgement of Financials - February 2025

DESCRIPTION/BACKGROUND:

Recommended Action: To accept the Expenditure Status Report and Revenue Report for February 2025.

REVENUE STATUS REPORT

FOR 2025 05				JOURNAL DETAIL 2025 5 TO 2025 5		
ACCOUNTS FOR: 1074 TOURIST DEVELOPMENT FUND						
ORIGINAL ESTIM REV	ESTIM REV ADJ	REVISED ESTIM REV	ACTUAL YTD REVENUE	REMAINING REVENUE	% COLL	
1074-31-312-450-45090-155-0000000-0000000-312131-			TOURIST DEVELOPMNT TAX 2%			
2,192,064.00	0.00	2,192,064.00	968,961.83	1,223,102.17	44.2%	
2025/05/002203	02/19/2025 GCR	-268,587.82	REF P02744 01/25 TOURIST DEV TAX			
1074-31-312-450-45090-155-0000000-0000000-312132-			TOURIST DEVELOP TAX 3RD %			
1,096,032.00	0.00	1,096,032.00	484,480.89	611,551.11	44.2%	
2025/05/002203	02/19/2025 GCR	-134,293.90	REF P02744 01/25 TOURIST DEV TAX			
1074-31-312-450-45090-155-0000000-0000000-312133-			TOURIST DEVELOP TAX 4TH %			
1,096,032.00	0.00	1,096,032.00	484,480.89	611,551.11	44.2%	
2025/05/002203	02/19/2025 GCR	-134,293.90	REF P02744 01/25 TOURIST DEV TAX			
1074-36-361-450-45090-155-0000000-0000000-361110-			INTEREST-BOARD			
555,000.00	0.00	555,000.00	185,360.92	369,639.08	33.4%	
2025/05/003795	02/28/2025 GEN	-30,031.71	REF SBAINTE SBA INT 221131 FEB			
1074-36-366-450-45090-155-0000000-0000000-366045-			FL SPORTS FOUNDATION			
0.00	0.00	0.00	14,834.00	-14,834.00	100.0%	
1074-36-369-450-45090-155-0000000-0000000-369030-			REFUND OF PRIOR YEAR EXP			
0.00	0.00	0.00	1,830.50	-1,830.50	100.0%	
2025/05/003629	02/28/2025 GCR	-915.25	REF P00013 FENSTERER 2ND PYMT			
1074-37-379-990-99090-000-0000000-0000000-379999-			LESS: 5% OF BUDG REVENUE			
-246,957.00	0.00	-246,957.00	0.00	-246,957.00	.0%	
1074-39-399-990-99090-000-0000000-0000000-399991-			BALANCES FWD-CASH-REGULAR			
10,190,353.00	0.00	10,190,353.00	0.00	10,190,353.00	.0%	
TOTAL TOURIST DEVELOPMENT FUND						
14,882,524.00	0.00	14,882,524.00	2,139,949.03	12,742,574.97	14.4%	
TOTAL REVENUES						
14,882,524.00	0.00	14,882,524.00	2,139,949.03	12,742,574.97		

REVENUE STATUS REPORT

FOR 2025 05				JOURNAL DETAIL 2025 5 TO 2025 5			
ORIGINAL ESTIM REV	ESTIM REV ADJ	REVISED ESTIM REV	ACTUAL YTD REVENUE	REMAINING REVENUE	% COLL		
14,882,524.00	0.00	14,882,524.00	2,139,949.03	12,742,574.97	14.4%		
GRAND TOTAL							

** END OF REPORT - Generated by wheeler, Sky **

EXPENDITURE STATUS REPORT

FOR 2025 05										JOURNAL DETAIL 2025 5 TO 2025 5	
ACCOUNTS FOR: 1074 TOURIST DEVELOPMENT FUND										REMAINING REVENUE	% COLL
ORIGINAL ESTIM REV	ESTIM REV ADJ	REVISED ESTIM REV	ACTUAL YTD REVENUE								
1074-55-552-450-45090-155-0000000-0000000-512101- REGULAR SALARIES & WAGES											
720,309.00	0.00	720,309.00	253,183.87							467,125.13	35.1%
2025/05/001245	02/14/2025	PRJ	25,475.21	REF 250214	WARRANT=250214	RUN=0	REGULAR				
2025/05/003157	02/28/2025	PRJ	26,934.42	REF 250228	WARRANT=250228	RUN=0	REGULAR				
1074-55-552-450-45090-155-0000000-0000000-521101- FICA TAXES											
55,114.00	0.00	55,114.00	18,218.10							36,895.90	33.1%
2025/05/001245	02/14/2025	PRJ	1,820.44	REF 250214	WARRANT=250214	RUN=0	REGULAR				
2025/05/003157	02/28/2025	PRJ	1,939.72	REF 250228	WARRANT=250228	RUN=0	REGULAR				
1074-55-552-450-45090-155-0000000-0000000-522101- RETIREMENT CONTRIBUTIONS											
98,183.00	0.00	98,183.00	36,331.43							61,851.57	37.0%
2025/05/001245	02/14/2025	PRJ	3,472.28	REF 250214	WARRANT=250214	RUN=0	REGULAR				
2025/05/003157	02/28/2025	PRJ	3,671.17	REF 250228	WARRANT=250228	RUN=0	REGULAR				
1074-55-552-450-45090-155-0000000-0000000-523101- HEALTH INSURANCE											
138,864.00	0.00	138,864.00	45,241.91							93,622.09	32.6%
2025/05/001245	02/14/2025	PRJ	6,562.05	REF 250214	WARRANT=250214	RUN=0	REGULAR				
2025/05/001245	02/14/2025	PRJ	-1,302.05	REF 250214	WARRANT=250214	RUN=0	REGULAR				
2025/05/003157	02/28/2025	PRJ	6,562.05	REF 250228	WARRANT=250228	RUN=0	REGULAR				
2025/05/003157	02/28/2025	PRJ	-1,302.05	REF 250228	WARRANT=250228	RUN=0	REGULAR				
1074-55-552-450-45090-155-0000000-0000000-523401- LIFE, AD&D, LTD											
4,837.00	0.00	4,837.00	1,767.16							3,069.84	36.5%
2025/05/001245	02/14/2025	PRJ	177.03	REF 250214	WARRANT=250214	RUN=0	REGULAR				
2025/05/003157	02/28/2025	PRJ	191.61	REF 250228	WARRANT=250228	RUN=0	REGULAR				
1074-55-552-450-45090-155-0000000-0000000-524101- WORKER'S COMPENSATION											
653.00	0.00	653.00	326.50							326.50	50.0%
1074-55-552-450-45090-155-0000000-0000000-531109- PROFESSIONAL SERVICES											
1,612,500.00	0.00	1,612,500.00	185,727.61							92,500.00	94.3%
2025/05/001641	02/12/2025	API	13,750.00	VND 106656	PO 2500502	MILES PARTNERSH	DEC-24	RETAINER		84058	
2025/05/001641	02/12/2025	POL	-13,750.00	VND 106656	PO 2500502	MILES PARTNERSH	DEC-24	RETAINER	2025		
2025/05/001641	02/12/2025	API	2,981.44	VND 106656	PO 2500502	MILES PARTNERSH	OCALA/MARION	COUNTY GOOGLE		84058	
2025/05/001641	02/12/2025	POL	-2,981.44	VND 106656	PO 2500502	MILES PARTNERSH	OCALA/MARION	COUNTY GOOGLE2025			
2025/05/001641	02/12/2025	API	13,417.84	VND 106656	PO 2500502	MILES PARTNERSH	OCALA/MARION	COUNTY TRIP ADVIS		84058	
2025/05/001641	02/12/2025	POL	-13,417.84	VND 106656	PO 2500502	MILES PARTNERSH	OCALA/MARION	COUNTY TRIP A2025			
2025/05/001641	02/12/2025	API	2,548.62	VND 106656	PO 2500502	MILES PARTNERSH	OCALAL/MARION	COUNTY NATIVO		84058	
2025/05/001641	02/12/2025	POL	-2,548.62	VND 106656	PO 2500502	MILES PARTNERSH	OCALAL/MARION	COUNTY NATIV2025			
2025/05/001641	02/12/2025	API	8,500.00	VND 106656	PO 2500502	MILES PARTNERSH	OCALA/MARION	COUNTY PREVUE		84058	

EXPENDITURE STATUS REPORT

FOR 2025 05 JOURNAL DETAIL 2025 5 TO 2025 5

ACCOUNTS FOR: 1074 TOURIST DEVELOPMENT FUND
 ORIGINAL ESTIM REV ESTIM REV ADJ REVISED ESTIM REV ACTUAL YTD REVENUE REMAINING REVENUE % COLL

CP155552 531109 PROFESSIONAL SERVICES											
2025/05/001641	02/12/2025	POL	-8,500.00	VND	106656	PO	2500502	MILES PARTNERSH	OCALA/MARION	COUNTY PREVUE2025	
2025/05/001641	02/12/2025	API	2,595.00	VND	106656	PO	2500502	MILES PARTNERSH	OCALA/MARION	COUNTY OUTFRONT	84058
2025/05/001641	02/12/2025	POL	-2,595.00	VND	106656	PO	2500502	MILES PARTNERSH	OCALA/MARION	COUNTY OUTFRO2025	
2025/05/001641	02/12/2025	API	1,229.00	VND	106656	PO	2500502	MILES PARTNERSH	OCALA/MARION	COUNTY CLEAR CHAN	84058
2025/05/001641	02/12/2025	POL	-1,229.00	VND	106656	PO	2500502	MILES PARTNERSH	OCALA/MARION	COUNTY CLEAR 2025	
2025/05/001641	02/12/2025	API	7,865.01	VND	106656	PO	2500502	MILES PARTNERSH	OCALA/MARION	COUNTY META	84058
2025/05/001641	02/12/2025	POL	-7,865.01	VND	106656	PO	2500502	MILES PARTNERSH	OCALA/MARION	COUNTY META 2025	
2025/05/001818	02/13/2025	API	30,552.47	VND	106656	PO	2500502	MILES PARTNERSH	OCALA/MARION	COUNTY AD GENUITY	84058
2025/05/001818	02/13/2025	POL	-30,552.47	VND	106656	PO	2500502	MILES PARTNERSH	OCALA/MARION	COUNTY AD GEN2025	
1074-55-552-450-45090-155-0000000-0000000-534101-			96,032.00	0.00	96,032.00			CONTRACT SERV - OTHER - MISC		31,734.75	59,774.00 37.8%
2025/05/002462	02/19/2025	API	430.65	VND	001703	PO	2500388	BLUE RIBBON CLE	JANUARY 2025:	FACILITIES	84527
2025/05/002462	02/19/2025	POL	-430.65	VND	001703	PO	2500388	BLUE RIBBON CLE	JANUARY 2025:	FACILITIES 2025	
1074-55-552-450-45090-155-0000000-0000000-540101-			42,500.00	0.00	42,500.00			TRAVEL & PER DIEM		3,320.02	39,179.98 7.8%
1074-55-552-450-45090-155-0000000-0000000-541101-			10,421.00	0.00	10,421.00			COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES		3,550.36	6,870.64 34.1%
2025/05/002201	02/11/2025	API	31.96	VND	001556	PO		AMAZON MARKETPL	ENVELOPES, IPHONE	CHARGERS, ST	
2025/05/002990	02/16/2025	API	658.42	VND	999999	PO		PCARD ONE TIME	SMARSH PLATFORM	FOR MULTIPLE D	
2025/05/003212	02/25/2025	API	323.44	VND	201928	PO		VERIZON WIRELES	421552992-00016		84624
2025/05/003212	02/25/2025	API	23.70	VND	203123	PO		CENTURY LINK/EM	320144423		84598
1074-55-552-450-45090-155-0000000-0000000-542201-			13,000.00	0.00	13,000.00			POSTAGE & FREIGHT		1,563.89	5,936.11 54.3%
1074-55-552-450-45090-155-0000000-0000000-543101-			25,188.00	0.00	25,188.00			UTILITY SERVICES - ELC WTR SWR		4,925.07	20,262.93 19.6%
2025/05/000506	02/03/2025	API	45.86	VND	000808	PO		SUMTER ELECTRIC	9608557201		83632
2025/05/001891	02/14/2025	API	31.30	VND	014881	PO		CITY OF OCALA/E	572726-118216		84042
2025/05/002651	02/21/2025	API	864.81	VND	014881	PO		CITY OF OCALA/E	550848-164495		84538
2025/05/003663	02/26/2025	API	25.18	VND	107238	PO		DUKE ENERGY FLO	9101 5957 9418		84815
1074-55-552-450-45090-155-0000000-0000000-543102-			756.00	0.00	756.00			UTILITY SERVICES - WST DISP		227.93	528.07 30.1%
2025/05/002651	02/21/2025	API	45.58	VND	014881	PO		CITY OF OCALA/E	550848-164495		84538

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FOR 2025 05										JOURNAL DETAIL 2025 5 TO 2025 5	
ACCOUNTS FOR: 1074 TOURIST DEVELOPMENT FUND										REMAINING REVENUE	% COLL
ORIGINAL ESTIM REV	ESTIM REV ADJ	REVISED ESTIM REV	ACTUAL YTD REVENUE								
1074-55-552-450-45090-155-0000000-0000000-544101-				RENTALS & LEASES - EQUIPMENT							
6,424.00	0.00	6,424.00	1,642.89						524.00	91.8%	
2025/05/003212	02/25/2025	API	255.52	VND	501306	PO	2500311	DOCUMENT TECHNO MC-01 COPIER LEASE, FEB-25		84603	
2025/05/003212	02/25/2025	POL	-255.52	VND	501306	PO	2500311	DOCUMENT TECHNO MC-01 COPIER LEASE, FEB-252025			
1074-55-552-450-45090-155-0000000-0000000-544401-				RENTALS & LEASES - BUILDINGS							
2,400.00	0.00	2,400.00	945.00						1,455.00	39.4%	
2025/05/001172	02/04/2025	API	315.00	VND	999999	PO		PCARD ONE TIME STORAGE UNIT RENTAL FOR PROMOT			
1074-55-552-450-45090-155-0000000-0000000-545101-				INSURANCE - PREMIUMS							
16,864.00	0.00	16,864.00	8,431.64						8,432.36	50.0%	
1074-55-552-450-45090-155-0000000-0000000-546101-				REPAIRS/MAINT - BLDGS & GRNDS							
44,000.00	0.00	44,000.00	5,680.00						38,320.00	12.9%	
2025/05/002454	02/19/2025	API	5,680.00	VND	500704	PO	2500506	KIMLEY HORN AND COUNTY LINE MARKER SIGNS ASSES		84611	
2025/05/002454	02/19/2025	POL	-5,680.00	VND	500704	PO	2500506	KIMLEY HORN AND COUNTY LINE MARKER SIGNS A2025			
1074-55-552-450-45090-155-0000000-0000000-546257-				REPAIRS/MAINT - FLEET MANAGMNT							
4,580.00	0.00	4,580.00	90.27						4,489.73	2.0%	
2025/05/003321	02/27/2025	WOJ	85.00	REF	rmfeb	272307					
2025/05/003321	02/27/2025	WOJ	4.58	REF	rmfeb	272307					
2025/05/003321	02/27/2025	WOJ	0.69	REF	rmfeb	272307					
1074-55-552-450-45090-155-0000000-0000000-547101-				PRINT & BIND							
55,500.00	0.00	55,500.00	51,349.72						4,150.28	92.5%	
2025/05/000558	02/02/2025	API	84.50	VND	999999	PO		PCARD ONE TIME WELCOME LETTER PRINTING FOR FL			
2025/05/000558	02/02/2025	API	180.26	VND	999999	PO		PCARD ONE TIME RACK CARD PRINTING			
2025/05/003780	02/28/2025	API	182.00	VND	999999	PO		PCARD ONE TIME NAMEPLATES FOR JOINT WORKSHOP			
2025/05/000506	02/03/2025	API	49,803.29	VND	001437	PO	2500769	SOLO PRINTING L PURCHASE OF VISITORS GUIDE MAP		83630	
2025/05/000506	02/03/2025	POL	-49,803.29	VND	001437	PO	2500769	SOLO PRINTING L PURCHASE OF VISITORS GUIDE2025			
1074-55-552-450-45090-155-0000000-0000000-548101-				PROMO ACT							
3,163,799.00	-59,160.00	3,104,639.00	352,365.42						1,939,904.10	37.5%	
2025/05/000558	02/02/2025	API	1,500.00	VND	999999	PO		PCARD ONE TIME BRANDED POPCORN FOR FL HUDDLE			
2025/05/001172	02/04/2025	API	300.00	VND	999999	PO		PCARD ONE TIME BROCHURE DISTRIBUTION IN GREAT			
2025/05/001173	02/05/2025	API	1,071.27	VND	999999	PO		PCARD ONE TIME DINNER FOR 21 JOURNALISTS & VC			
2025/05/001175	02/06/2025	API	400.30	VND	999999	PO		PCARD ONE TIME BREAKFAST FOR 18 JOURNALISTS D			
2025/05/001698	02/07/2025	API	403.80	VND	999999	PO		PCARD ONE TIME LUNCH FOR 18 JOURNALISTS DURIN			
2025/05/002211	02/13/2025	API	106.68	VND	999999	PO		PCARD ONE TIME MEALS FOR DOUBLE K RODEO PRODU			
2025/05/002986	02/21/2025	API	98.98	VND	001556	PO		AMAZON MARKETPL TABLE SKIRT FOR TRADESHOWS, EV			
2025/05/002986	02/21/2025	API	66.86	VND	001556	PO		AMAZON MARKETPL BRANDED HATS, TABLE SKIRT USED			
2025/05/002991	02/14/2025	API	240.00	VND	999999	PO		PCARD ONE TIME VIMEO VIDEO HOSTING SITE SUBSC			

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FOR 2025 05		JOURNAL DETAIL 2025 5 TO 2025 5				
ACCOUNTS FOR: 1074 TOURIST DEVELOPMENT FUND	ORIGINAL ESTIM REV	ESTIM REV ADJ	REVISED ESTIM REV	ACTUAL YTD REVENUE	REMAINING REVENUE	% COLL

CP155552 548101 PROMO ACT

2025/05/003689	02/27/2025	API	75.39	VND	999999	PO	PCARD ONE TIME	REFRESHMENTS & SNACKS FOR PUBL		
2025/05/003690	02/26/2025	API	20.93	VND	999999	PO	PCARD ONE TIME	TABLECLOTH FOR TRADE SHOWS, CO		
2025/05/003690	02/26/2025	API	8.99	VND	999999	PO	PCARD ONE TIME	POSTAGE TO SEND CERAMIC TO GER		
2025/05/003691	02/24/2025	API	90.60	VND	999999	PO	PCARD ONE TIME	LUNCH FOR FAMILY TRAVELLER CAN		
2025/05/003691	02/24/2025	API	64.20	VND	999999	PO	PCARD ONE TIME	LUNCH FOR FAMILY TRAVELLER CAN		
2025/05/003692	02/25/2025	API	180.30	VND	999999	PO	PCARD ONE TIME	BRANDED SHIRTS FOR STAFF		
2025/05/003698	02/23/2025	API	79.28	VND	999999	PO	PCARD ONE TIME	DINNER FOR FAMILY TRAVELLER CA		
2025/05/003698	02/23/2025	API	76.80	VND	999999	PO	PCARD ONE TIME	DINNER FOR FAMILY TRAVELLER CA		
2025/05/003698	02/23/2025	API	7,300.00	VND	999999	PO	PCARD ONE TIME	FEBRUARY WEB SUPPORT, GROWTH MA		
2025/05/003780	02/28/2025	API	22.94	VND	999999	PO	PCARD ONE TIME	TABLE SKIRT TO BE USED FOR MEE		
2025/05/003780	02/28/2025	API	14.00	VND	999999	PO	PCARD ONE TIME	NAME BADGE FOR COLLEEN ROBINSO		
2025/05/003785	02/23/2025	API	302.00	VND	999999	PO	PCARD ONE TIME	HOTEL FOR J BAMBOULIS FOR FAMI		
2025/05/000506	02/03/2025	API	2,400.00	VND	001799	PO	2500196	MAVEN PHOTO	ON LOCATION DRONE FOOTAGE	83622
2025/05/000506	02/03/2025	POL	-2,400.00	VND	001799	PO	2500196	MAVEN PHOTO	ON LOCATION DRONE FOOTAGE 2025	
2025/05/000506	02/03/2025	API	2,150.00	VND	001799	PO	2500196	MAVEN PHOTO	ON LOCATION DRONE FOOTAGE	83622
2025/05/000506	02/03/2025	POL	-2,150.00	VND	001799	PO	2500196	MAVEN PHOTO	ON LOCATION DRONE FOOTAGE 2025	
2025/05/001294	02/06/2025	API	1,725.00	VND	001799	PO	2500196	MAVEN PHOTO	ON LOCATION DRONE FOOTAGE	83845
2025/05/001294	02/06/2025	POL	-1,925.00	VND	001799	PO	2500196	MAVEN PHOTO	ON LOCATION DRONE FOOTAGE 2025	
2025/05/001299	02/07/2025	API	998.00	VND	002424	PO	2500814	LAMERS BUS LINE	SHUTTLE RENTAL FOR FLORIDA HUD	83842
2025/05/001299	02/07/2025	POL	-998.00	VND	002424	PO	2500814	LAMERS BUS LINE	SHUTTLE RENTAL FOR FLORIDA2025	
2025/05/002555	02/10/2025	API	48,360.00	VND	001445	PO	2500834	WORLD EQUESTRIA	CATERING FOR FL HUDDLE AT WEC	84625
2025/05/002555	02/10/2025	POL	-49,755.00	VND	001445	PO	2500834	WORLD EQUESTRIA	CATERING FOR FL HUDDLE AT 2025	
2025/05/000868	02/05/2025	API	925.00	VND	002428	PO	2500843	THE LOVELY LOO	RESTROOM TRAILER RENTAL FOR FL	83867
2025/05/000868	02/05/2025	POL	-925.00	VND	002428	PO	2500843	THE LOVELY LOO	RESTROOM TRAILER RENTAL FO2025	
2025/05/000868	02/05/2025	API	3,520.00	VND	002423	PO	2500844	GREEN GAITS LLC	VENUE RENTAL	83838
2025/05/000868	02/05/2025	POL	-3,520.00	VND	002423	PO	2500844	GREEN GAITS LLC	VENUE RENTAL 2025	
2025/05/001294	02/06/2025	API	1,920.00	VND	001661	PO	2500847	VETERANS4YOU	PROMOTIONAL ITEMS	83873
2025/05/001294	02/06/2025	POL	-1,920.00	VND	001661	PO	2500847	VETERANS4YOU	PROMOTIONAL ITEMS 2025	
2025/05/001981	02/17/2025	API	1,400.00	VND	102569	PO	2500848	ON TIME MARKETI	PROMOTIONAL TUMBLERS	84061
2025/05/001981	02/17/2025	POL	-1,400.00	VND	102569	PO	2500848	ON TIME MARKETI	PROMOTIONAL TUMBLERS 2025	
2025/05/001641	02/12/2025	API	3,900.00	VND	002039	PO	2500852	FIDDLERS TURKEY	REIMBURSEMENT FOR ELIGIBLE EXP	84052
2025/05/001641	02/12/2025	POL	-3,900.00	VND	002039	PO	2500852	FIDDLERS TURKEY	REIMBURSEMENT FOR ELIGIBLE2025	
2025/05/000114	02/03/2025	POE	382.50	VND	002435	PO	2500861	OPAV	POWER SERVICE AT FL HUDDLE	
2025/05/001302	02/05/2025	API	382.50	VND	002435	PO	2500861	OPAV	WEC-POWER SERVICE AT FL HUDDLE	83850
2025/05/001302	02/05/2025	POL	-382.50	VND	002435	PO	2500861	OPAV	WEC-POWER SERVICE AT FL HU2025	
2025/05/000631	02/05/2025	POE	250.00	VND	002438	PO	2500873	GYPSEA ARTS	SIDEWALK CHALK ART FOR FL HUDD	
2025/05/001294	02/06/2025	API	250.00	VND	002438	PO	2500873	GYPSEA ARTS	SIDEWALK CHALK ART FOR FL HUDD	83839
2025/05/001294	02/06/2025	POL	-250.00	VND	002438	PO	2500873	GYPSEA ARTS	SIDEWALK CHALK ART FOR FL 2025	
2025/05/002610	02/21/2025	POE	16,275.00	VND	002454	PO	2500948	OCALA INTERNATI	HOTEL REIMBURSEMENT	
2025/05/002620	02/21/2025	POE	25,000.00	VND	204759	PO	2500949	HITS LLC	REIMBURSEMENT FOR ELIGIBLE EXP	
2025/05/003107	02/24/2025	API	25,000.00	VND	204759	PO	2500949	HITS LLC	2024 OCALA HOLIDAY SHOWS REIMB	84609
2025/05/003107	02/24/2025	POL	-25,000.00	VND	204759	PO	2500949	HITS LLC	2024 OCALA HOLIDAY SHOWS R2025	
2025/05/002624	02/21/2025	POE	164,400.00	VND	106354	PO	2500953	DIGITAL FURY LL	VIDEO & AUDIO PROCUCTION	
2025/05/002845	02/25/2025	POE	40,000.00	VND	002059	PO	2500963	CSF AQUATICS	FL SWIMMING SENIOR CHAMPIONSHI	
2025/05/002846	02/25/2025	POE	30,000.00	VND	002059	PO	2500964	CSF AQUATICS	FL SWIMMING FLAGS SPRING CHAMP	
2025/05/002847	02/25/2025	POE	66,000.00	VND	001786	PO	2500965	YMCA OF THE USA	YMCA NATIONAL LONG COURSE CHAM	

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ACCOUNTS FOR: 1074 TOURIST DEVELOPMENT FUND
 ORIGINAL ESTIM REV ESTIM REV ADJ REVISED ESTIM REV ACTUAL YTD REVENUE REMAINING REVENUE % COLL

ACCOUNTS FOR:	ORIGINAL ESTIM REV	ESTIM REV ADJ	REVISED ESTIM REV	ACTUAL YTD REVENUE	REMAINING REVENUE	% COLL
CP155552 548101						
PROMO ACT						
2025/05/002848	02/25/2025	POE	60,000.00	VND 001553 PO 2500966	COLLEGE SWIMMIN	CSCAA NATIONAL INVITATIONAL CH
2025/05/002849	02/25/2025	POE	50,000.00	VND 001746 PO 2500967	FLORIDA HIGH SC	FHSAA SWIMMING & DIVING STATE
2025/05/002850	02/25/2025	POE	60,000.00	VND 002059 PO 2500968	CSF AQUATICS	FL SWIMMING FLAGS CHAMPIONSHIP
2025/05/002851	02/25/2025	POE	50,000.00	VND 002059 PO 2500969	CSF AQUATICS	USA SWIMMING SPEEDO SECTIONALS
2025/05/002852	02/25/2025	POE	150,000.00	VND 001392 PO 2500970	NATIONAL COLLEG	NCEA NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS
1074-55-552-450-45090-155-0000000-0000000-549185-						
	174,198.00	0.00	174,198.00	CHARGES - COST ALLOCATION	72,582.50	101,615.50 41.7%
2025/05/001642	02/14/2025	GEN	14,516.50	REF REC COST ALLOCATION/FEB25		
1074-55-552-450-45090-155-0000000-0000000-551101-						
	2,000.00	0.00	2,000.00	OFFICE SUPPLIES	314.02	1,685.98 15.7%
1074-55-552-450-45090-155-0000000-0000000-552101-						
	4,000.00	0.00	4,000.00	GASOLINE, OIL & LUBRICANTS	352.67	3,647.33 8.8%
2025/05/000076	02/03/2025	WOJ	59.77	REF fuel FUEL-4162		
2025/05/001864	02/17/2025	WOJ	62.05	REF fuel FUEL-4680		
2025/05/002697	02/24/2025	WOJ	18.84	REF fuel FUEL-4837		
1074-55-552-450-45090-155-0000000-0000000-552106-						
	25,055.00	0.00	25,055.00	COMPUTER SOFTWARE	15,510.24	5,873.15 76.6%
2025/05/001743	02/13/2025	API	1,685.61	VND 500685 PO 2500734	INSIGHT PUBLIC	10522812: UPGRADE TO G5 AND F3 84002
2025/05/001743	02/13/2025	POL	-1,685.61	VND 500685 PO 2500734	INSIGHT PUBLIC	10522812: UPGRADE TO G5 AN2025
2025/05/001269	02/11/2025	API	4,285.30	VND 500685 PO 2500835	INSIGHT PUBLIC	10522812: ADOBE RENEWAL 83766
2025/05/001269	02/11/2025	POL	-4,285.30	VND 500685 PO 2500835	INSIGHT PUBLIC	10522812: ADOBE RENEWAL 2025
1074-55-552-450-45090-155-0000000-0000000-552108-						
	7,500.00	0.00	7,500.00	OPERATING SUPPLIES	1,210.85	6,289.15 16.1%
2025/05/002201	02/11/2025	API	30.97	VND 001556 PO	AMAZON MARKETPL	ENVELOPES, IPHONE CHARGERS, ST
2025/05/002986	02/21/2025	API	25.77	VND 001556 PO	AMAZON MARKETPL	BRANDED HATS, TABLE SKIRT USED
2025/05/002986	02/21/2025	API	99.50	VND 001556 PO	AMAZON MARKETPL	OFFICE CHAIR
2025/05/002986	02/21/2025	API	265.98	VND 001556 PO	AMAZON MARKETPL	STANDING DESK CONVERTER
1074-55-552-450-45090-155-0000000-0000000-552116-						
	11,500.00	0.00	11,500.00	OPER SUPPLIES - COMP HARDWARE	5,225.90	6,274.10 45.4%

EXPENDITURE STATUS REPORT

FOR 2025 05										JOURNAL DETAIL 2025 5 TO 2025 5	
ACCOUNTS FOR: 1074 TOURIST DEVELOPMENT FUND										REMAINING REVENUE	% COLL
ORIGINAL	ESTIM REV	ESTIM REV	ADJ	REVISED	ESTIM REV	ACTUAL	YTD	REVENUE			
1074-55-552-450-45090-155-0000000-0000000-552257-				PARTS - VEHICLE / EQUIPMENT							
	3,000.00		0.00		3,000.00		89.19			2,910.81	3.0%
2025/05/001602	02/13/2025	WOJ		5.75	REF	rm jan	269701				
2025/05/001602	02/13/2025	WOJ		5.75	REF	rm jan	269878				
2025/05/003321	02/27/2025	WOJ		25.94	REF	rmfeb	272303				
2025/05/003321	02/27/2025	WOJ		6.90	REF	rmfeb	272308				
2025/05/003321	02/27/2025	WOJ		6.90	REF	rmfeb	273077				
2025/05/003321	02/27/2025	WOJ		6.90	REF	rmfeb	274294				
1074-55-552-450-45090-155-0000000-0000000-554101-				BOOKS, PUBS & SUBSCRIPTIONS							
	49,104.00		0.00		49,104.00		20,419.88			28,684.12	41.6%
1074-55-552-450-45090-155-0000000-0000000-554201-				DUES & MEMBERSHIPS							
	29,704.00		6,025.00		35,729.00		16,861.00			18,868.00	47.2%
2025/05/003689	02/27/2025	API		350.00	VND	999999	PO	PCARD ONE TIME	ANNUAL DMO ASSOCIATE DUES, 04/		
1074-55-552-450-45090-155-0000000-0000000-555501-				TRAINING & EDUCATION							
	76,530.00		0.00		76,530.00		10,014.17			66,515.83	13.1%
2025/05/001751	02/13/2025	API		34.17	VND	002444	PO	FLYNN MARY	BOOKS FOR LEADERSHIP PROGRAM		83994
2025/05/002209	02/12/2025	API		660.00	VND	999999	PO	PCARD ONE TIME	FL TOURISM REGISTRATIONS FOR A		
2025/05/002211	02/13/2025	API		540.00	VND	999999	PO	PCARD ONE TIME	REGISTRATIONS FOR J HELLER AND		
1074-55-552-450-45090-155-0000000-0000000-563102-				IMPROVE - CIP							
	6,786,423.00		0.00		6,786,423.00		2,447,046.18			2,994,428.99	55.9%
2025/05/002239	02/18/2025	API		47,829.08	VND	500704	PO	2400721	KIMLEY HORN AND CONSTRUCTION SUPPORT SVCS-SOUT		84124
2025/05/002239	02/18/2025	POL		-47,829.08	VND	500704	PO	2400721	KIMLEY HORN AND CONSTRUCTION SUPPORT SVCS-2024		
2025/05/001298	02/07/2025	API		918,078.37	VND	203811	PO	2400722	COMMERCIAL INDU CONSTRUCTION/INSTALL AESTHETIC		83830
2025/05/001298	02/07/2025	POL		-918,078.37	VND	203811	PO	2400722	COMMERCIAL INDU CONSTRUCTION/INSTALL AESTH2024		
1074-55-552-450-45090-155-0000000-0000000-564102-				MACHINERY & EQUIPMENT - CIP							
	1,259.00		0.00		1,259.00		0.00			1,259.00	.0%
1074-55-552-450-45090-155-0000000-0000000-568102-				INTANGIBLE SOFTWARE - CIP							
	3,462.00		0.00		3,462.00		0.00			-0.06	100.0%
1074-55-552-450-45090-155-0000000-0000000-599101-				RESERVE FOR CONTINGENCIES							
	446,865.00		-446,865.00		0.00		0.00			0.00	.0%

EXPENDITURE STATUS REPORT

FOR 2025 05				JOURNAL DETAIL 2025 5 TO 2025 5		
ACCOUNTS FOR: 1074 TOURIST DEVELOPMENT FUND						
ORIGINAL ESTIM REV	ESTIM REV ADJ	REVISED ESTIM REV	ACTUAL YTD REVENUE		REMAINING REVENUE	% COLL
1074-55-552-450-45090-155-0000000-0000000-599199-			RESERVE FOR CASH CARRY FORWARD			
1,150,000.00	0.00	1,150,000.00	0.00		1,150,000.00	.0%
TOTAL TOURIST DEVELOPMENT FUND						
14,882,524.00	-500,000.00	14,382,524.00	3,596,250.14		7,273,270.13	25.0%
TOTAL EXPENSES						
14,882,524.00	-500,000.00	14,382,524.00	3,596,250.14		7,273,270.13	

EXPENDITURE STATUS REPORT

FOR 2025 05				JOURNAL DETAIL 2025 5 TO 2025 5		
ORIGINAL ESTIM REV	ESTIM REV ADJ	REVISED ESTIM REV	ACTUAL YTD REVENUE	REMAINING REVENUE	% COLL	
14,882,524.00	-500,000.00	14,382,524.00	3,596,250.14	7,273,270.13	25.0%	
GRAND TOTAL						

** END OF REPORT - Generated by wheeler, Sky **



Marion County Tourist Development Council

Agenda Item

File No.: 2025-18551

Agenda Date: 3/28/2025

Agenda No.:

SUBJECT:

MOTION: TDC Chairman/Vice-Chairman Vote

DESCRIPTION/BACKGROUND:

Annual Chairman/Vice-Chairman vote by ballot.



Marion County Tourist Development Council

Agenda Item

File No.: 2025-18552

Agenda Date: 3/28/2025

Agenda No.:

SUBJECT:

MOTION: Gateway Signage Update, Kimley-Horn

DESCRIPTION/BACKGROUND:

Recommended Action: To provide direction regarding the Gateway Signage Update presented by Kimley-Horn.



Marion County Tourist Development Council

Agenda Item

File No.: 2025-18583

Agenda Date: 3/28/2025

Agenda No.:

SUBJECT:

Reminder: Marion County Day - March 29th at McPherson Complex and Marion at the Capitol - April 10th in Tallahassee

DESCRIPTION/BACKGROUND:

Information only.



Marion County Tourist Development Council

Agenda Item

File No.: 2025-18553

Agenda Date: 3/28/2025

Agenda No.:

SUBJECT:
Fiscal Year 2025 Event Funding Allocations

DESCRIPTION/BACKGROUND:
Information only.

FY 24-25 Bid Fee Allocations

Event	Proposed Funding	Approved Funding	Expended Funding
AJGA Billy Horschel Junior Championships*	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$0.00
FHSAA Swimming & Diving State Championships	\$50,000.00	\$50,000.00	\$50,000.00
Kayak Adventure Series	\$17,000.00	\$17,000.00	\$17,000.00
Florida Swimming FLAGS Spring Championship	\$15,000.00	\$15,000.00	\$15,000.00
CSCAA National Invitational Championship	\$30,000.00	\$30,000.00	\$30,000.00
NCEA National Championships	\$50,000.00	\$50,000.00	
USA Swimming Speedo Sectionals	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00	
Florida Swimming FLAGS Championship	\$30,000.00	\$30,000.00	
Florida Swimming Senior Championships	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00	
YMCA National Long Course Championship	\$33,000.00	\$33,000.00	
Cal Ripken Rookie World Series	\$5,000.00		
Babe Ruth 16-18 World Series	\$50,000.00		
USA Swimming Futures Meet	\$25,000.00		
MLF Heavy Hitters **	\$75,000.00		
Budgeted amount		\$500,000.00	
Available to Fund Bid Fee Events		\$75,000.00	

TDC approved higher funding
 Event canceled due to Hurricane Milton
 Planner fell short on deliverables

FY 24-25 Room Night Generating Event Funding Allocations

Event	Proposed Funding	Approved Funding	Expended Funding
NMRA Sunshine Region Convention*	\$ 1,400.00	\$ 1,400.00	\$ -
Grandview Fall Fun Draft Horse Show*	\$ 10,010.00	\$ 10,010.00	\$ -
Ocala International Horse Show	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 16,275.00
Fiddler's Turkey Run	\$ 5,040.00	\$ 5,040.00	\$ 3,900.00
HITS Ocala Holiday Series	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00
HITS Post Time Farm Premier	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00
JVC Nike First in Show	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00
HITS Ocala Winter Circuit Weeks 1-5	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 37,500.00	
The Sun Conference Swimming and Diving Championships	\$ 8,400.00	\$ 8,400.00	
HITS Ocala Winter Circuit Weeks 6-10	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 37,500.00	
JVC Nike Winner's Circle Volleyball Tournament	\$ 10,010.00	\$ 10,010.00	
FACAP 47th Annual Seminar	\$ 3,500.00	\$ 3,500.00	
Rock the Country	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	
Live Oak International	\$ 18,200.00	\$ 18,200.00	
Grandview Invitational	\$ 19,600.00	\$ 19,600.00	
Grandview World Nights	\$ 22,400.00	\$ 22,400.00	
Cal Ripken T-Ball/Rookie B State Tournament	\$ 10,500.00		
Dixie Softball State Tournament	\$ 12,012.00		
Budgeted Amount		\$330,000.00	
Available to Fund Room Night Generating Events		\$5,203.00	

TDC approved higher funding
 Event canceled due to Hurricane Milton
 Event planner fell short on deliverables



Marion County Tourist Development Council

Agenda Item

File No.: 2025-18554

Agenda Date: 3/28/2025

Agenda No.:

SUBJECT:

MOTION: Cal Ripken T-Ball/Rookie B State Tournament - \$10,500 (Room Night Generating Events Funding)

DESCRIPTION/BACKGROUND:

Recommended Action: Motion to approve funding for the Cal Ripken T-Ball/Rookie B State Tournament for recommendation to the Marion County Board of County Commissioners.



REPEAT EVENT
EVENT DATES: June 5-8, 2025
EVENT LOCATION: Rotary Sportsplex

Funding Program: Room Night Generating Event Funding (Rev. 06-2023)

EVENT INFORMATION:	FINANCIALS:
Event Name: Cal Ripken T-Ball/Rookie B State Tournament Organization: Rotary Sportsplex – Cal Ripken Baseball Inc.	Requested Amount: \$10,500 Eligible Funding/Staff Recommendation: \$10,500* Business Sales (Total): \$1,078,606 Total ROI: 158% Anticipated Attendance (Total): 1,820 Anticipated Room Nights (Total): 750 Average Occupancy Rate for Period: 80.8% (2024) 67.3% (2023)

**Funding is awarded \$14/room night*

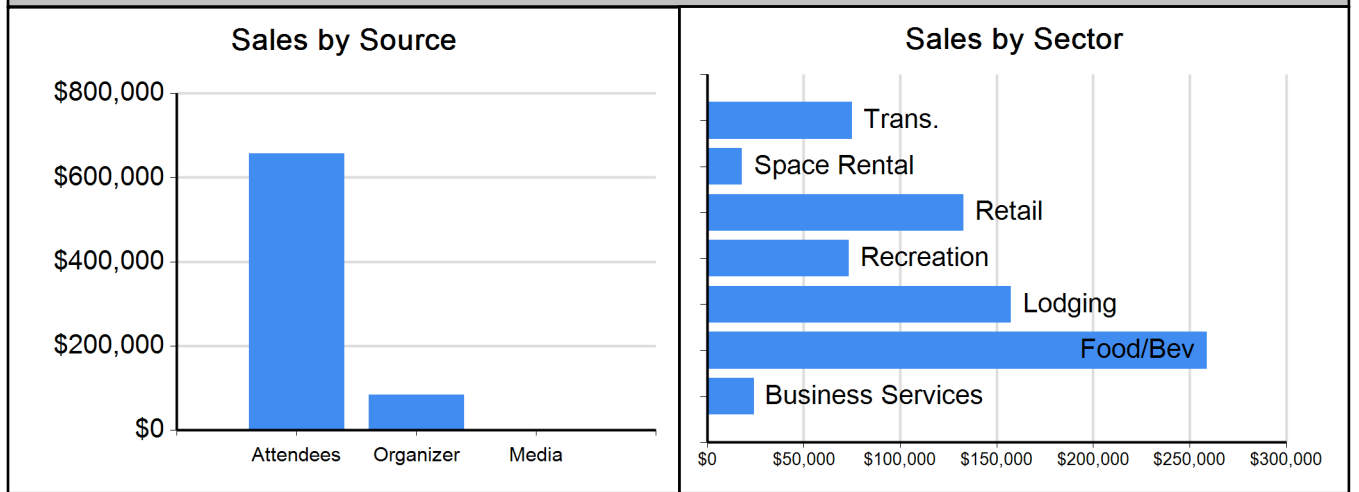
- **Use of Funds:** facility rental fee, tournament sanctioning fee, umpires, marketing materials, baseballs
- **Event Description:**
This tournament will be a state championship for all T-ball and Rookie “B-Teams” totaling about 45-55 teams. Each age group will have a separate tournament to award the state champion.

Event Impact Summary

Destination: Ocala/Marion County Visitors & Convention Bureau

Event Parameters		Key Results	
Event Name:	Cal Ripken T-Ball/Rookie B State Championship	Business Sales (Direct):	\$739,907
Organization:	Cal Ripken Baseball	Business Sales (Total):	\$1,078,606
Event Type:	Youth Amateur	Jobs Supported (Direct):	253
Start Date:	6/5/2025	Jobs Supported (Total):	288
End Date:	6/8/2025	Local Taxes (Total):	\$27,042
Overnight Attendees:	1183	Net Direct Tax ROI:	\$12,149
Day Attendees:	637	Estimated Room Demand:	1,050

Direct Business Sales



Industry	Attendees	Organizer	Media/Sponsors	Total
Lodging	\$157,513	\$0	\$0	\$157,513
Transportation	\$73,926	\$1,005	\$95	\$75,026
Food & Beverage	\$218,914	\$39,967	\$0	\$258,881
Retail	\$132,949	\$0	\$0	\$132,949
Recreation	\$73,259	\$0	\$0	\$73,259
Space Rental	\$0	\$18,142	\$0	\$18,142
Business Services	\$0	\$24,083	\$54	\$24,136
TOTAL	\$656,561	\$83,196	\$149	\$739,907

Event Impact Details

Destination: Ocala/Marion County Visitors & Convention Bureau

Event Name: Cal Ripken T-Ball/Rookie B State Championship 2025

Organization: Cal Ripken Baseball

Economic Impact Details			
	Direct	Indirect/Induced	Total
Business Sales	\$739,907	\$338,699	\$1,078,606
Personal Income	\$233,981	\$87,608	\$321,588
Jobs Supported			
Persons	253	35	288
Annual FTEs	8	1	10
Taxes and Assessments			
<u>Federal Total</u>	<u>\$65,371</u>	<u>\$27,701</u>	<u>\$93,072</u>
<u>State Total</u>	<u>\$50,537</u>	<u>\$10,771</u>	<u>\$61,308</u>
sales	\$38,107	\$5,080	\$43,187
income	\$0	\$0	\$0
bed	\$0	-	\$0
other	\$12,431	\$5,690	\$18,121
<u>Local Total (excl. property)</u>	<u>\$22,649</u>	<u>\$4,393</u>	<u>\$27,042</u>
sales	\$9,527	\$1,270	\$10,797
income	\$0	\$0	\$0
bed	\$6,301	-	\$6,301
per room charge	\$0	-	\$0
tourism district	\$0	-	\$0
restaurant	\$0	\$0	\$0
other	\$6,822	\$3,123	\$9,945
property tax	\$13,423	\$3,970	\$17,393

Event Return on Investment (ROI)		
Direct local tax RO(net property taxes)		
Direct Tax Receipts	\$22,649	
DMO Hosting Costs	\$10,500	
Direct ROI	\$12,149	
Net Present Value	\$12,149	
Direct ROI (%)	116%	
Total local tax RO(net property taxes)		
Total Local Tax Receipts	\$27,042	
Total ROI	\$16,542	
Net Present Value	\$16,542	
Total ROI (%)	158%	

Estimated Room Demand Metrics	
Room Nights (total)	1,050
Room Pickup (block only)	750
Peak Rooms	320
Total Visitor Days	4,196



Marion County

Tourist Development Council

Agenda Item

File No.: 2025-18555

Agenda Date: 3/28/2025

Agenda No.:

SUBJECT:

MOTION: Dixie Softball State Tournament - \$12,012 (Room Night Generating Events Funding)

DESCRIPTION/BACKGROUND:

Recommended Action: Motion to approve funding for the Dixie Softball State Tournament for recommendation to the Marion County Board of County Commissioners.



REPEAT EVENT
EVENT DATES: June 25-29, 2025
EVENT LOCATION: Belleview Sportsplex

Funding Program: Room Night Generating Event Funding (Rev. 06-2023)

EVENT INFORMATION:	FINANCIALS:
Event Name: Dixie Softball State Tournament Organization: Belleview Girls Softball Association, Inc.	Requested Amount: \$12,012 Eligible Funding/Staff Recommendation: \$12,012* Business Sales (Total): \$1,697,760 Total ROI: 268% Anticipated Attendance (Total): 2,600 Anticipated Room Nights (Total): 858 Average Occupancy Rate for Period: 61.8% (2024) 63.2% (2023)

**Funding is awarded \$14/room night*

- **Funding History:**
 - 2019 - \$10,000
 - 2021 - \$9,265

- **Use of Funds:** facility rental fee, tournament sanctioning fee, umpires, marketing materials, softballs, security, advertising

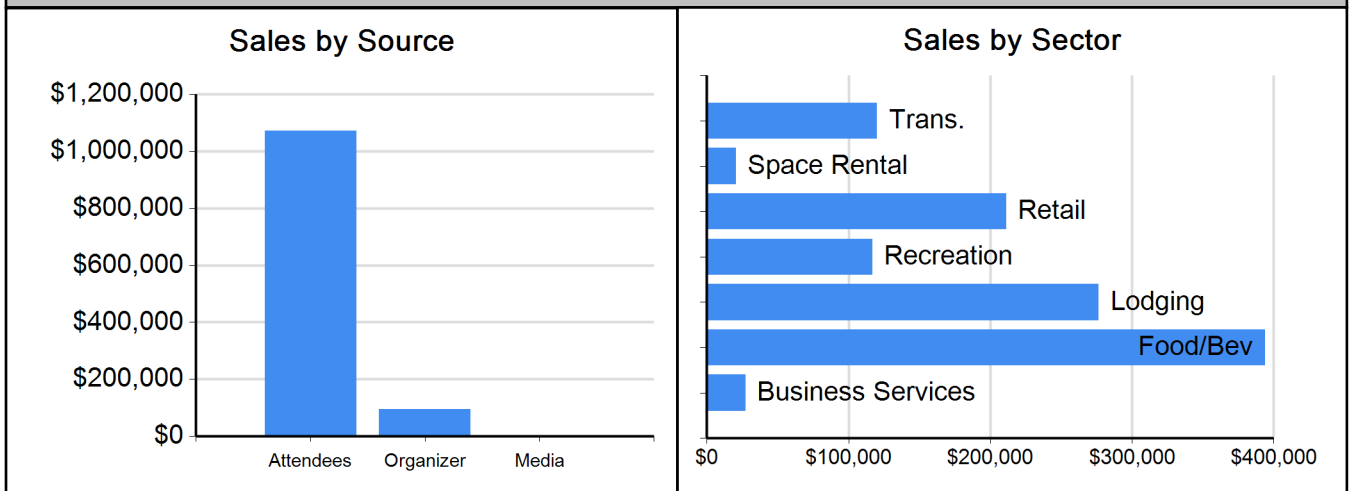
- **Event Description:**
 The Dixie Softball State Tournament will consist of 25-30 teams ages 5-19 over 8 different classifications. The winners of each bracket will qualify for the Dixie Softball World Series.

Event Impact Summary

Destination: Ocala/Marion County Visitors & Convention Bureau

Event Parameters		Key Results	
Event Name:	Dixie Softball State Championships	Business Sales (Direct):	\$1,167,026
Organization:	Bellevue Girls Softball Association, Inc.	Business Sales (Total):	\$1,697,760
Event Type:	Youth Amateur	Jobs Supported (Direct):	351
Start Date:	6/25/2025	Jobs Supported (Total):	399
End Date:	6/29/2025	Local Taxes (Total):	\$44,171
Overnight Attendees:	1584	Net Direct Tax ROI:	\$25,275
Day Attendees:	1056	Estimated Room Demand:	1,843

Direct Business Sales



Industry	Attendees	Organizer	Media/Sponsors	Total
Lodging	\$276,391	\$0	\$0	\$276,391
Transportation	\$118,256	\$1,822	\$162	\$120,239
Food & Beverage	\$348,734	\$45,070	\$0	\$393,804
Retail	\$211,508	\$0	\$0	\$211,508
Recreation	\$117,120	\$0	\$0	\$117,120
Space Rental	\$0	\$20,458	\$0	\$20,458
Business Services	\$0	\$27,414	\$91	\$27,505
TOTAL	\$1,072,009	\$94,764	\$253	\$1,167,026

Event Impact Details

Destination: Ocala/Marion County Visitors & Convention Bureau

Event Name: Dixie Softball State Championships 2025

Organization: Belleview Girls Softball Association, Inc.

Economic Impact Details			
	Direct	Indirect/Induced	Total
Business Sales	\$1,167,026	\$530,735	\$1,697,760
Personal Income	\$367,735	\$137,307	\$505,043
Jobs Supported			
Persons	351	48	399
Annual FTEs	13	2	15
Taxes and Assessments			
<u>Federal Total</u>	<u>\$102,957</u>	<u>\$43,410</u>	<u>\$146,368</u>
<u>State Total</u>	<u>\$81,489</u>	<u>\$16,877</u>	<u>\$98,366</u>
sales	\$61,883	\$7,961	\$69,844
income	\$0	\$0	\$0
bed	\$0	-	\$0
other	\$19,606	\$8,916	\$28,523
<u>Local Total (excl. property)</u>	<u>\$37,287</u>	<u>\$6,884</u>	<u>\$44,171</u>
sales	\$15,471	\$1,990	\$17,461
income	\$0	\$0	\$0
bed	\$11,056	-	\$11,056
per room charge	\$0	-	\$0
tourism district	\$0	-	\$0
restaurant	\$0	\$0	\$0
other	\$10,760	\$4,894	\$15,654
property tax	\$21,171	\$6,206	\$27,377

Event Return on Investment (ROI)		
Direct local tax RO(net property taxes)		
Direct Tax Receipts	\$37,287	
DMO Hosting Costs	\$12,012	
Direct ROI	\$25,275	
Net Present Value	\$25,275	
Direct ROI (%)	210%	
Total local tax RO(net property taxes)		
Total Local Tax Receipts	\$44,171	
Total ROI	\$32,159	
Net Present Value	\$32,159	
Total ROI (%)	268%	

Estimated Room Demand Metrics	
Room Nights (total)	1,843
Room Pickup (block only)	858
Peak Rooms	480
Total Visitor Days	6,714



Marion County Tourist Development Council

Agenda Item

File No.: 2025-18557

Agenda Date: 3/28/2025

Agenda No.:

SUBJECT:

Update on Funding Programs

DESCRIPTION/BACKGROUND:

Information only.



Marion County Tourist Development Council

Agenda Item

File No.: 2025-18558

Agenda Date: 3/28/2025

Agenda No.:

SUBJECT:

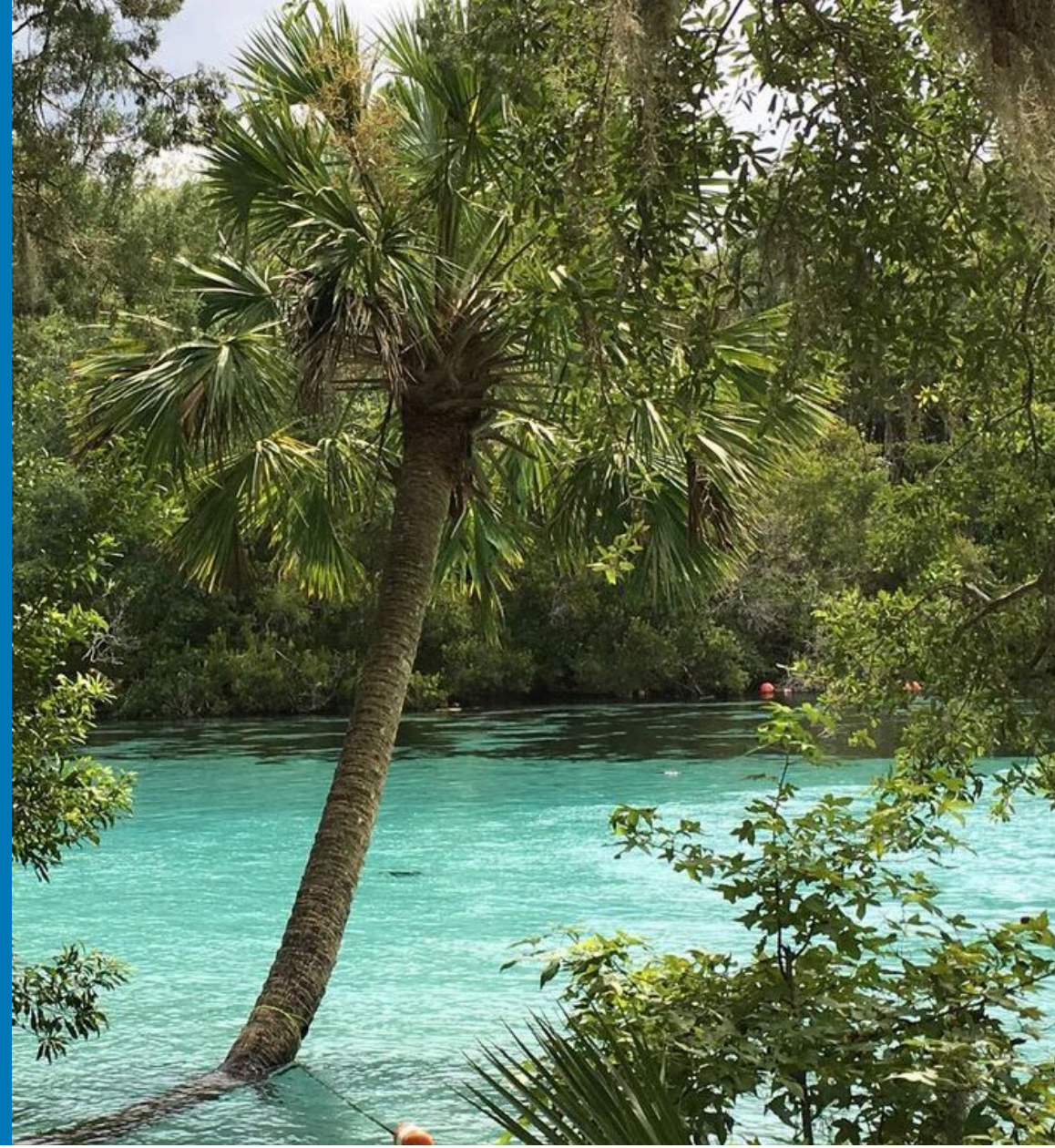
PRESENTATION: Quarterly Economic Impact/Visitor Tracking Report - October - December Data

DESCRIPTION/BACKGROUND:

Information only.

Ocala/MARION COUNTY VCB

Economic Impact Study &
Visitor Tracking Report
Oct-Dec 2024



STUDY OBJECTIVES: VISITOR JOURNEY



- Planning cycle
- Planning sources
- Reasons for visiting
- Recall of destination messaging

- Visitor origin
- Party size
- Party composition
- Demographics
- Number of visits to the area

- Mode of transportation
- Accommodations
- Booking
- Length of stay
- Activities in destination
- Visitor spending

- Satisfaction of Ocala/Marion County area
- Likelihood of returning
- Evaluation of destination attributes
- Painting a picture for others

- Number of visitors
- Expenditures
- Room nights generated
- Occupancy, ADR, RevPAR

Visitor Tracking Study

- » Interviews were completed in person and online with **762 visitors** at local hotels, attractions, and events between **October 1, 2024** and **December 31, 2024**



Partner & Event Involvement

- » Appleton Museum of Art
- » KP Hole Park
- » Silver Springs State Park
- » HDG Hotels
- » Hampton Inn and Suites
- » Circle Square Cultural Center
- » MCA & Brick City Center for the Arts
- » Canyon Zipline & Adventure Park
- » Santos Bike Shop
- » WEC
- » FAST Aquatic Center

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



VISITOR JOURNEY: ECONOMIC IMPACT



Oct - Dec 2024 TOURISM SNAPSHOT



\$1,400,448

TDT
COLLECTIONS

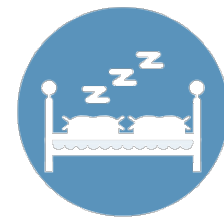
↑ 25.7%



322,700

ROOM
NIGHTS

↑ 32.9%



66.3%

OCCUPANCY
RATE

↑ 20.5%



\$128.54

AVERAGE DAILY
RATE

↑ 12.1%



\$85.26

REVENUE PER AVAILABLE
ROOM

↑ 35.0%

2024 vs. 2023

- » Hurricanes Helene and Milton made landfall in late September and Early October. Hurricane evacuees and recovery workers had a strong impact on visitor and lodging metrics in October to December 2024.
- » There was a return of a longer trip planning cycle as last year, Oct-Dec 2023 was historically a shorter trip planning cycle (48 days) compared to the previous year 2022 and the current year, 2024 which were both averaging a planned trip at 57 days in advance.
- » Average Travel party size decreased from 3.0 people in 2023 to 2.7 in 2024.
- » Length of stay increased from 3.5 nights in 2023 to 3.8 nights in 2024.
- » First time visitation increased from 31% in 2023 to 36% in 2024.

VISITOR & LODGING METRICS

Visitor Statistics ¹	Oct - Dec 2023	Oct - Dec 2024	Percent Change
Visitors ²	344,400	360,800	+ 4.8%
Direct Expenditures ³	\$141,948,600	\$166,433,800	+ 17.2%
Total Economic Impact	\$220,020,300 ⁴	\$250,792,600 ⁴	+ 14.0%

Lodging Statistics ⁵	Oct - Dec 2023	Oct - Dec 2024	Percent Change
Occupancy	55.1%	66.3%	+ 20.5%
Room Rates	\$114.69	\$128.54	+ 12.1%
RevPAR	\$63.15	\$85.26	+ 35.0%
Room Nights	242,800	322,700	+ 32.9%
TDT Collections	\$1,114,494	\$1,400,448	+ 25.7%
Hotel Units	4,547	5,056	+ 11.2%
Vacation Rental Units	246	232	- 5.7%

¹ Hurricanes Helene and Milton made landfall in late September and early October. Hurricane evacuees and recover workers had a strong impact on visitor and lodging metrics in October to December 2024.

² Visitation is lagging behind other key metrics due to smaller travel party size as well as fewer visitors in unpaid accommodations and day trippers

³ Includes spending for: accommodations, restaurants, entertainment, shopping, transportation, groceries, and "other" expenses.

⁴ Multiplier decreased from 1.55 in Oct-Dec 2023 to 1.51 in Oct-Dec 2024.

⁵ Lodging figures utilize accommodation metrics from STR, Key Data, and the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR).

VISITOR JOURNEY: PRE-VISIT



TRIP PLANNING CYCLE OCT-DEC 2024

- » **Over half** of visitors planned their trips to the Ocala/Marion County area **a month or less in advance (-10% YoY)**
- » Visitors planned their trip **on average of 57 days in advance of their visit (48 days in 2023)**



TOP TRIP PLANNING SOURCES OCT-DEC 2024*



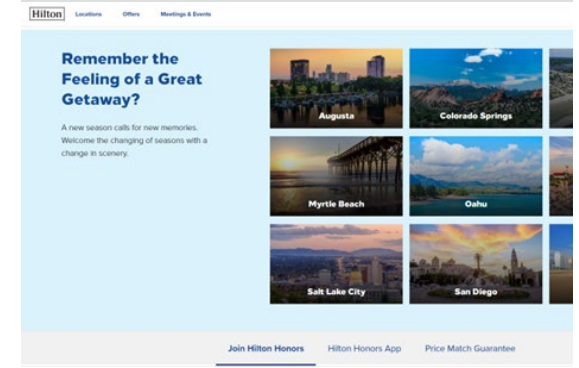
47% Talk to friends and family
(+11% YoY)



45% Search sites
(No change YoY)



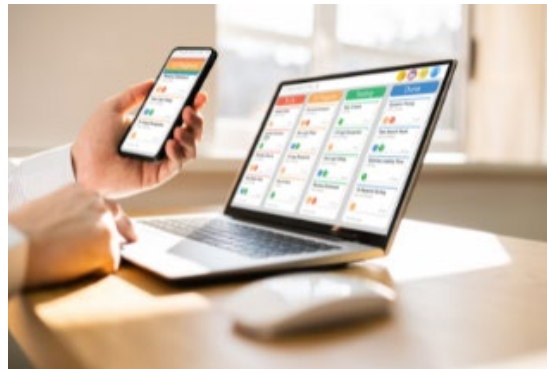
9% Destination social media
(-4% YoY)



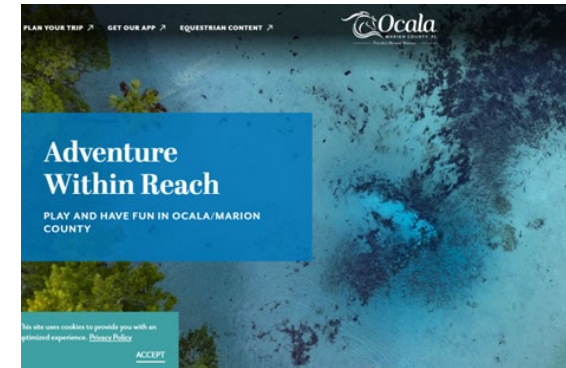
7% Hotel/resort website/app
(-2% YoY)



7% Personal social media
(-7% YoY)



6% Trip planning website/app
(-5% YoY)



5% Online advertisement
(-2% YoY)

TOP REASONS FOR VISITING OCT-DEC 2024*



23% Attend horse shows, sales, events (+6% YoY)



22% Visit friends/relatives (+1% YoY)



19% Visit area springs (+4% YoY)



12% Business or conference (+7% YoY)



9% Sporting tournament/event (+1% YoY)



8% Relax/unwind (-7% YoY)

PRE-TRIP RECALL OF ADVERTISING OCT-DEC 2024*

- » **26%** of visitors recalled advertising about the Ocala/Marion County area (**+4% YoY**)
- » **Over 2 in 3** visitors who recalled advertising were influenced by this information to visit the area which represents **18% of all visitors (+1% YoY)**



SOURCES OF ADVERTISING RECALL OCT-DEC 2024*

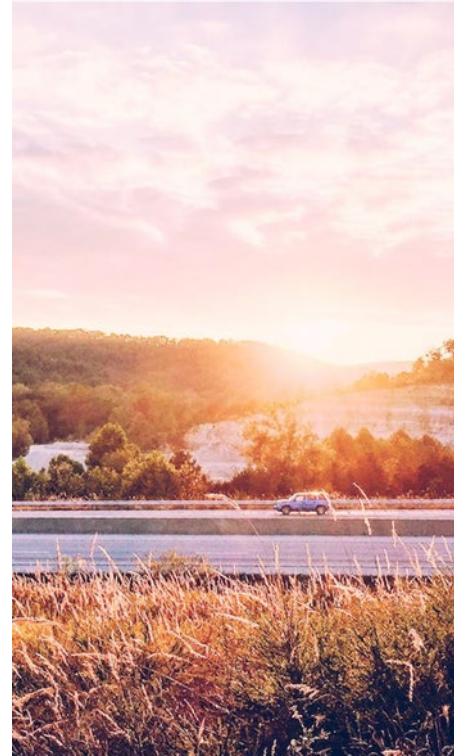
Base: **26%** of visitors who recalled advertising



36% Social media
(-4% YoY)



31% Online
Advertisement
(-1% YoY)



14% Billboard
(-2% YoY)



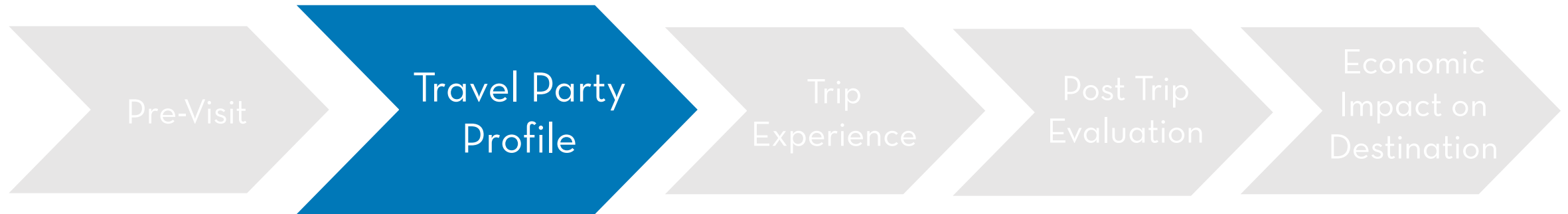
13% Print
Advertisement
(+2% YoY)



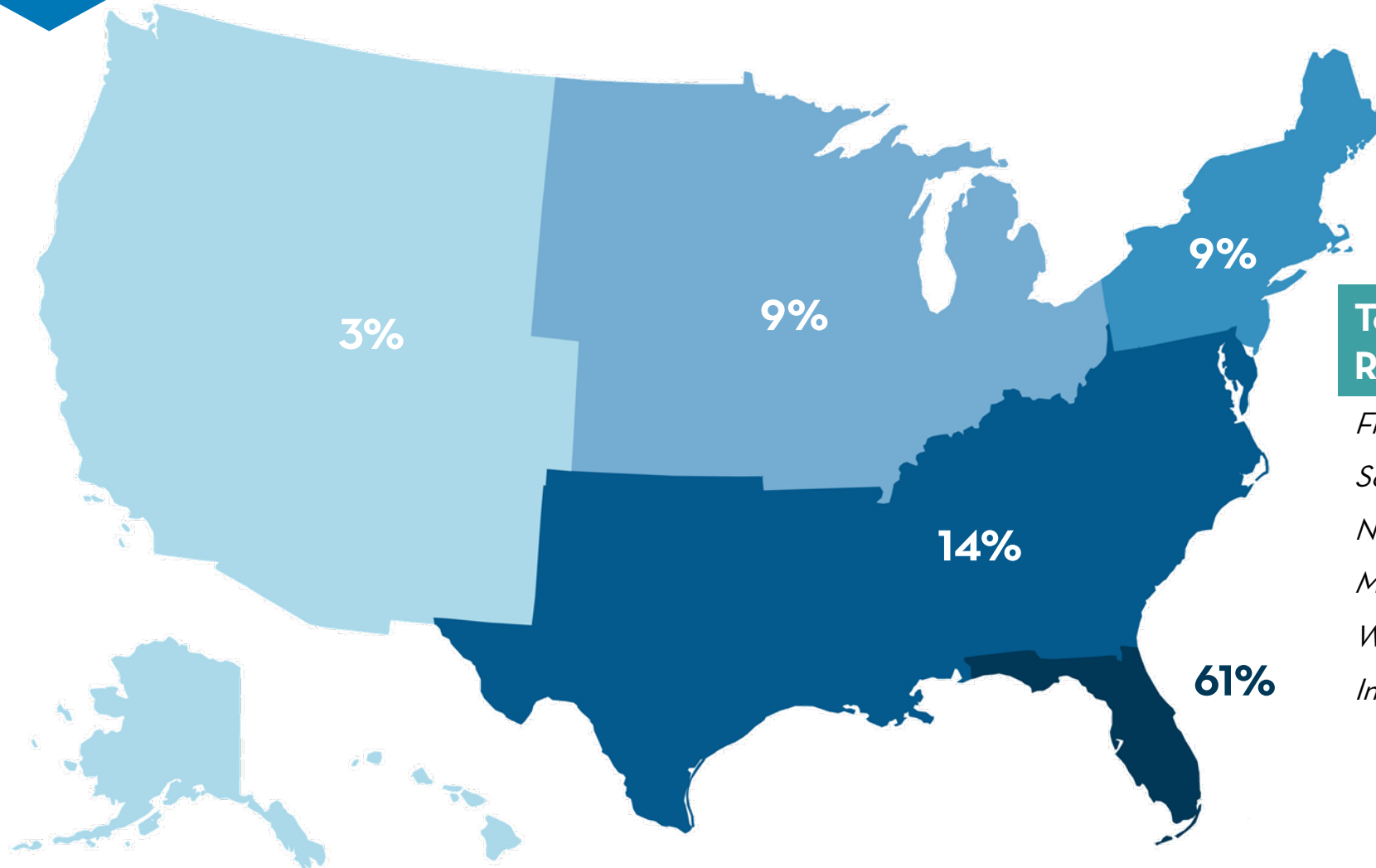
13% Magazine/
newspaper article
(+3% YoY)

*Advertising efforts mentioned on this slide include VCB's efforts and the efforts of other organizations.

VISITOR JOURNEY: TRAVEL PARTY PROFILE



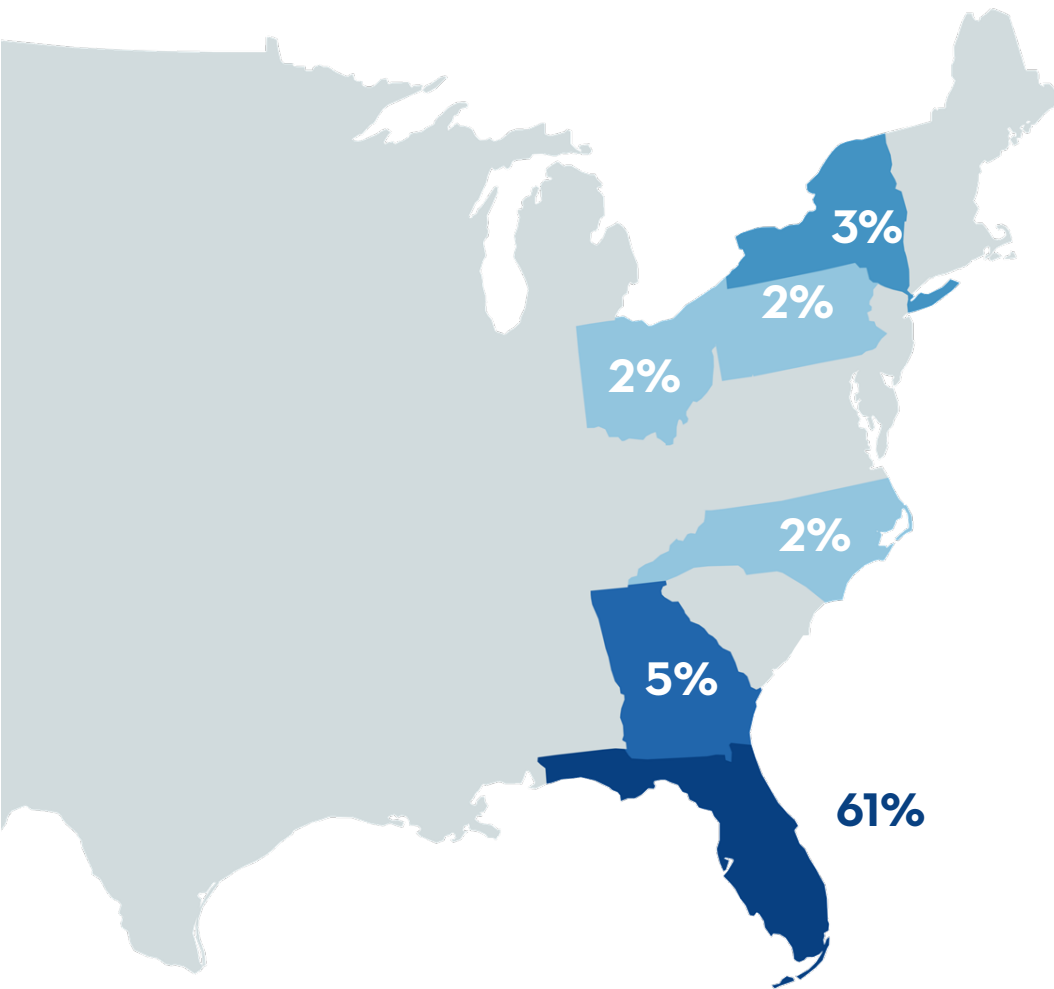
REGIONS OF ORIGIN OCT-DEC 2024



Top Origin Regions	% Difference YoY
<i>Florida</i>	<i>+5%</i>
<i>Southeast</i>	<i>-1%</i>
<i>Northeast</i>	<i>-2%</i>
<i>Midwest</i>	<i>-1%</i>
<i>West</i>	<i>-1%</i>
<i>International</i>	<i>No change</i>

4% of visitors traveled to the Ocala/Marion County area from outside of the U.S.

TOP STATES OF ORIGIN OCT-DEC 2024



3 in 4 visitors traveled to Ocala/Marion County from 6 states:

- 61% Florida (+5% YoY)
- 5% Georgia (+1% YoY)
- 3% New York (No change YoY)
- 2% Ohio (No change YoY)
- 2% North Carolina (No change YoY)
- 2% Pennsylvania (No change YoY)

TOP ORIGIN MARKETS OCT-DEC 2024



17% Orlando - Daytona Beach
- Melbourne **(No change YoY)**



11% Tampa - St. Petersburg
(No change YoY)



8% Gainesville
(+2% YoY)



7% Jacksonville
(-1% YoY)



6% West Palm Beach - Ft.
Pierce **(+3% YoY)**



5% Miami - Fort
Lauderdale **(+1% YoY)**

TRAVEL PARTIES OCT-DEC 2024

» The typical visitor traveled in a party size of **2.7** people (**3.0 in 2023**)



» **35%** traveled with at least one person under the age of 18 (**-7% YoY**)



VISITOR PROFILE OCT-DEC 2024

- » The typical Ocala/Marion County area visitor:
 - » Is **51** years old (**51 in 2023**)
 - » Has a household income of **\$95,000** per year (**\$77,800 in 2023**)



NEW & RETURNING VISITORS OCT-DEC 2024

- » **Over 1 in 3** were first-time visitors to the Ocala/Marion County area (+5% YoY)
- » **Nearly 2 in 10** visitors were loyalists, having visited over 10 times (-4% YoY)



VISITOR JOURNEY: TRIP EXPERIENCE



- » **79%** of visitors **drove** to the Ocala/Marion County area **(-3% YoY)**
- » **13%** of visitors flew via the **Orlando International Airport (+1% YoY)**



VISITOR BEHAVIOR OCT-DEC 2024

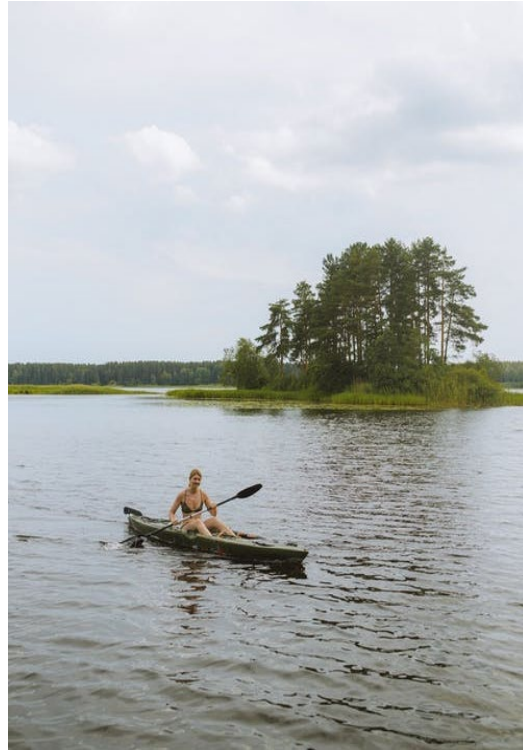
- » Typical visitors spent **3.8** nights in Ocala/Marion County area* (**3.5 in 2023**)
- » **Over 2 in 3** visitors were only visiting Ocala/Marion County during their trip (**+7% YoY**)



TOP ACCOMMODATIONS OCT-DEC 2024



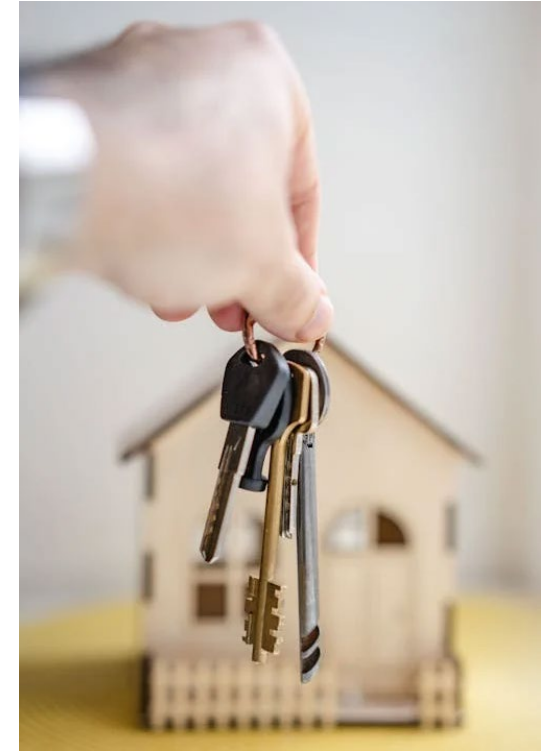
46% Hotel/motel/resort
(+9% YoY)



30% Day tripper
(-2% YoY)



12% Friends' or
relatives' home
(No change YoY)



4% Vacation rental home*
(-1% YoY)

TOP ACTIVITIES DURING VISIT OCT-DEC 2024*



65% Dining out
(+19% YoY)



41% Visit family/friends
(+11% YoY)



31% Visit Downtown
Ocala (+7% YoY)



23% Attend horse shows,
sales, events (+1% YoY)



23% Shopping
(No change YoY)



21% Visit area springs
(-2% YoY)



21% Relax & unwind
(-7% YoY)

ACTIVITIES VS. REASON FOR VISIT OCT-DEC 2024*

Reason for Visiting

23%

22%

19%

12%

9%

8%

5%

5%

5%

5%

5%

4%

3%

3%

Horse-related event

Visit friends/relatives

Visit area springs

Business/conference

Sporting tournament/event

Relax and unwind

Canoeing/kayaking/tubing

Other horse-related events

Special occasion

Special event

Nature/birdwatching

Go to restaurants

Visit Downtown Ocala

Shopping/antiquing

Visitor Activities

23%

41%

21%

12%

9%

21%

9%

10%

10%

8%

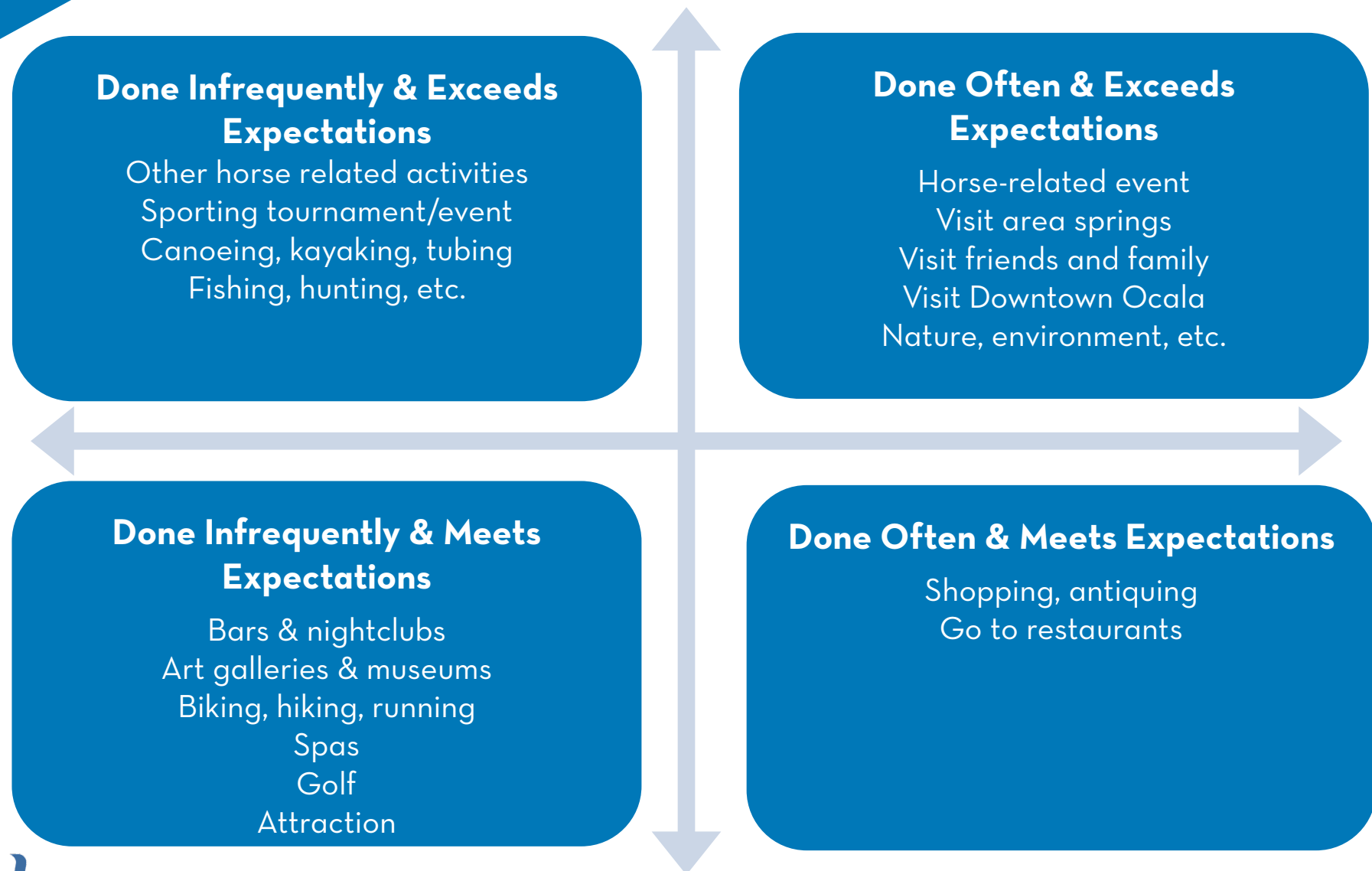
14%

65%

31%

23%

QUADRANT ANALYSIS OCT-DEC 2024



TRAVEL PARTY SPENDING OCT-DEC 2024

- » Travel parties spent **\$320** (**\$324 in 2023**) per day and **\$1,214** (**\$1,134 in 2023**) during their trip



VISITOR JOURNEY: POST-TRIP



VISITOR SATISFACTION OCT-DEC 2024

- » **99%** of visitors said their visit met or exceeded expectations with **39%** exceeded expectations (**-9% YoY**)
- » **94%** will recommend Ocala/Marion County to a friend (**No change YoY**)
- » **95%** will return to Ocala/Marion County with **50%** saying they will definitely return (**-18% YoY**)



AREA DESCRIPTIONS OCT-DEC 2024



“Ocala is Interesting; it’s a small town but there is lots to do. The traffic is light and people are friendly.”



“Ocala is Great! We really like the vibe of the area. It has pretty rural surroundings.”

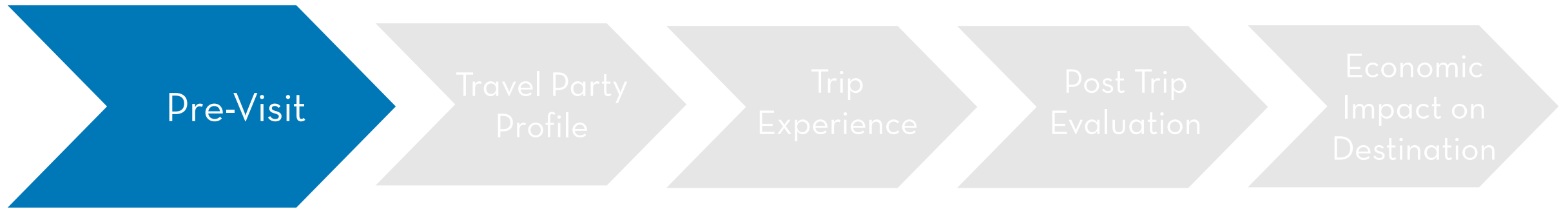


“Ocala has really nice hiking trails. And the natural springs are pretty! It was a pleasant place to stay.”

DETAILED FINDINGS

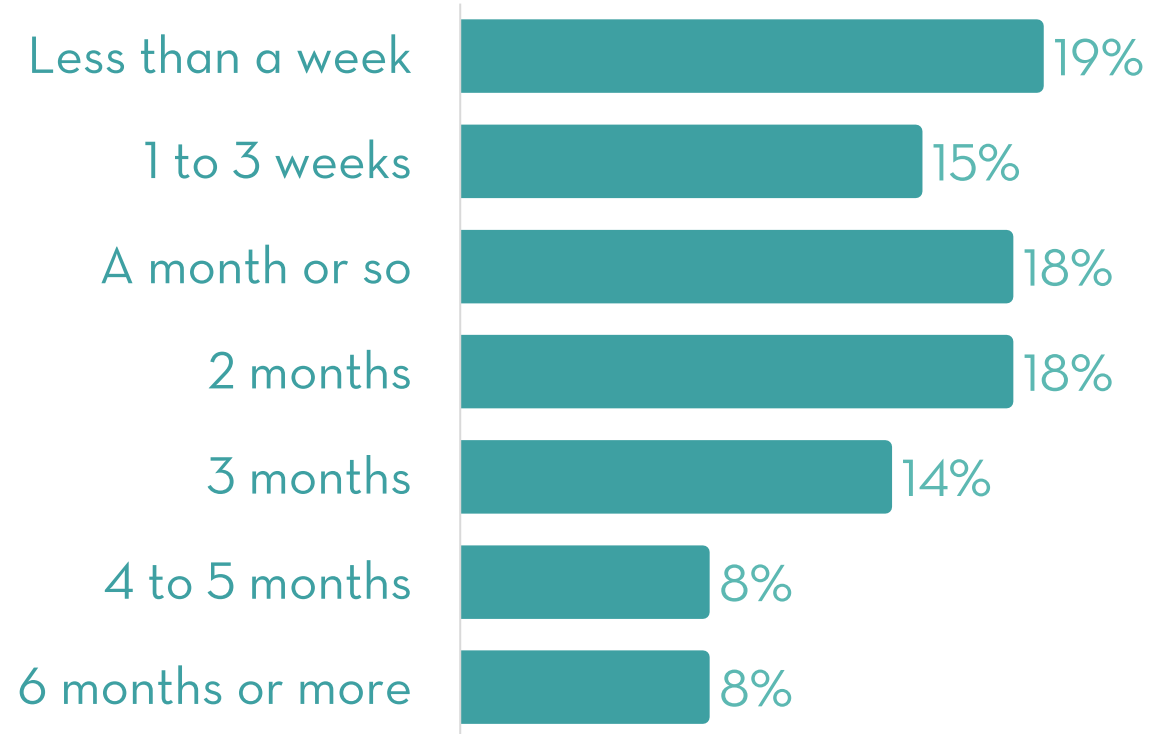


VISITOR JOURNEY: PRE-VISIT



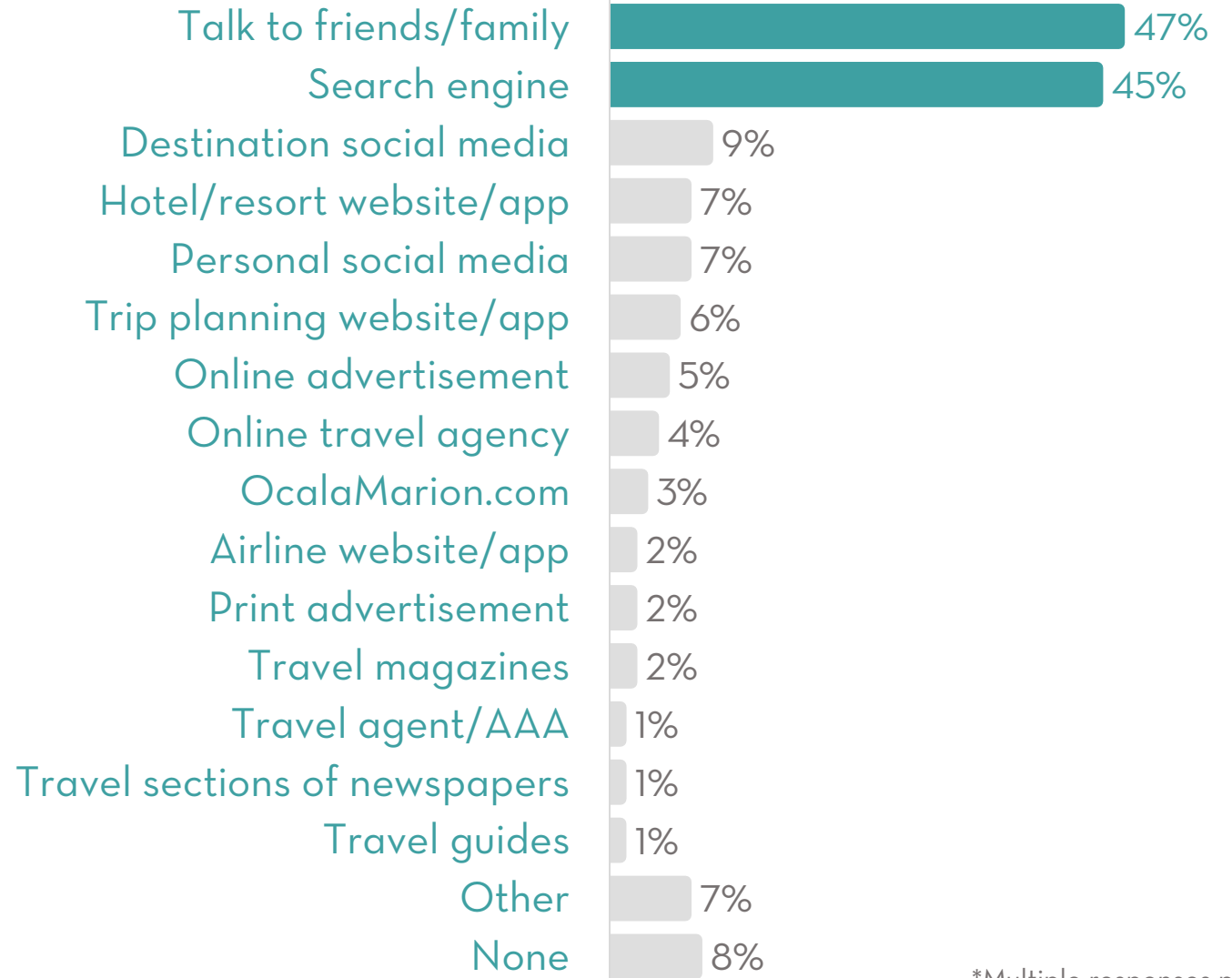
TRIP PLANNING CYCLE

- » **Over half** visitors planned their trips to the Ocala/Marion County area **a month or less in advance**
- » On the other hand, **3 in 10** visitors planned their trips **at least 3 months in advance**
- » Visitors planned their trip **on average 57 days in advance**



TRIP PLANNING SOURCES*

- » **Talking to friends** is the **top planning source** for trips to Ocala/Marion County
- » **Over 2 in 5** visitors used a **search engine (i.e., Google)** to plan their trip



REASONS FOR VISITING*

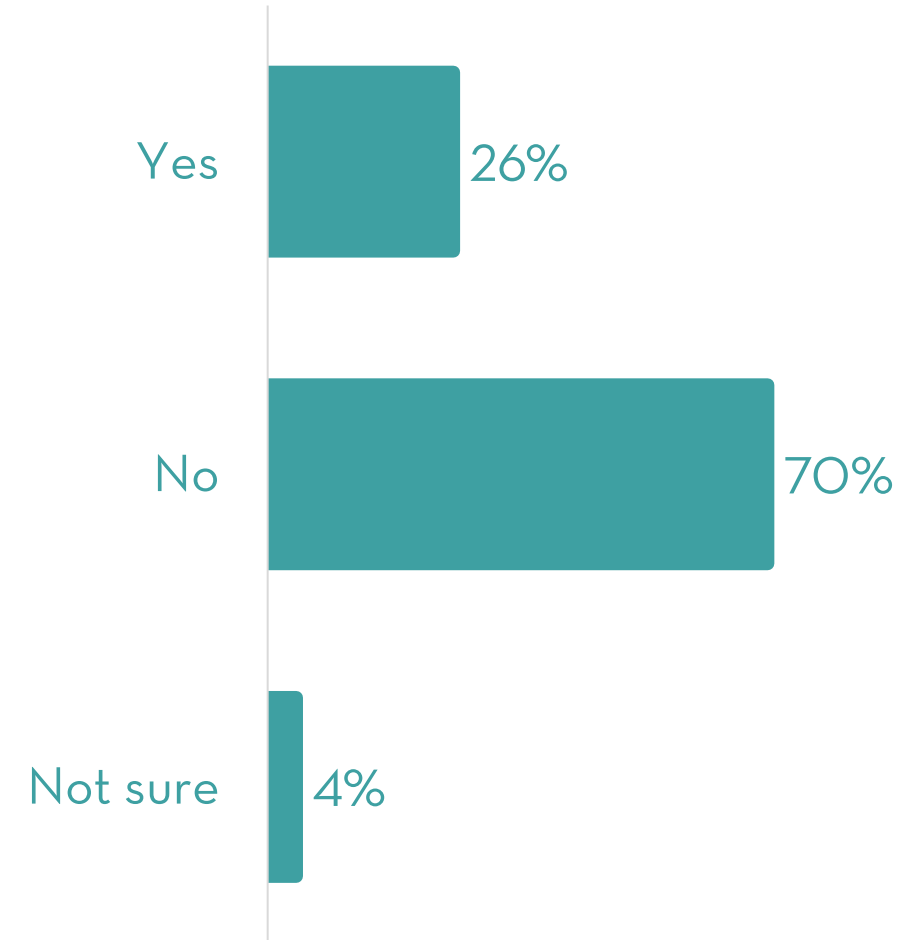
- » **Horse-related events and visiting friends and relatives** are the **top two** choices for coming, as **over 1 in 5** visitors came to Ocala/Marion County for this reason
- » **Nearly 1 in 5** visitors came to Ocala/Marion County for **area springs**



RECALL OF ADVERTISING*

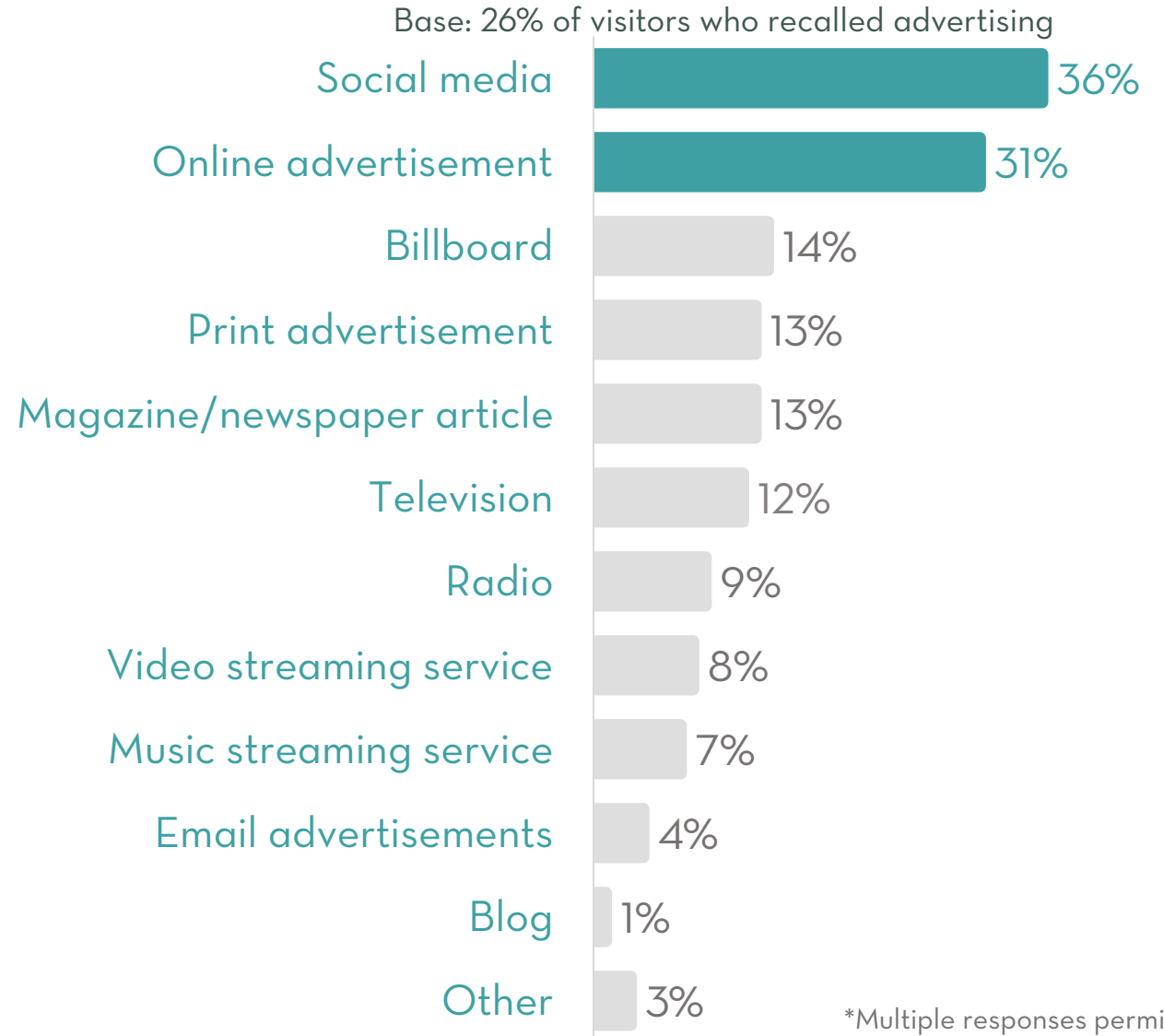
- » **Over 1 in 4** visitors recalled advertising about the Ocala/Marion County area
- » Of the visitors who recalled advertising, **Over 2 in 3 (represents 18% of all visitors)** were influenced by this information to come to the area

Recalled Advertising



ADVERTISING SOURCE*

- » **Over 1 in 3** visitors who recalled advertising for the Ocala/Marion County area recalled advertisements on **social media**
- » **Over 3 in 10** visitors recalled **online advertisements****



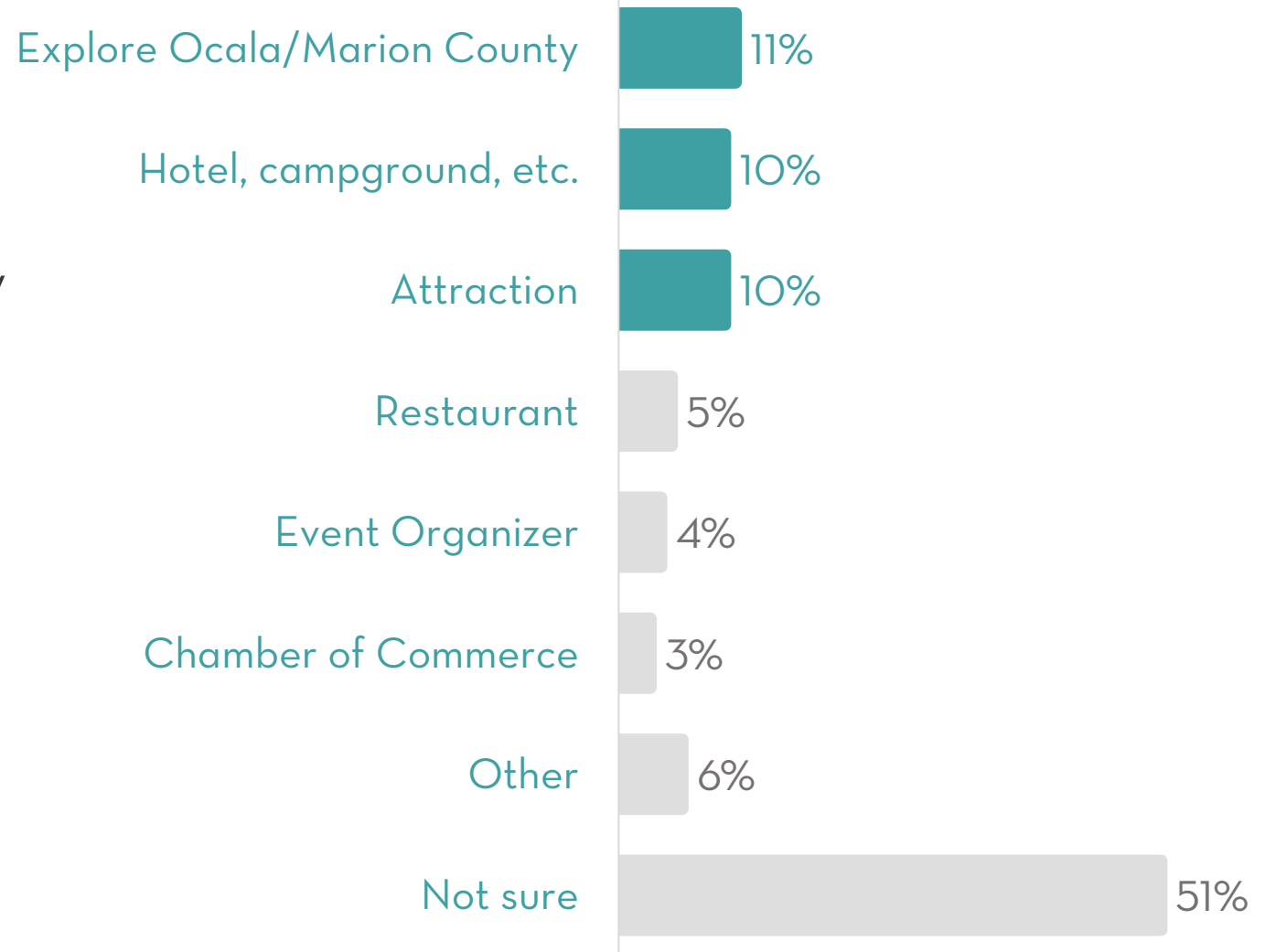
*Multiple responses permitted

** Advertising efforts mentioned on this slide include VCB's efforts and the efforts of other organizations.

SPONSORED ADVERTISEMENT*

- » **Over 1 in 10** visitors who recalled advertising for the Ocala/Marion County area recall **Explore Ocala/Marion County** as a sponsor of the advertisement
- » **1 in 10** visitors stated that they recalled advertisements sponsored by a **hotel, campground, etc. or an attraction**

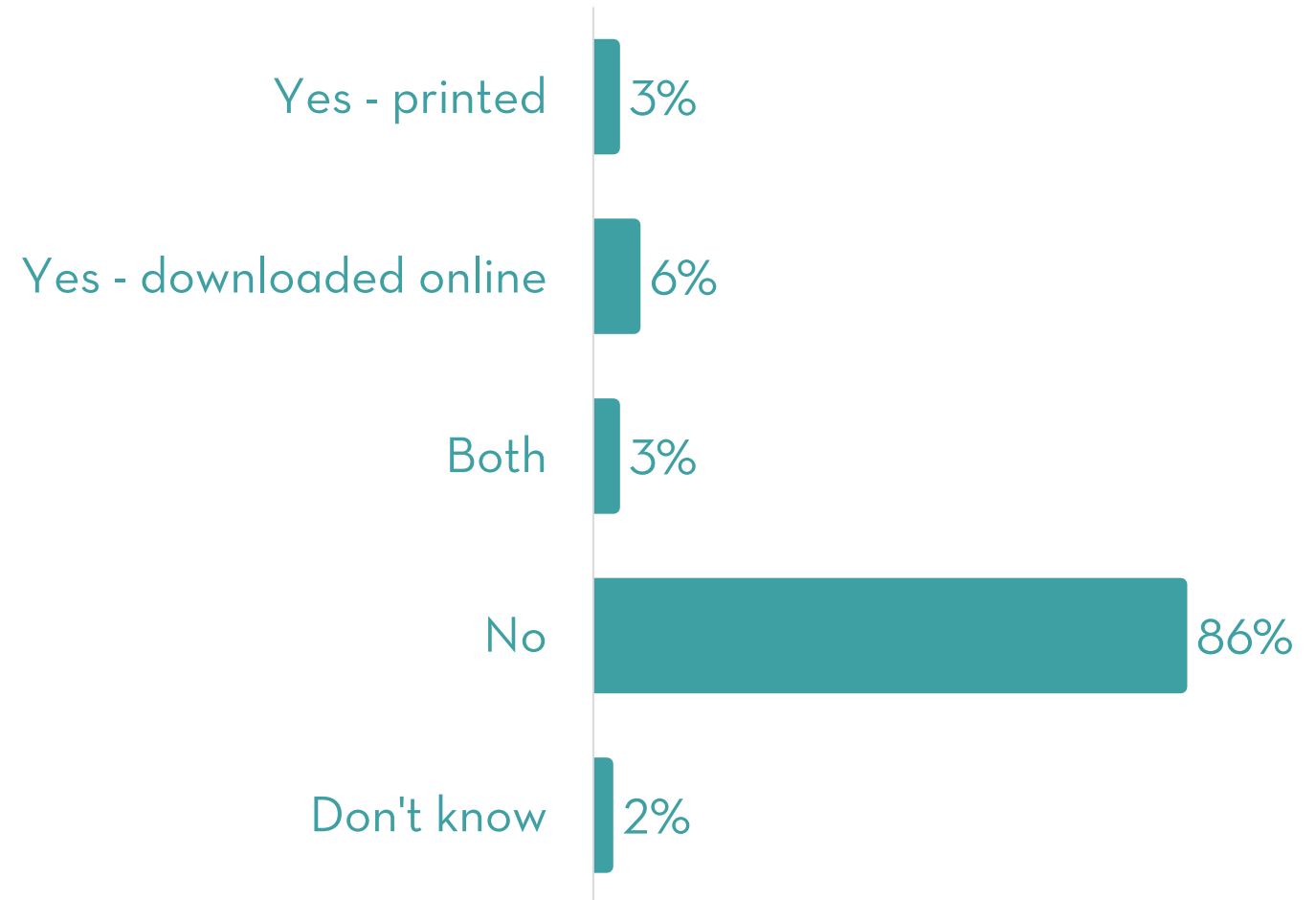
Base: 26% of visitors who recalled advertising



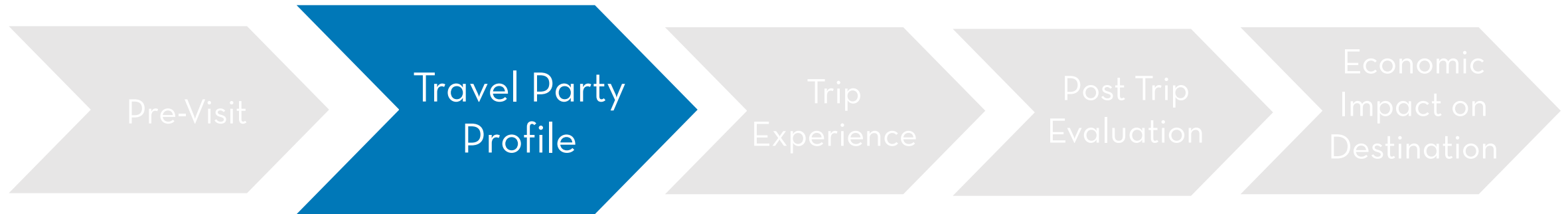
*Multiple responses permitted.

VISITOR GUIDE

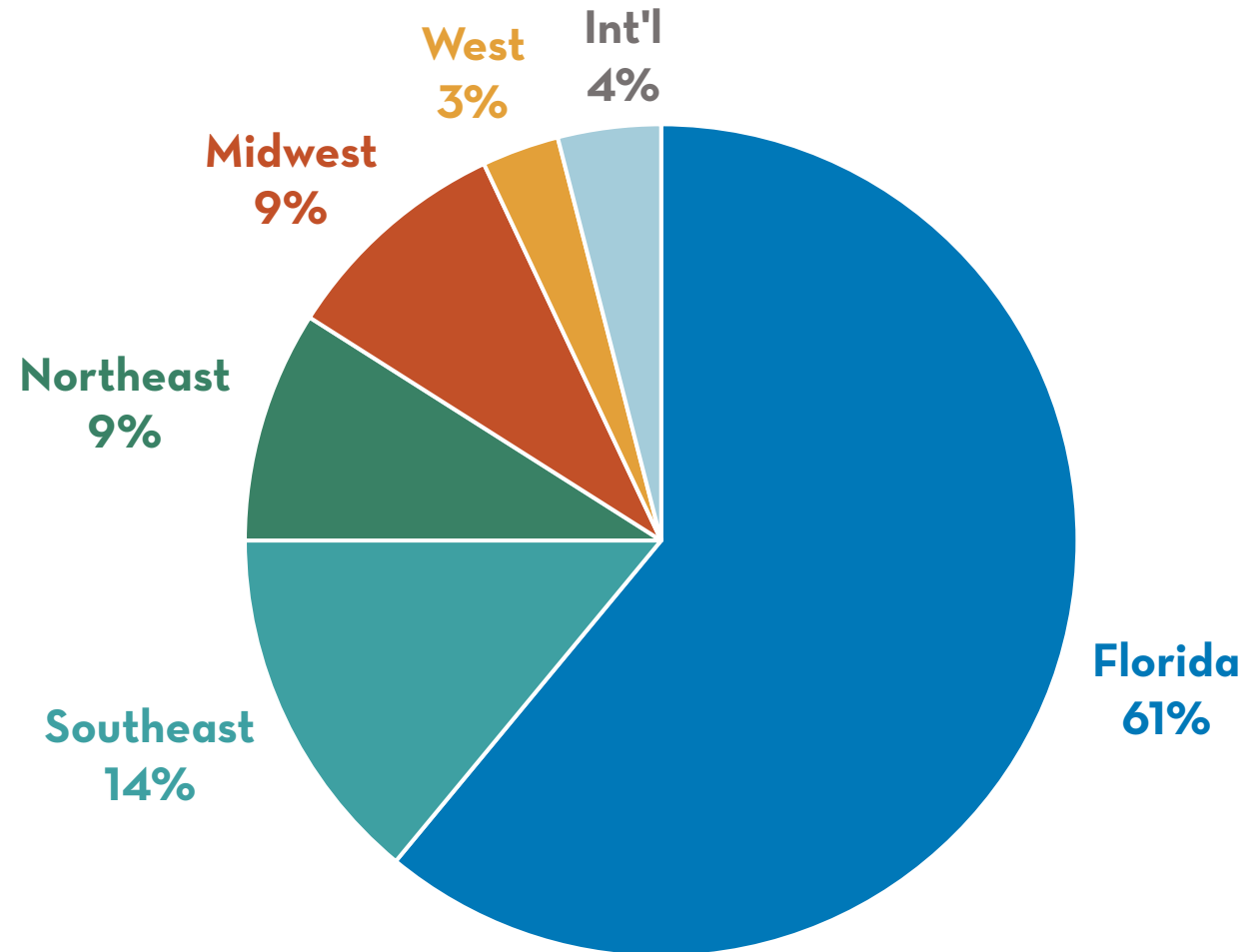
- » **12%** of visitors viewed the **print and/or online visitor guide**
- » Usefulness Rating: **8.3 out of 10***



VISITOR JOURNEY: TRAVEL PARTY PROFILE



REGION OF ORIGIN



TOP ORIGIN STATES

- » **3 in 4** visitors came to Ocala/Marion County from 6 states
- » **Florida** and **Georgia** were key origin states for the Ocala/Marion County area

State	Percent
Florida	61%
Georgia	5%
New York	3%
Ohio	2%
North Carolina	2%
Pennsylvania	2%

TOP ORIGIN MARKETS

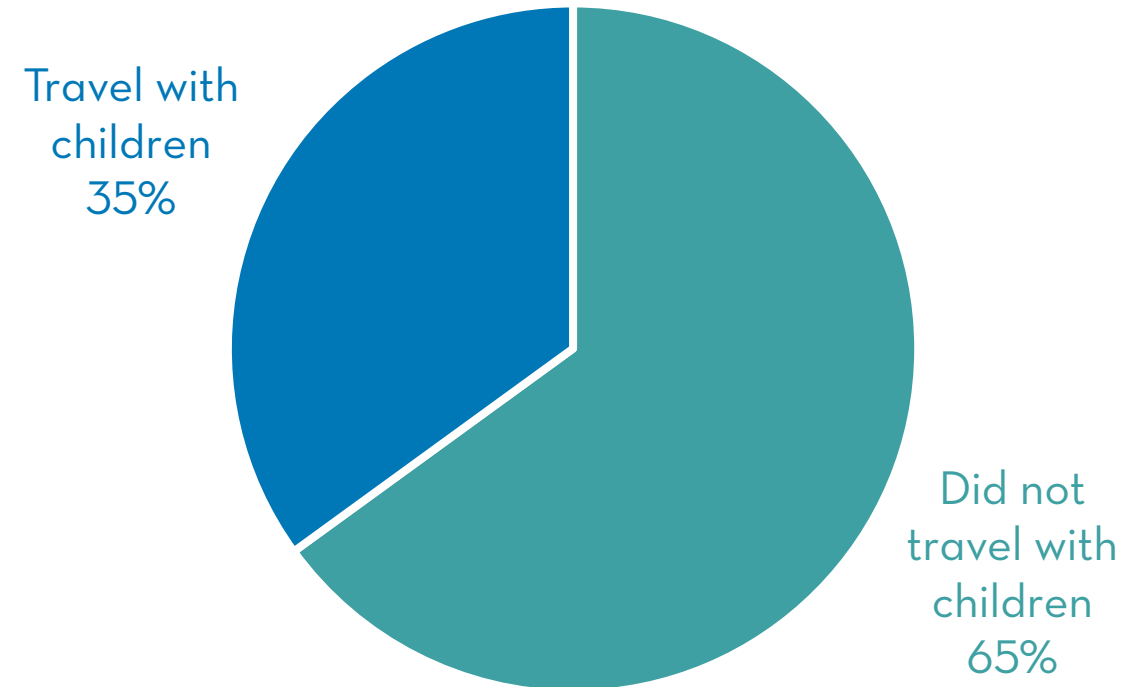
- » **Orlando-Daytona Beach-Melbourne, Tampa-St. Peterburg, and Gainesville** were key origin markets this quarter
- » **Florida markets** dominated the top markets for Ocala/Marion County

Market	Percent
Orlando-Daytona Beach-Melbourne	17%
Tampa-St. Petersburg	11%
Gainesville	8%
Jacksonville	7%
West Palm Beach-Ft. Pierce	6%
Miami-Fort Lauderdale	5%
Atlanta	3%
New York*	3%
Tallahassee-Thomasville	3%
Fort Myers-Naples	2%

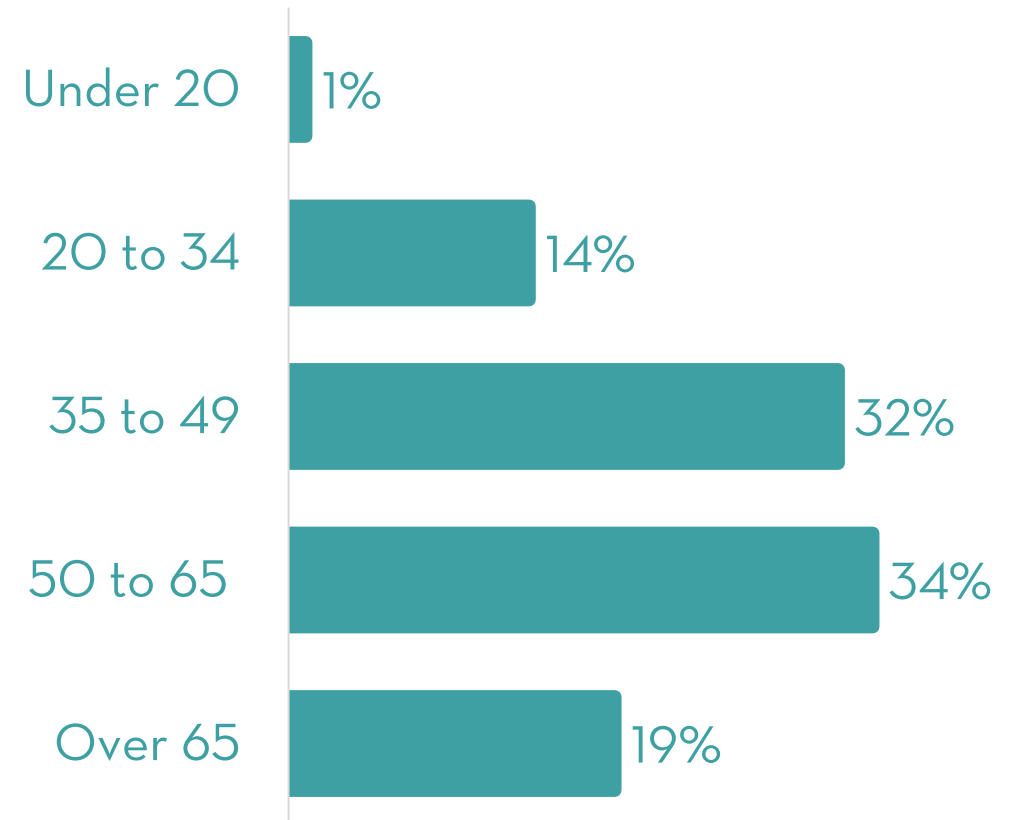
*New York City includes areas of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut

TRAVEL PARTIES

- » The typical travel party size was **2.7** people
- » **Over a third** of travel parties included children under the age of 18

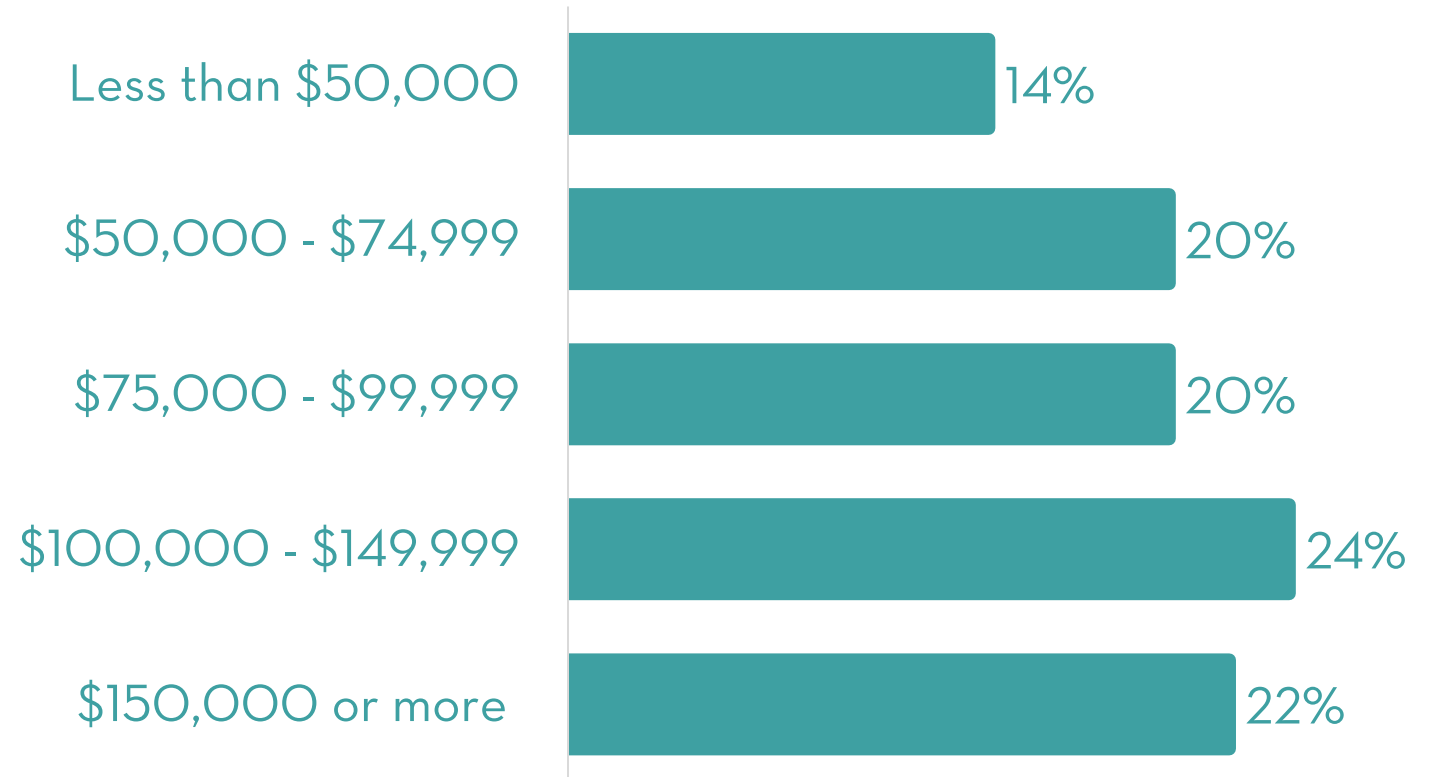


» The median age of visitors to the Ocala/Marion County area was **51**

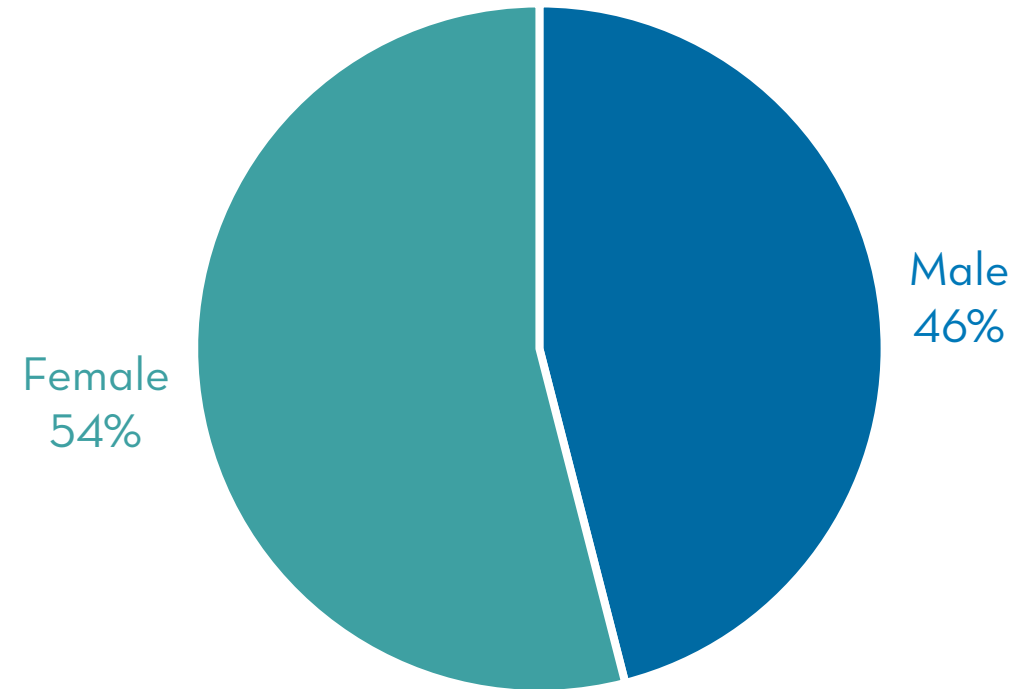


HOUSEHOLD INCOME

- » Visitors to the Ocala/Marion County area had a median household income of **\$95,000** per year
- » **Over 2 in 5** visitors had household incomes over **\$100,000**

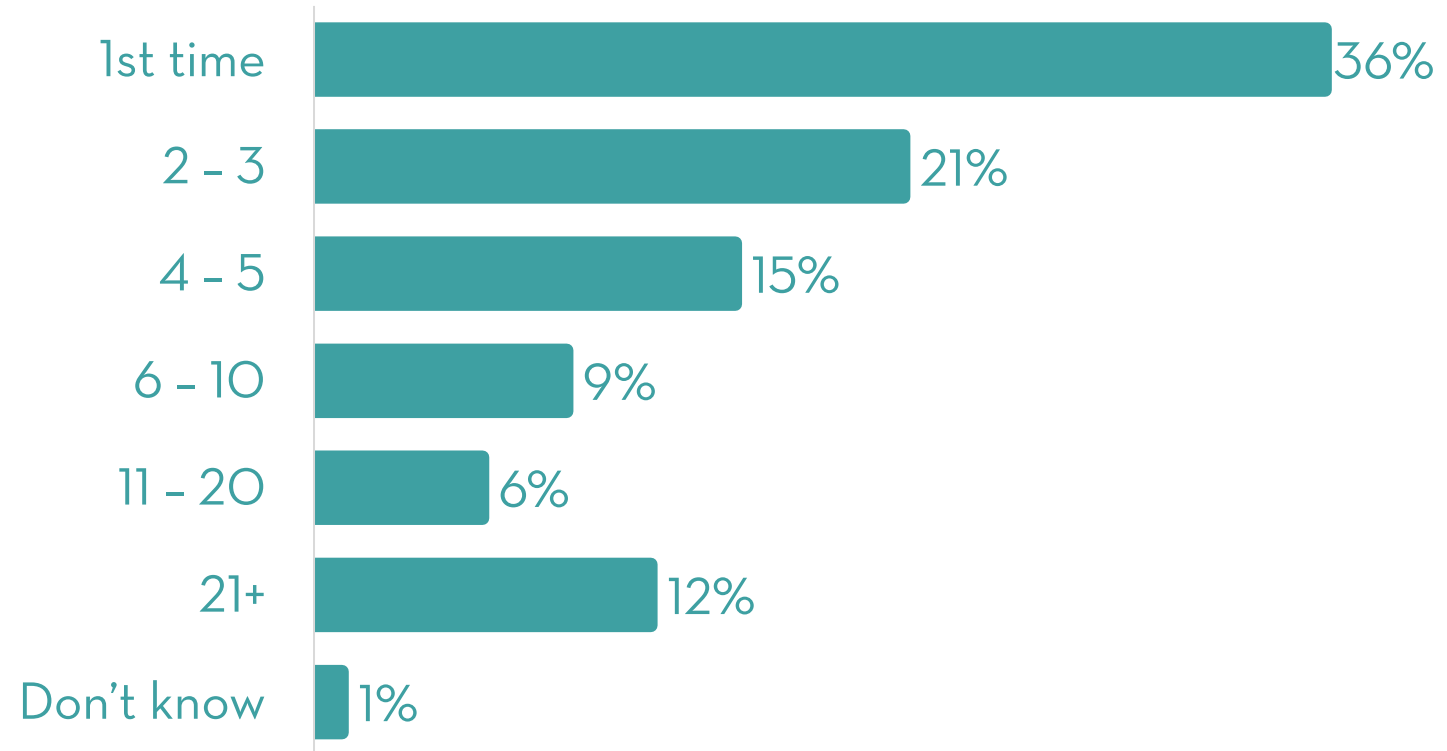


» **54%** of visitors interviewed were **female**



NEW & RETURNING VISITORS

- » **Over 1 in 3** visitors said **this was their first time visiting** the Ocala/Marion County area
- » **Nearly 2 in 10** visitors were loyalists, having visited over 10 times

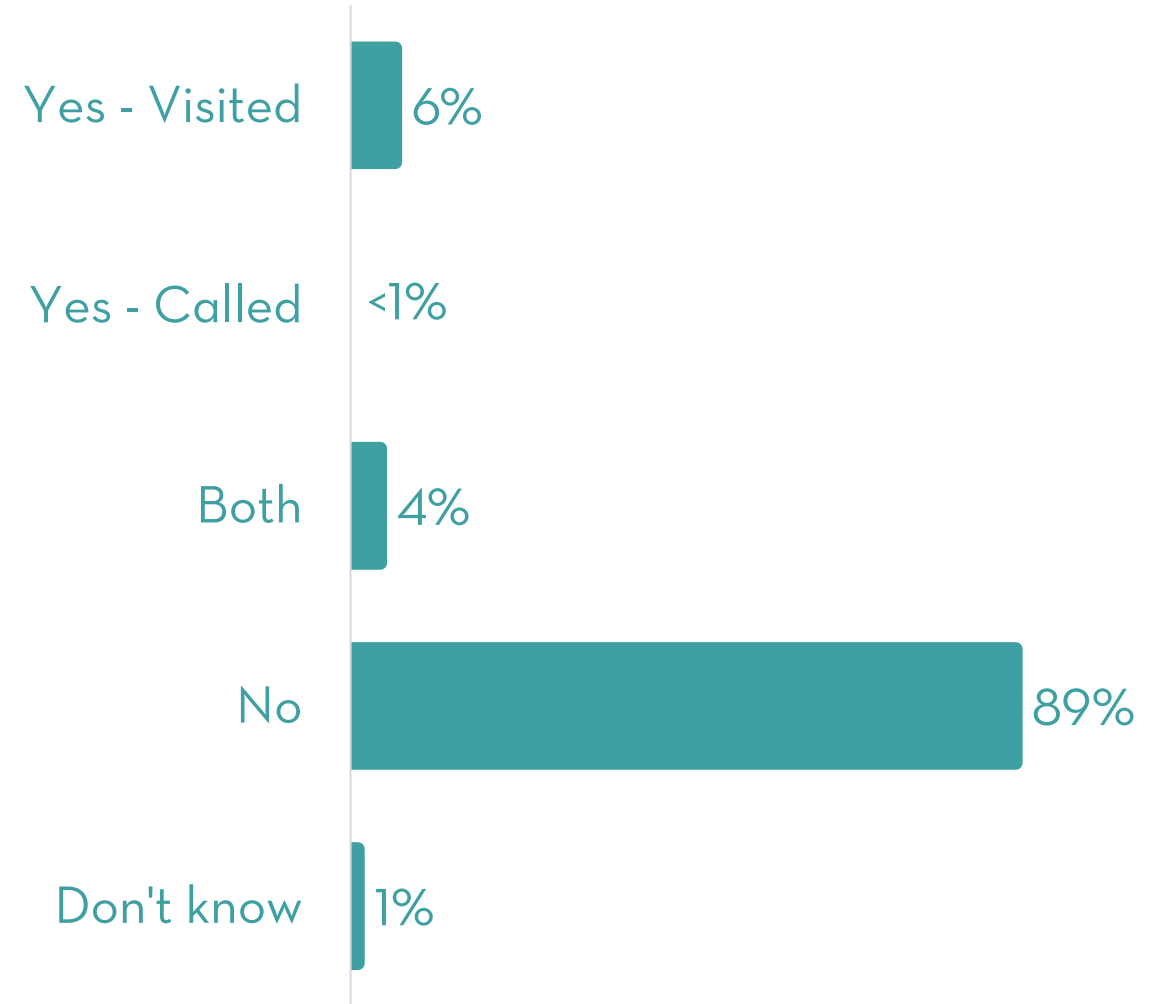


VISITOR JOURNEY: TRIP EXPERIENCE



VISITOR CENTER

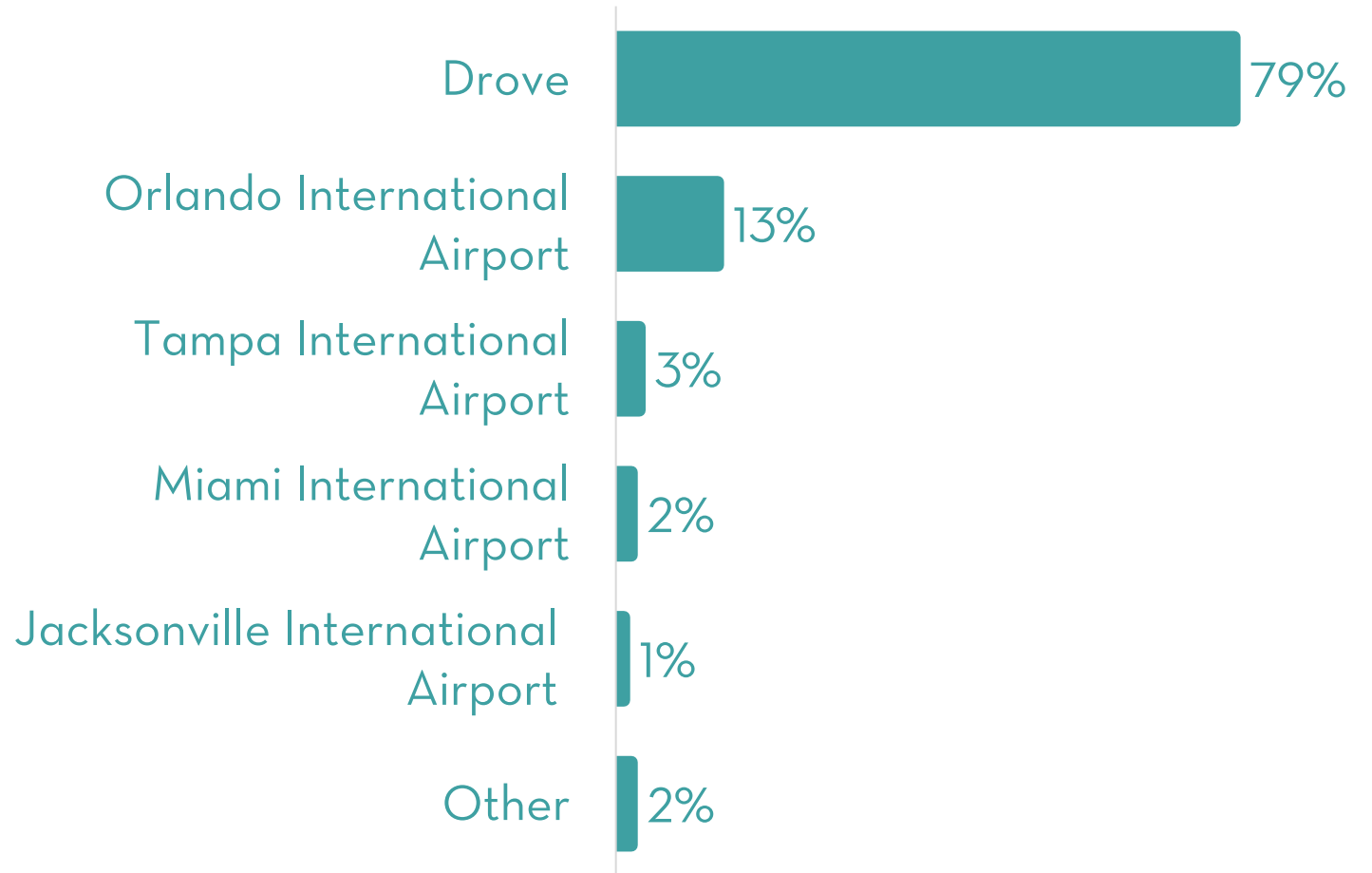
- » **10%** of visitors **stopped at the Visitor Center**
- » Usefulness Rating: **8.5 out of 10***



*On a scale from 1 to 10, where service is rated as is a 10 is Excellent and 1 is poor

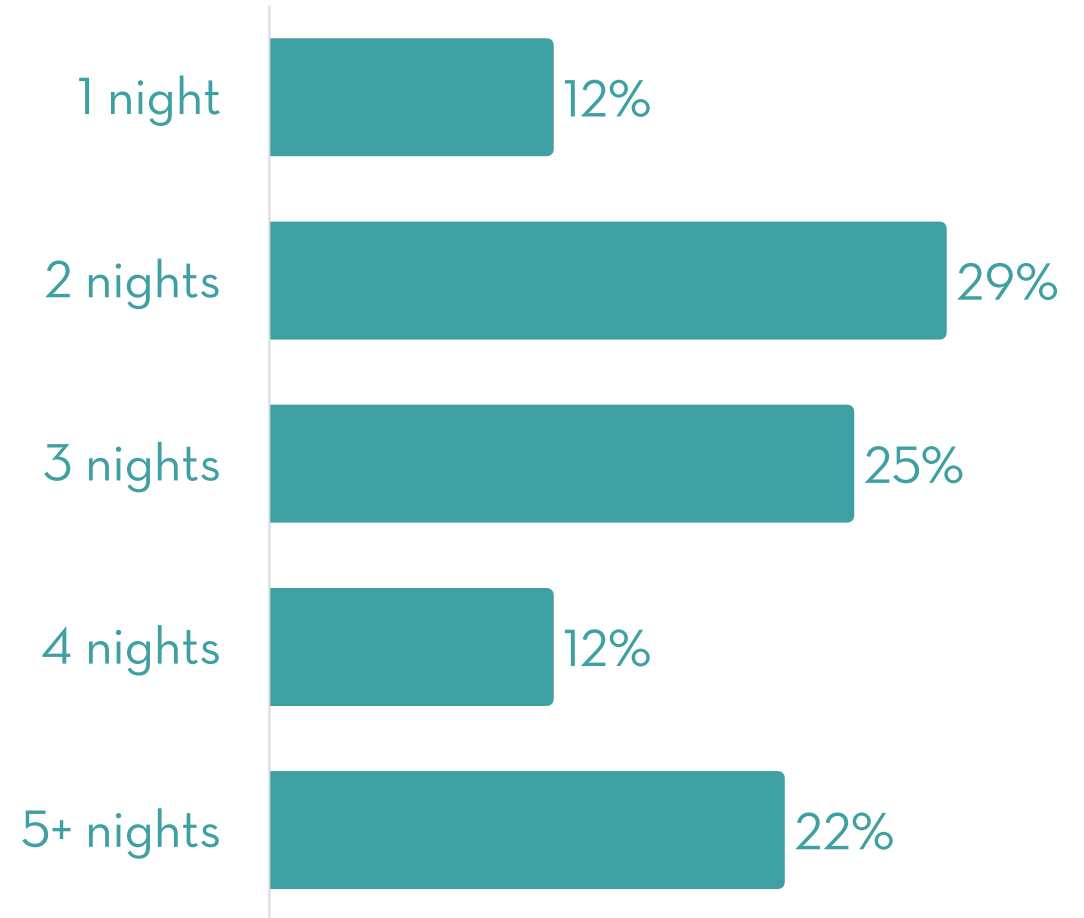
TRANSPORTATION

- » **79%** of visitors **drove** to the Ocala/Marion County area for their trip
- » **13%** of **all** visitors used the **Orlando International Airport**



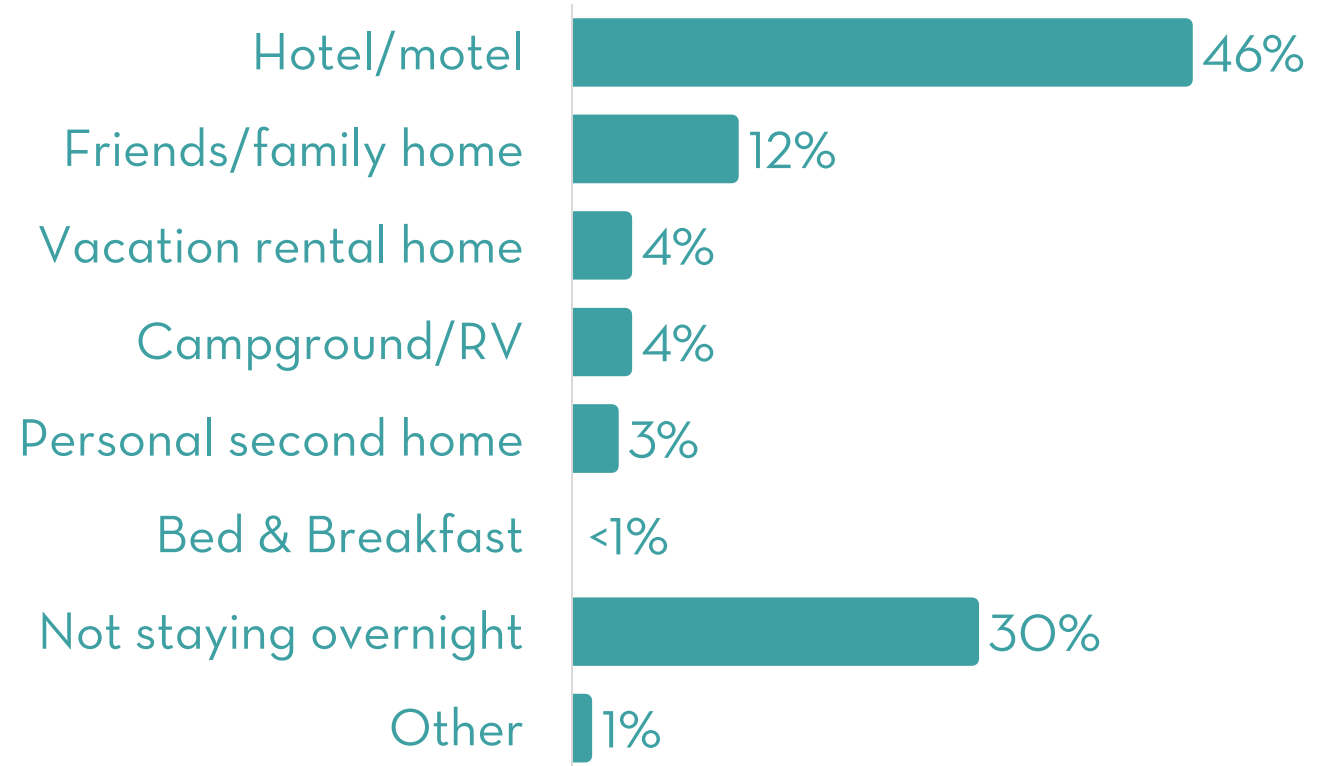
NIGHTS

- » Visitors stayed **3.8** nights in Ocala/Marion County*
- » Visitors staying in paid accommodations stayed **4.5** nights in the Ocala/Marion County area



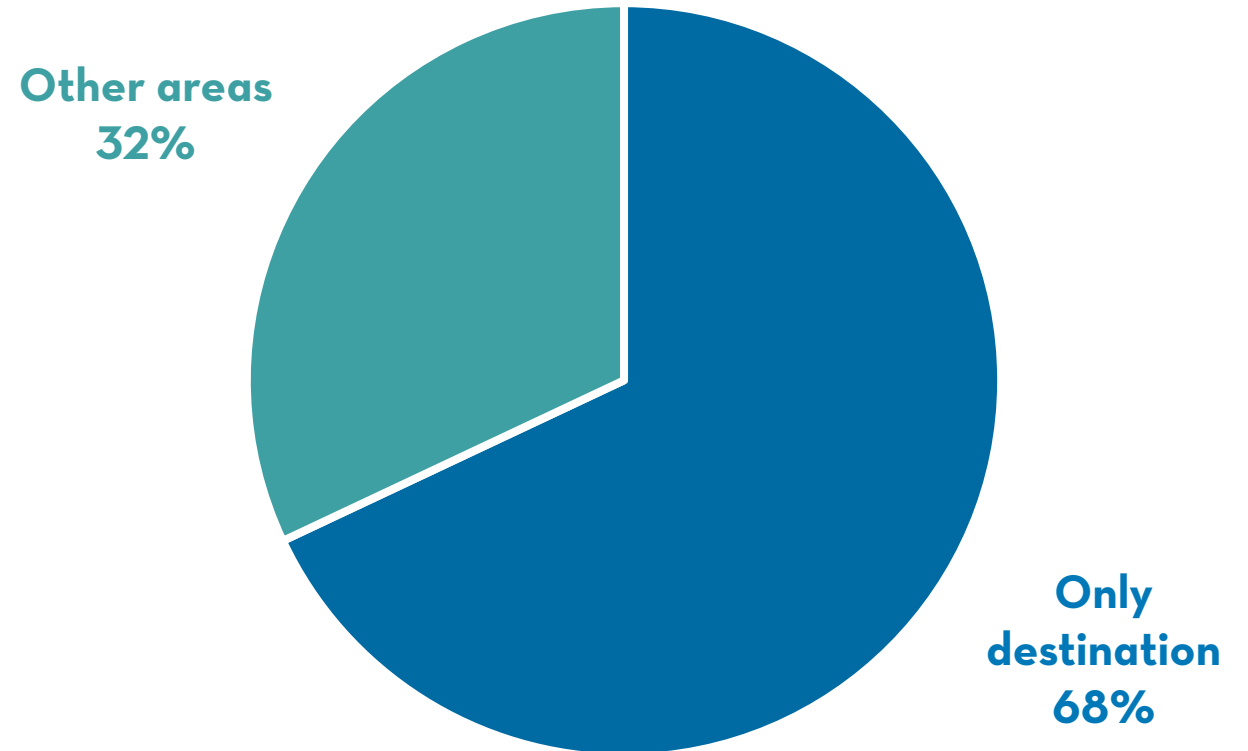
ACCOMMODATIONS

» **Over 2 in 5** visitors stayed overnight in a **hotel or motel**



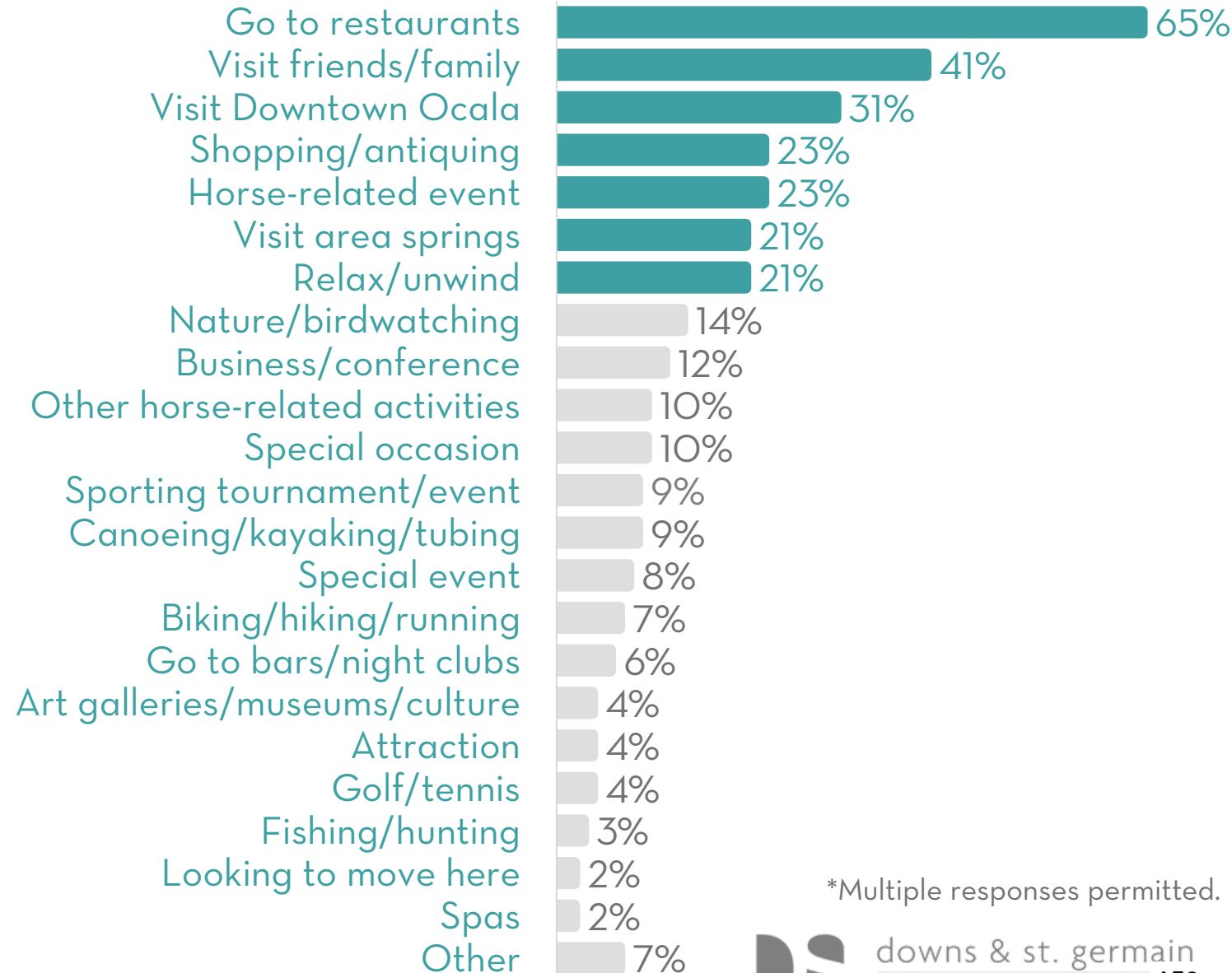
VISITING OTHER AREAS

» **Nearly 1 in 3** visitors were also visiting other destinations on their trip



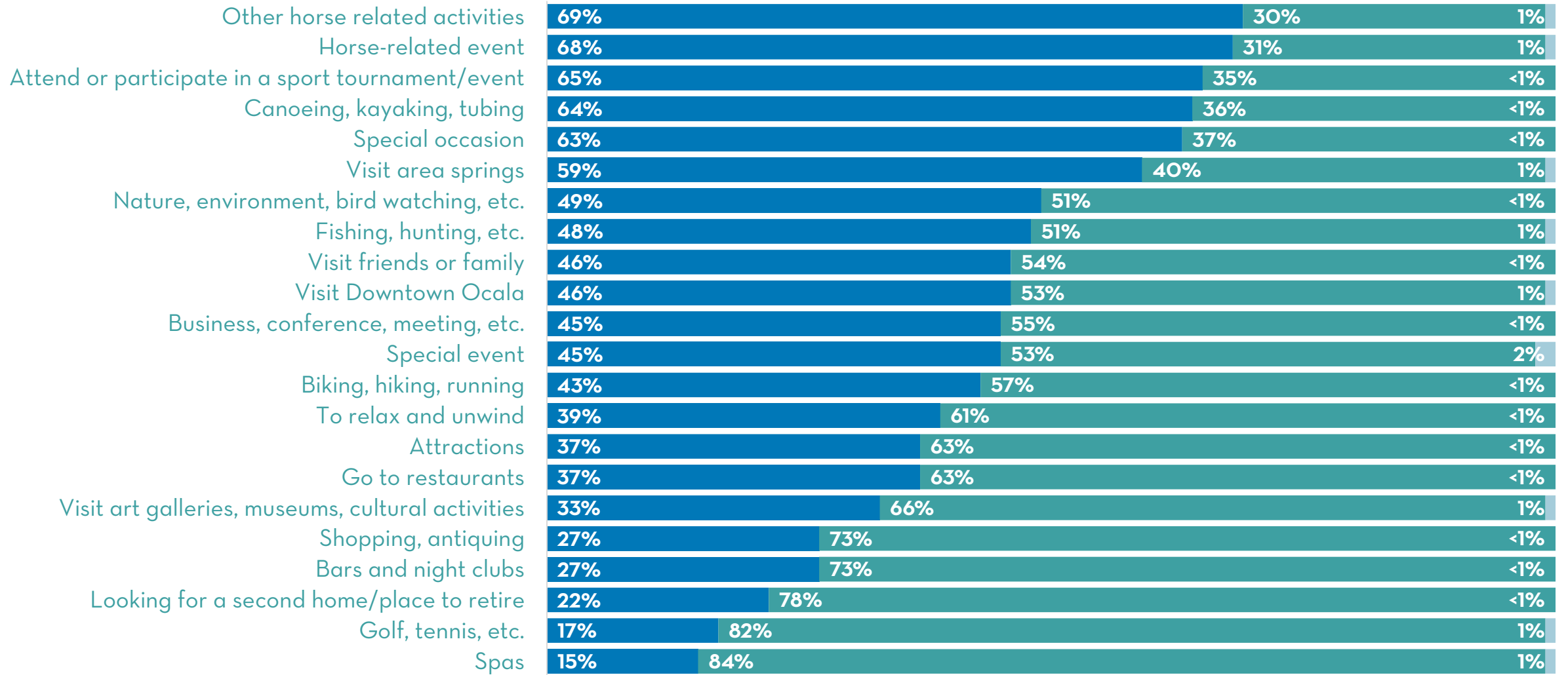
VISITOR ACTIVITIES*

- » **Going to restaurants** is the number one activity, as **nearly 2 in 3** visitors went out to eat
- » **Over 2 in 5** visitors visited **friends and family**
- » **Nearly 1 in 3** visitors enjoyed **Downtown Ocala** during their visit
- » **Over 1 in 5** visitors enjoyed the **shopping in the area** during their visit



*Multiple responses permitted.

VISITOR ACTIVITY RATINGS



ACTIVITIES VS. REASON FOR VISIT*

Reason for Visiting

23%

22%

19%

12%

9%

8%

5%

5%

5%

5%

5%

4%

3%

3%

Horse-related event

Visit friends/relatives

Visit area springs

Business/conference

Sporting tournament/event

Relax and unwind

Canoeing/kayaking/tubing

Other horse-related events

Special occasion

Special event

Nature/birdwatching

Go to restaurants

Visit Downtown Ocala

Shopping/antiquing

Visitor Activities

23%

41%

21%

12%

9%

21%

9%

10%

10%

8%

14%

65%

31%

23%

TRAVEL PARTY SPENDING

	Daily Spending: All Visitors	Total Spending: All Visitors
<i>Accommodations</i>	\$71 ¹	\$270
<i>Restaurants</i>	\$71	\$270
<i>Groceries</i>	\$20	\$75
<i>Shopping</i>	\$53	\$200
<i>Entertainment</i>	\$34	\$129
<i>Transportation</i>	\$25	\$95
<i>Other</i>	\$46	\$175
Total	\$320	\$1,214

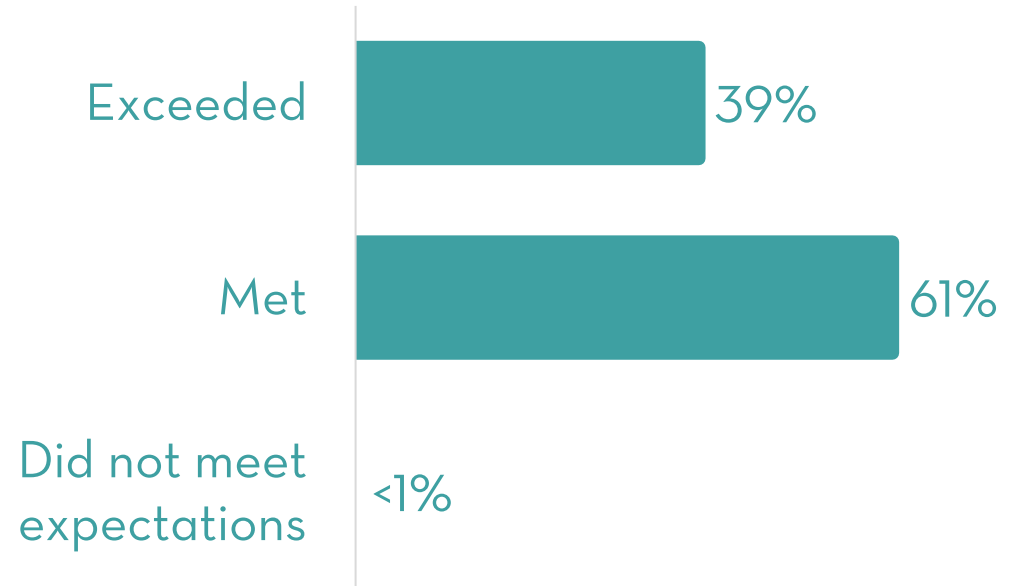
¹ Includes paid visitors, visitors staying with friends and relatives and day trippers

VISITOR JOURNEY: POST-TRIP



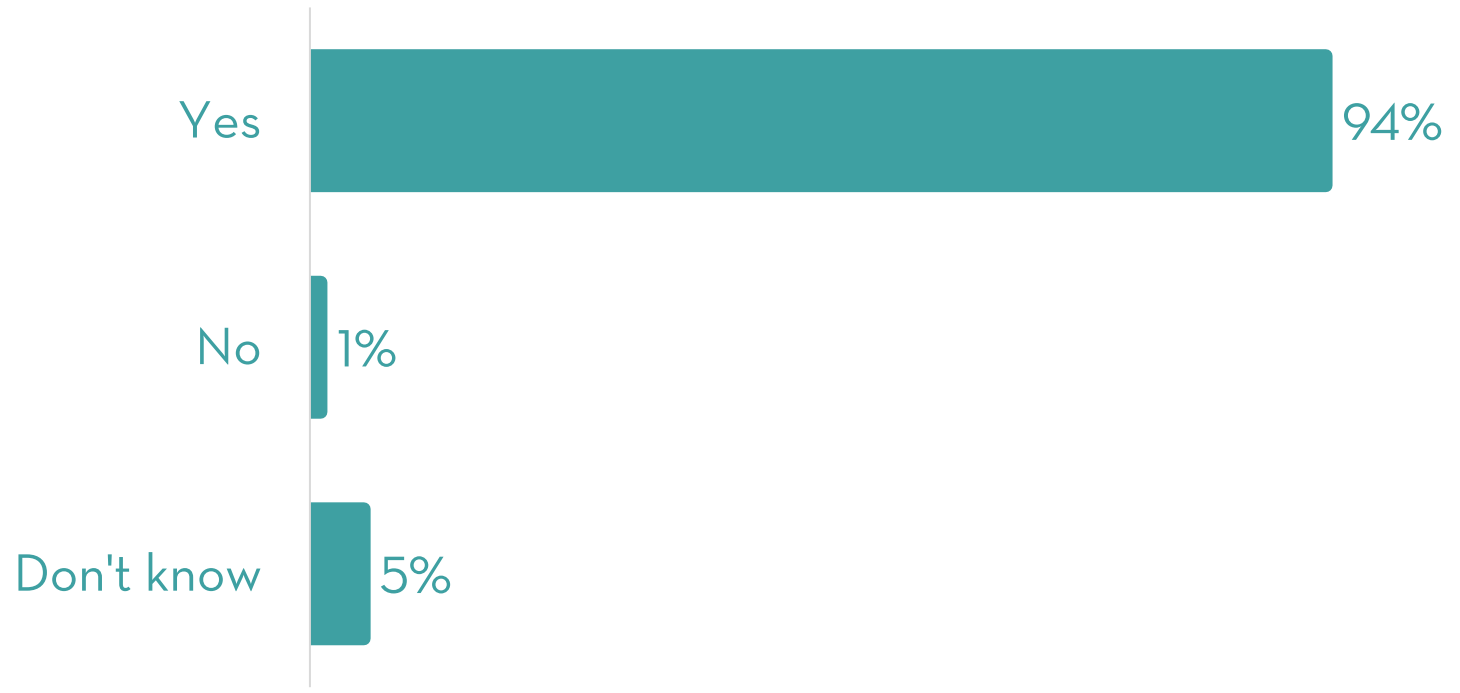
TRIP EXPERIENCE

- » **Nearly 2 in 5** visitors' expectations were **exceeded** on their visit to the Ocala/Marion County area



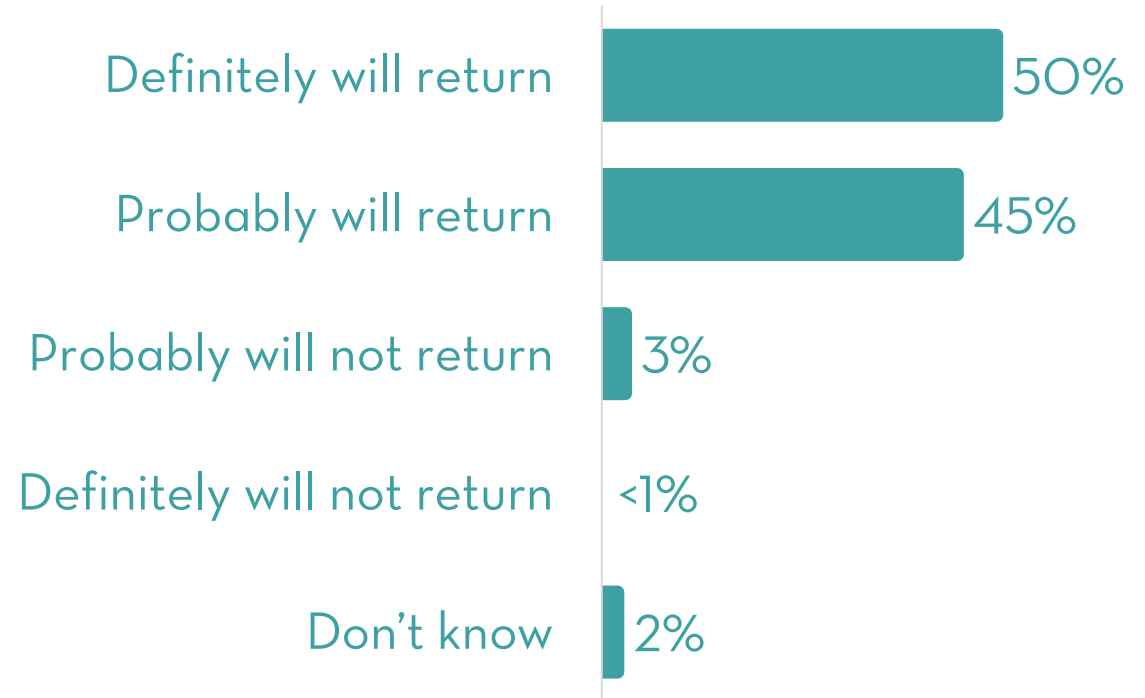
RECOMMENDATION

» **Over 9 in 10** visitors **would recommend** the Ocala/Marion County area to others



LIKELIHOOD OF RETURNING

- » Nearly **all** visitors will **return** to the Ocala/Marion County area
- » Of visitors who will likely not return, a majority state **it's too soon to tell if they would come back** and **they prefer a variety in vacation spots**



2024 to 2023 COMPARISONS



PRE-VISIT

Visitor Metrics	Oct - Dec 2023	Oct - Dec 2024
<i>Ocala/Marion County was the only destination</i>	61%	68%
<i>Viewed Visitors Guide</i>	6%	12%
<i>Stopped at Visitors Center</i>	7%	10%
<i>Planned trip a month or less in advance</i>	62%	52%
<i>Average number of days trip was planned in advance of it being taken</i>	48	57
<i>Used OcalaMarion.com to plan their trip</i>	6%	3%
<i>Recalled Ocala/Marion County promotions</i>	22%	26%

PRE-VISIT

Reason for Visiting	Oct - Dec 2023	Oct - Dec 2024
<i>Horse-related event</i>	17%	23%
<i>Visit friends/family</i>	21%	22%
<i>Visit area springs</i>	15%	19%
<i>Business meeting/conference</i>	5%	12%
<i>Sporting tournament/event</i>	8%	9%
<i>Relax/unwind</i>	15%	8%
<i>Canoeing/kayaking/tubing</i>	4%	5%
<i>Nature/environment</i>	10%	5%
<i>Special event</i>	7%	5%
<i>Other horse-related activities</i>	5%	5%
<i>Special occasion</i>	3%	5%

Reason for Visiting	Oct - Dec 2023	Oct - Dec 2024
<i>Go to restaurants</i>	6%	4%
<i>Visit Downtown Ocala</i>	7%	3%
<i>Shopping</i>	6%	3%
<i>Looking for a second home/place to retire</i>	3%	2%
<i>Biking/hiking/running</i>	3%	2%
<i>Attraction</i>	4%	2%
<i>Art galleries/museums/culture</i>	2%	1%
<i>Go to bars/nightclubs</i>	1%	1%
<i>Fishing/hunting</i>	1%	1%
<i>Golf/tennis</i>	1%	1%
<i>Spas</i>	1%	1%
<i>Other</i>	4%	7%

TRAVEL PARTY PROFILE

Top Origin Markets	Oct - Dec 2023	Oct - Dec 2024
<i>Orlando - Daytona Beach - Melbourne</i>	17%	17%
<i>Tampa - St. Petersburg</i>	11%	11%
<i>Gainesville</i>	6%	8%
<i>Jacksonville</i>	8%	7%
<i>West Palm Beach-Ft. Pierce</i>	3%	6%
<i>Miami - Ft. Lauderdale</i>	4%	5%
<i>Atlanta</i>	3%	3%
<i>New York City*</i>	3%	3%
<i>Tallahassee-Thomasville</i>	2%	3%

Top Origin States	Oct - Dec 2023	Oct - Dec 2024
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<i>Florida</i>	56%	61%
<i>Georgia</i>	4%	5%
<i>New York</i>	3%	3%
<i>Ohio</i>	2%	2%
<i>North Carolina</i>	2%	2%
<i>Pennsylvania</i>	2%	2%

Top Origin Regions	Oct - Dec 2023	Oct - Dec 2024
--------------------	----------------	----------------

<i>Southeast (includes Florida)</i>	71%	75%
<i>Northeast</i>	11%	9%
<i>Midwest</i>	10%	9%
<i>West</i>	4%	3%
<i>International</i>	4%	4%

*New York City includes areas of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut.

TRIP EXPERIENCE

Visitor Metrics	Oct - Dec 2023	Oct - Dec 2024
<i>Travel party</i>	3.0	2.7
<i>Children <18</i>	42%	35%
<i>Median age</i>	51	51
<i>Estimated median household income</i>	\$77,800	\$95,000
<i>1st time visitor</i>	31%	36%
<i>10+ visits to Ocala/Marion County</i>	22%	18%

Visitor Metrics	Oct - Dec 2023	Oct - Dec 2024
<i>Drove</i>	82%	79%
<i>Nights spent</i>	3.5	3.8
<i>Direct expenditures (entire trip)</i>	\$1,134	\$1,214

TRIP EXPERIENCE

Visitor Activities	Oct - Dec 2023	Oct - Dec 2024
<i>Go to restaurants</i>	46%	65%
<i>Visit friends or family</i>	30%	41%
<i>Visit Downtown Ocala</i>	24%	31%
<i>Horse-related event</i>	22%	23%
<i>Shopping</i>	23%	23%
<i>Visit area springs</i>	23%	21%
<i>Relax and unwind</i>	28%	21%
<i>Nature/environment</i>	20%	14%
<i>Business meeting/conference</i>	6%	12%
<i>Other horse-related activities</i>	7%	10%
<i>Special occasion</i>	5%	10%
<i>Sporting tournament/event</i>	8%	9%

Visitor Activities	Oct - Dec 2023	Oct - Dec 2024
<i>Canoeing/kayaking/tubing</i>	9%	9%
<i>Special event</i>	8%	8%
<i>Biking/hiking/running</i>	8%	7%
<i>Go to bar/night clubs</i>	8%	6%
<i>Art galleries/museums/cultural events</i>	3%	4%
<i>Attraction</i>	6%	4%
<i>Golf/tennis</i>	7%	4%
<i>Fishing/hunting</i>	4%	3%
<i>Looking for a second home/place to retire</i>	4%	2%
<i>Spas</i>	3%	2%
<i>Other</i>	8%	7%

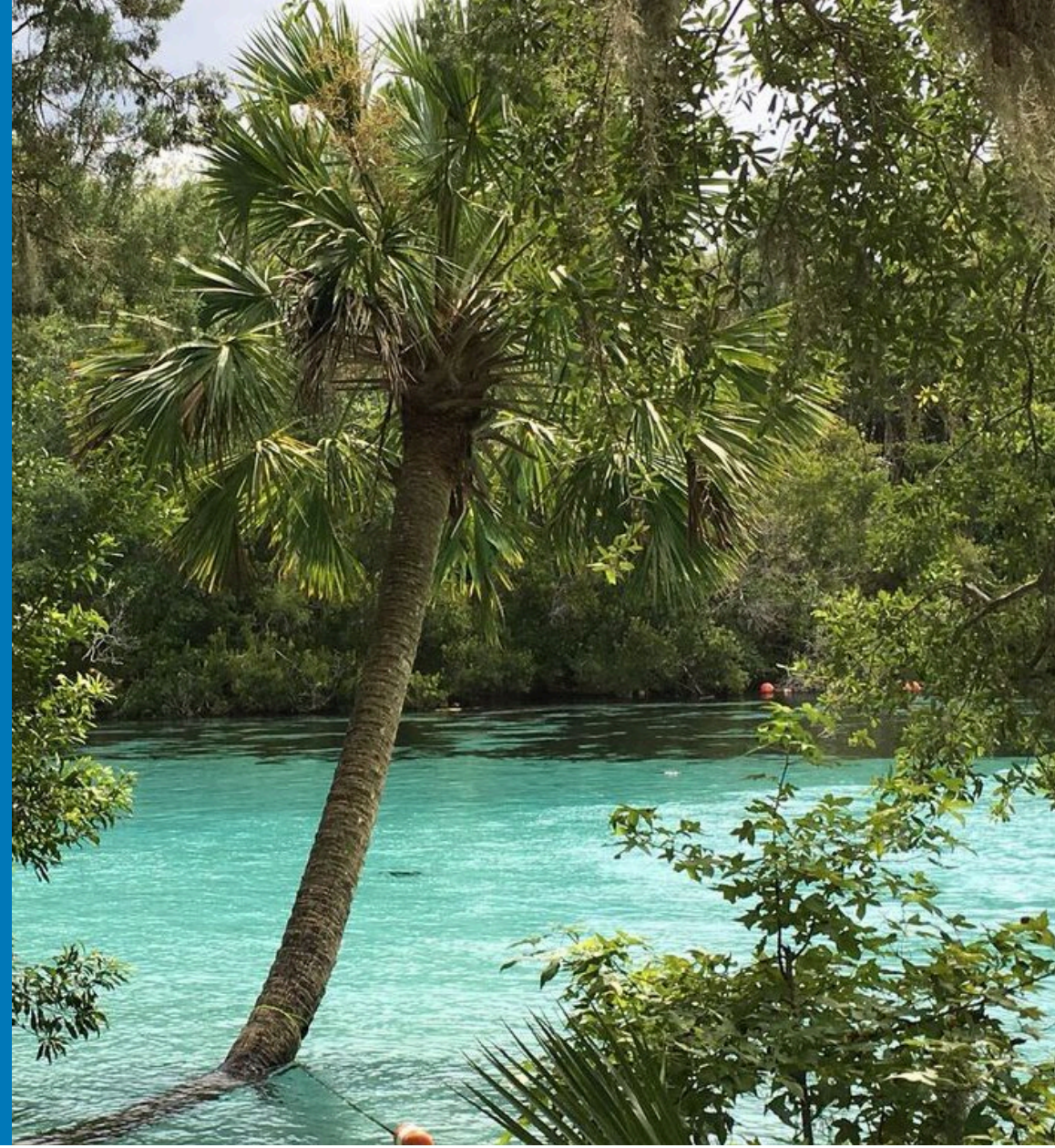
POST TRIP EVALUATION

Satisfaction Metrics	Oct - Dec 2023	Oct-Dec 2024
<i>Visit Met + Exceeded expectations</i>	99%	99%
<i>Will return to Ocala/Marion County</i>	96%	95%
<i>Will recommend Ocala/Marion County</i>	94%	94%

Ocala/MARION COUNTY VCB

Economic Impact Study &
Visitor Tracking Report
Oct – Dec 2024

Downs & St. Germain Research
850-906-3111 | www.dsg-research.com
contact@dsg-research.com





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R E S E A R C H

The 2025 Travel Trends

General Travel Trends

General

- Global gross bookings will grow to \$1.61 trillion in 2024 before climbing to \$1.72 trillion in 2025, with annual growth rates between 6-9% through 2026. (Phocuswright)
 - Insight: This growth pattern is getting back to a more normal growth, leaving behind the higher variance changes of 2020-2023
- 32% of travelers have already booked a trip for 2025. (Hilton)
- 4 in 5 U.S. adults plan to take a vacation in the next 12 months, a 7% increase from last year (MMGY)
- Travel media newsletters and other subscription-based email content reach people who have raised their hand to receive targeted messages. In a world of search result overload and social media oversaturation, email has re-emerged as the most effective way to simultaneously build brand awareness and track engagement back to bookings. (Skift & Curacity)
- 56% of travelers intend to be thriftier on their trips and 68% plan on tightening budget planning in order to maximize their experiences (Booking.com)
- Consumers spending more on experiences over things continues to increase (US Dept. of Commerce)

Trip Planning

- More than half (51%) of respondents said that they had been influenced “somewhat” or “a great deal” by influencers, compared to 41% by celebrities. (MMGY)
- Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube most used social media for trip planning (Phocuswright)
 - Facebook and Instagram, by a significant margin, most used social media for sharing their trip (Phocuswright)
- Email has seen significant increase in utilization
 - 94% increase from 2022 to 2024 in preferring email to learn about new destinations (Future Partners)
- For trip planning, the most relied-upon resources remain recommendations from friends and family (58%), general search (51%), and online travel agencies (OTAs) (41%). (Phocuswright)

Air Travel

- Airline loyalty membership grew by 8% in the last year (MMGY)
- Predicted stabilization in flight prices in 2025
 - There are more routes available, there are more planes flying and there’s more competition, which drives down prices. (TravelAge West)
- 75% of first-class seats are being sold (versus 14% in 2011) instead offered as upgrades (SmartFlyer)

Hotels

- Hotel loyalty program members grew 6% in the last year (MMGY)



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- Currently, Online Travel Agencies (OTAs) responsible for the largest amount of hotel bookings, but direct bookings expected to overtake OTAs by 2030 (Skift)
- One-third of Gen Zers say their perception of all-inclusives has changed for the better and 42% say that an all-inclusive resort would be their preferred hotel type. (Expedia)
- Searches on Hotels.com using the 'all-inclusive' filter jumped 60% year-over-year. (Hotels.com)
- Boutique hotels market value, about \$100B but estimated to increase 80% by 2032 (DataIntel)
- 63% want to use a digital room key. (Hilton)
- "Streaming TV" is one of the top 10 filters that converts searches to stays. (Hilton)

Family Travel

- Rise in multigenerational SKI (Spending Kids' Inheritance) trip
 - 49% of baby boomer respondents would rather spend money on a trip of a lifetime in 2025 than leave an inheritance to their children. (Booking.com)
- 70% of global travelers who travel with their children pick the vacation destination based on kids' needs and interests. (Hilton)
- 73% of global travelers often seek out authentic, local experiences when traveling with children. (Hilton)
- 65% of parents often prioritize learning about their culture or family background through their travels with their kids. (Hilton)
- 63% of parents always or often let their kids pick where they dine while traveling. (Hilton)
- 56% of families will choose hotels based on their kids' club or youth programming (Hilton)

Business/Meetings Travel

- 30% of travelers surveyed said they vacation with friends they know professionally. (Hilton)
- Despite a 30% decrease in business trips, revenues have only fallen by 10%, driven by extended stays. (JLL)
- Blended travel (business and leisure) estimated to hit \$370B by 2027 (Skift)
 - More likely for travelers aged 25-44

International Travel

- International visitor spending projected to grow by 16% (world & Travel & Tourism Council)

Travel Niches

Event Travel

- One of Skift's Megatrends that does not seem to be slowing down in 2025
- Sports Tourism is one of the fastest-growing sectors in tourism
 - 67% of Millennial and Gen Z travelers were interested in travel for sport events worldwide. (Skift)
- 69% increase in mentions of sports tourism worldwide (GSIQ)
- 47% of travel is planned around a central event (Vacasa)
- Nearly 1 in 4 global travelers plans to prioritize live entertainment in their 2025 leisure budgets. (Hilton)



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Culinary Travel

- 50% of travelers book restaurants before flights. (Recommend.com)
- Nearly 1 in 5 will travel specifically to seek out new restaurants or culinary experiences. (Hilton)
- 60% of luxury travelers prioritize staying at hotels with great restaurants. (Hilton)

Wellness Travel

- About 22% of travelers surveyed plan a getaway soon for self-discovery or mental health rather than for family outings, business, or other more traditional purposes. Many people share visuals of these trips on social media, and refer to the vacations as “soft travel,” Hilton’s report said. (Hilton)
- Americans spent \$425B on wellness-related travel in 2024 (Skift)
- Wellness tourism is experiencing remarkable growth, with an annual increase of 16.6 percent (Global Wellness Institute)
- 62% of American travelers say they feel more mindful about their overall health and wellbeing than ever before. (Skyscanner)

Adventure Travel

- Note – this has been a continued trend from 2023 and 2024. So not a new trend.
- Americans have a growing interest in exploring untouched landscapes and natural wonders. This shift is particularly pronounced among younger generations, especially teens, who are increasingly drawn to outdoor adventure programs. (IGES)
- 7 in 10 travelers like being active when they travel (Hilton)

Pet-Friendly Travel

- 65 percent of pet parents who believe traveling with pets enhances their trip. (Recommend.com)
- High-end airlines and hotels are increasingly catering to four-legged companions, offering pet-friendly accommodations and premium travel options. (Virtuoso)
- Searches for pet-friendly hotel options doubled year-over-year, ranking among the top 10 most used search filter terms and is also the fourth highest in search-to-stay conversion. (Hilton)

Less Traveled (Detour) Destinations

- Some 63% of travelers said they are likely to visit an off-the-beaten-track destination on their next trip (Expedia)
 - 67% of adult travelers said they want to visit less crowded destinations (Booking.com)
- Less traveled destinations tend to be cheaper and more relaxing – lower cost and fewer people is appealing (Expedia)
- Lesser-known destinations generally considered more “authentic” which is important for travelers, particularly younger travelers (Expedia)
- 80% of the respondents planned to skip mainstream vacation hubs and opt for destination dupes next year. (Contiki)

Responsible/Sustainable Travel



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- Nearly three out of four travelers agreed with the statement that it's important to minimize travel's environmental impact. (Hilton)
- 83 percent of global travelers think sustainable travel is vital, 49 percent believe there aren't enough options available. (IGES)
- Many travelers are prioritizing sustainable stays, with 76% considering sustainability aspects when planning their trips. (Booking.com)

Luxury Travel

- 89% of luxury travelers are more likely to book a luxury hotel if they're already familiar with the brand (Skift & Curacity)
- Luxury travelers prioritize recommendations from travel media as the most reliable source for brand reputation, quality, and value when making decisions on where to stay. (Skift & Curacity)
- By the end of 2025, Millennials and Gen Z will make up 45% of luxury sales. (IGES)
- Cooler destinations are among the most popular once again
 - Seventy-six percent of luxury travel advisors say clients now favor destinations with more moderate weather (Virtuoso)

Noctourism

- Nearly two in three travelers said they have considered "darker sky destinations" for activities such as stargazing (72%), once-in-a-lifetime cosmic events (59%) and constellation tracking (57%). (Booking.com)
- Noctourism experiences rose 25% in the past year, with requests for Northern Light viewings in Norway and Iceland, but also night diving in Australia's Great Barrier Reef and Egypt's Red Sea.

Medical Tourism

- By 2025, it's expected to reach a staggering \$182B, with about 88M people traveling across borders for healthcare annually. (IGES)

Set-Jetting

- Two-thirds of travelers shared that movies, streaming services and TV shows have influenced their travel choices. (Expedia)
- 36% say TV and films are more influential on their travel plans than they were last year. (Expedia)

Solo Travel

- About half of travelers take solo trips from time to time. Yet many complained that restaurants often make them self-conscious about dining alone — with 39% wishing more restaurants had an odd number of bar stools and a wider variety of table types. (Hilton)
- A majority of travelers are interested in traveling alone, with 76% of Gen Z and Millennials open to solo adventures. (IGES)
 - Use Case: Younger generations strive for a sense of community — can destinations help provide a 'community' for solo travelers?
- The #solotravel hashtag has been used on Instagram nearly 10 million times (IGES)



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- 62% of American respondents said they plan to take between two and five solo trips within the next year. (Skyscanner)
- Solo travel is almost evenly divided between men and women (Skyscanner)
- 44% of solo travelers appreciate suggested activities or events where they can meet other solo travelers. (Hilton)

Traveler Demographic Trends

Baby Boomers

- Nearly one quarter (23%) of Baby Boomers are interested in vacations that involve adventure (up from 10% in 2024) [Booking.com]
- Rise in multigenerational SKI (Spending Kids' Inheritance) trip
 - 49% of baby boomer respondents would rather spend money on a trip of a lifetime in 2025 than leave an inheritance to their children. (Booking.com)

Gen X Travelers

- Nobody cares about group (Source: A Gen Xer who has read hundreds of tourism articles, with not one focusing on this generation)

Millennial and Gen Z Travelers

- Gen Z, estimated to have a global spending power of \$140 billion, accounts for about 40% of all consumers. (IGES)
- By the end of 2025, Millennials and Gen Z will make up 45% of luxury sales. (IGES)
- 70% of American millennial and Gen Z travelers looking for unique adventures their friends haven't considered. (IGES)
- 83% of Millennial and Gen Z travelers are interested in booking 'sober travel' experiences, in which they don't drink for the course of their vacation. (Contiki)
- One-third of Gen Zers say their perception of all-inclusives has changed for the better and 42% say that an all-inclusive resort would be their preferred hotel type. (Expedia)
- Searches on Hotels.com using the 'all-inclusive' filter jumped 60% year-over-year. (Hotels.com)
- 25-to-34-year-olds traveling to see a sporting event say it's about feeling part of a community. (Skyscanner)
- Gen Z and Millennials are less likely to enroll in airline loyalty programs than older generations. Only 65% of Gen Z and 70% of Millennials are loyalty program members, compared to 89% of Baby Boomers and 80% of Gen X. (Forbes)

Macro Trends

Technology

- **PERSONALIZATION:** 78% of travelers prefer accommodations that offer personalized options, and many are willing to share their data to customize their stay (Hospitality Net)
 - *Use Case:* Generative AI is being woven into guest journeys to deliver hyper-personalized experiences. For example, generative AI can suggest specific hotels during the booking process and recommend add-ons that match individual preferences. It can also craft



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R E S E A R C H

customized itineraries based on a guest's specific interests, suggest relevant activities, and even generate personalized welcome messages. (Skift)

- 78% of travelers want the option to book their trips entirely online, looking for personalized options. (Hilton)
- AI-powered platforms will analyze your past travel behavior, social media activity, and real-time trends to create tailored itineraries. This shift is particularly evident among younger generations, with 53% of Gen Z and 57% of Millennials preferring personalized travel planning aided by AI tools. (IGES)

Economy

- US GDP is forecasted to grow 1.9% in 2025. (Convera)

Mental Health

- Travel is increasingly recognized not just as a leisure activity, but as a valuable investment in a person's psychological well-being. (IGES)
- 75% of American travelers believe vacations can help build resilience and strength so they're better able to handle the stresses of everyday life. (Skyscanner)



Marion County Tourist Development Council

Agenda Item

File No.: 2025-18559

Agenda Date: 3/28/2025

Agenda No.:

SUBJECT:

PRESENTATION: Quarterly Public Relations and Analytics Reports - October - December Data

DESCRIPTION/BACKGROUND:

Information only.



PUBLIC RELATIONS & ANALYTICS REPORT

October 1 - December 31, 2024



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PUBLIC RELATIONS



Press Releases

VISIT FLORIDA

As part of the ongoing state tourism initiatives through VISIT FLORIDA, the Ocala/Marion County Visitors and Convention Bureau (OMCVCB) fulfills press release requests highlighting tourism activities throughout the destination. VISIT FLORIDA uses these press releases as part of larger media pitches both nationally and internationally.

- Arts and Culture
- Beat January Blues
- Escape the Winter
- National Plan for Vacation Day
- Luxury in the Heart of Florida
- Sunny Winter
- Florida Way by Water
- Generational Travel

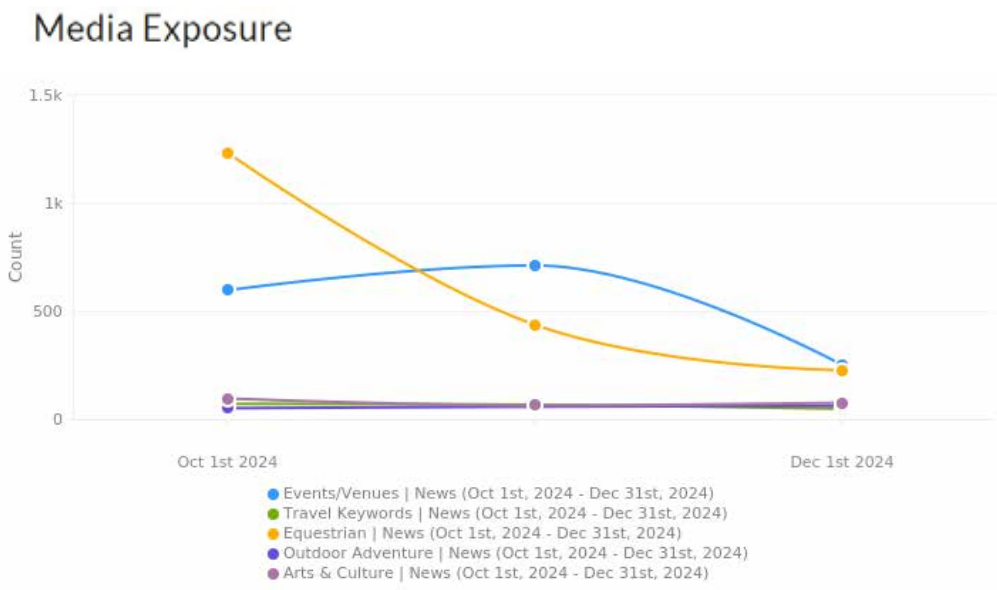
OMCVCB

- Ocala National Forest Makes National Geographic's Best of 2025
- Rock the Country Returns the Ocala/Marion County

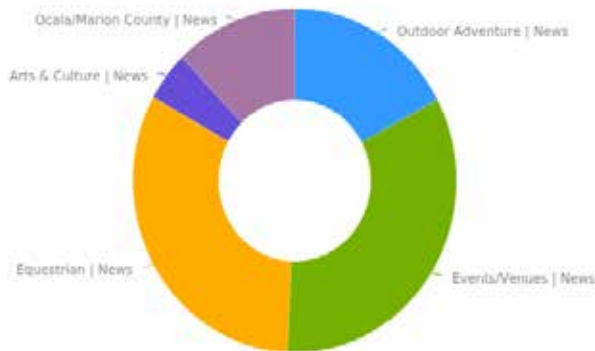
Meltwater: Media Exposure

The OMCVCB uses the media monitoring system, Meltwater, which allows for us to monitor online sentiment with our audiences, send out press releases and search for media outlets that are talking about the destination.

The following graph shows the media exposure from October 1 - December 31, 2024, including media topics and key words that were trending during this time period.



Meltwater: Public Relations Pick-Up



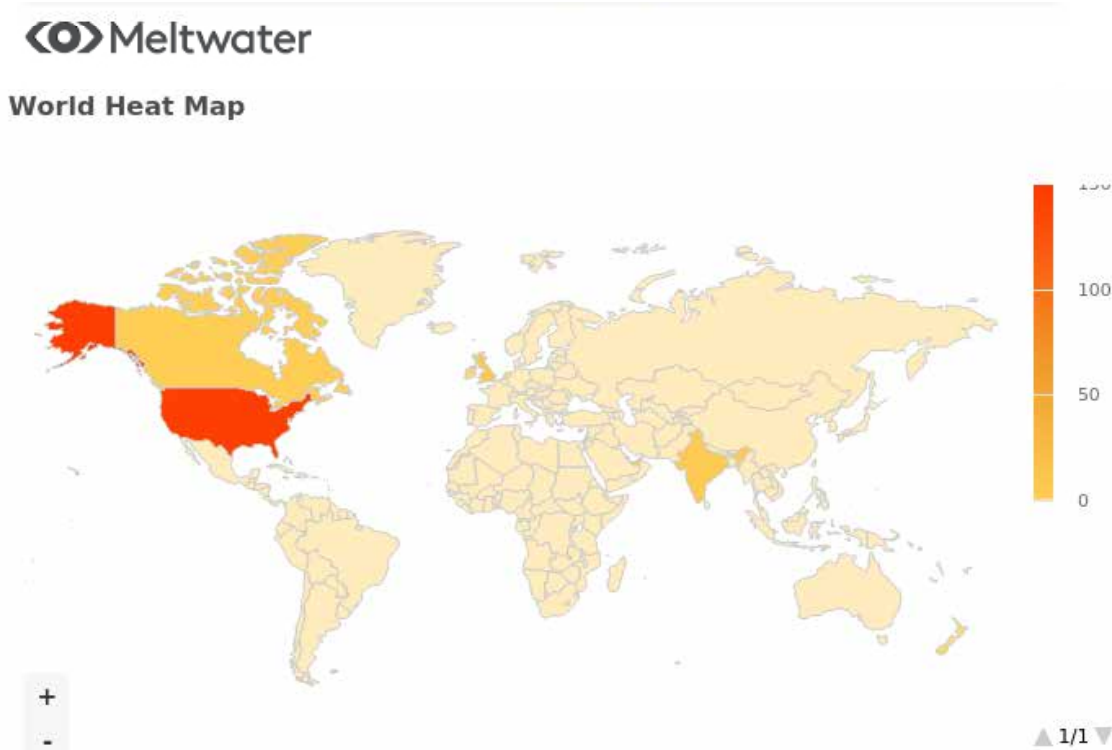
The graph to the left shows the potential media reach from October 1- December 31, 2024, including the topics that garnered the most interest within the destination.

Meltwater: Geographical Pick Up

The following heat map shows the locations where the topic of outdoor adventure in our area is trending domestically from October 1- December 31, 2024.



The following heat map shows the locations where the topic of outdoor adventure in our area is trending globally from October 1- December 31, 2024.



FAM Tours: Journalists Visiting In Market

Familiarization trips (FAM) or Individual Press trips (IPT) are tours offered to media on behalf of an organization to get the media familiar with their destination and services.

During this quarter, we hosted 2 press trips with freelance journalists who reached out the the Ocala/Marion County VCB directly. These two trips had zero cost.

NEWS OUTLET	JOURNALIST	TRIP DATE	STORY ANGLE	FAM BUDGET SPENT	REACH
Florida Today + USA Today	Maria Sonnenberg	December 2024	horse country and "Old Florida"	\$0	Weekly print readership: 294,000 Online readers: Additional 100,000
Lifestyles Over 50	Lori Burton	December 2024	leisure travel, with a focus on equine	\$0	2,900 locations of distribution in 10 Florida Counties



Thank you to the industry partners:

- KP Hole Park
- Silver Springs State Park
- Canyons Zip Line & Adventure Park
- World Equestrian Center
- Grandview Clydesdales
- Gypsy Gold Farm
- Acadia Acres
- Hampton Inn & Suites by Hilton Ocala

Press Trip - Maria Sonnenberg

OMCVCB hosted a press trip December 2024 for a journalist with Florida Today and USA Today. Maria Sonnenberg was doing a story for both print and online for Florida Today about horse country and “old Florida”.

Not only was the article published on Florida Today, but was republished on MSN Travel.

REACH: Florida Today: 965,208
MSN Travel: 127,645,172
TOTAL EARNED MEDIA VALUE: \$1,189,646.01

Below and on the next 5 pages is the article in Florida Today.

‘Small places of enchantment’ — and horses! — abound in Ocala and Marion County

Florida Today



'Small places of enchantment' — and horses! — abound in Ocala and Marion County

Florida Today



7 Photos

VIEW FULL GALLERY

Horses, hospitality and 'small enchantments': Charm abounds in Ocala

Whether you're a horse lover or more into kayaking, adventure awaits in Ocala and Marion County.

Horses have been hoofing it in Florida for some time, as witnessed by the skeleton of a 1.5-million-year-old horse ancestor on display at the Florida Museum of Natural History in Gainesville. Fast forward to 1943, when Carl G. Rose developed the first thoroughbred horse farm in Florida. These days, more than 1,200 horse farms in Ocala/Marion County pamper more than 35,000 of these noble beasts, from sleek thoroughbreds to gentle Clydesdales and flamboyant Gypsy Vanners. Marion County is an outdoor art museum where the artwork is living, breathing and stunningly beautiful in motion. For horse lovers, it is paradise, but even for those uninitiated in the many flavors of the Sport of Kings, Ocala and its environs offer an immersive opportunity into a world of rolling, green pastures lined with majestic live oaks, of luxurious barns that put many houses to shame and of a culture of grace, elegance and passion.

'Small places of enchantment' — and horses! — abound in Ocala and Marion County

Florida Today

In this a land of champion equine athletes was born — and trained — 1978 Triple Crown winner Affirmed, the last horse to win that coveted title before American Pharoah broke a 37-year drought in 2015. While not a native, American Pharoah was taught his winning ways in Marion County. The area has produced 45 national champions, six Kentucky Derby winners, 20 Breeders' Cup champions and six Horses of the Year.

Need a break? [Play the USA TODAY Daily Crossword Puzzle.](#)

Horse farm tours offer the opportunity for an insider's view into this fascinating world. At [Grandview Clydesdales](#) ([grandviewclydesdalestours.com](#)), Karen and Shannon Cobbs and their sons squarely place guests up close and personal with the animals at one of the most award-winning Clydesdale farms in the world. The tour takes visitors on a whirlwind of day-to-day operations, from the birth of baby Clydesdales to winning world championships and starring in famous commercials (think Budweiser). During the holidays, the farm adds a "Christmas with the Clydesdales" evening tour for an even more unique experience.

In addition to Grandview, other horse farms offer horse lovers the opportunity to tour the homes of prime examples of equine pulchritude. [Chestnut Hill Arabians](#) ([chestnuthillarabians.com](#)) encourages visitors to make an appointment to tour a facility where each horse is pampered by their very own human, who grooms and works with them daily. During a three-hour-plus adventure at three different farms, [Farm Tours of Ocala](#) ([farmtoursofocala.com](#)) connects visitors with equine athletes and the special breed of people who train the noble animals. The 1,500 acres that comprise [GoldMark Farm](#) ([goldmarkfarm.com](#)) house a thoroughbred farm as well as the Triple Crown Museum, which traces the history of these superstars of the racing world. Following a tour of the museum, guests embark on a farm tour via golf cart or larger vehicle.

'Small places of enchantment' — and horses! — abound in Ocala and Marion County

Florida Today

Food, drink, lodging: What's your pleasure?

Rustic to luxury lodging options are readily available in Horse Country, with well-represented lodging chains, traditional bread and breakfast inns and luxe accommodations enhanced by boutique lodging at farms such as [Acadia Acres](http://acadia-acres.com) (acadia-acres.com). This farm complex of pastures, barns and paddocks encompasses four houses, an apartment and RV hookups, plus a pool. This taste of the country offers plenty of room to roam, tons of tranquility and horses that love being fed carrots. Ample patios in the individual houses beg for spending an evening outdoors together with loved ones and a nice bottle of wine.

Within golf cart distance from Acadia Acres lies the [World Equestrian Center](http://worldequestriancenter.com) (worldequestriancenter.com). This crown in the kingdom of the horse is hard to do justice with mere words. Named one of Time magazine's 2024 World's Greatest Places, the 2,000-acre world-class facility is the largest equestrian complex in the United States, with gleaming arenas and expo venues as far as the eye can see. Awe-inspiring, elegant, distinctive, the World Equestrian Center is memorable, even if you've never been near a horse.

More: [Small but nimble, these cruise vessels offer a journey that's anything but scaled down](#)

The jewel in the WEC crown is the stately Equestrian Hotel. Situated in the center of this homage to horses, the Equestrian overlooks WEC's Grand Outdoor Arena, which is indeed grand, and guests can view world-class equestrian events right from their luxurious accommodations.

The competition is intense at every one of the many, many events hosted by the WEC each year, yet for the casual observer, they also present a lovely opportunity for an outing with the family. Spectators pay nothing, except for a parking fee, for the pleasure of watching this panoply of fine horseflesh, and many families make a day of it. After the show, shopping and dining opportunities await both inside the many indoor riding venues, as well as along the plaza encircling the Grand Outdoor Arena.

'Small places of enchantment' — and horses! — abound in Ocala and Marion County

Florida Today

During the holidays, the plaza transforms into the Ocala Winter Wonderland, complete with a million twinkling lights shaped into life-size-plus fanciful shapes that include Cinderella's coach, a VW bus, an English phone booth, walk-through Christmas trees and more. They make a perfect backdrop for holiday pictures and, amazingly, the wonderful experience, which also includes live entertainment, is gratis, except for the parking fees.



Among the boutique lodging options in Marion County: Acadia Acres, where there's tons of tranquility and the ample patios in individual houses beg for spending an evening outdoors with a nice bottle of wine. *Maria Sonnenberg For FLORIDA TODAY*

For foodies, the Ocala Food and Wine Festival is a three-day whirlwind of jazz brunches, celebrity chef dinners, Grand Tasting, and more

History and oh, those springs!

While Marion County is indeed horse-centered, a cornucopia of non-horse activities also beckons. This is a land of springs, and a crystal-clear oasis is never far. For nostalgia seekers, taste a glorious bite of Old Florida at [Silver Springs State Park](http://floridastateparks.org/silversprings) (floridastateparks.org/silversprings), one of the largest springs in the world, and home to the historic glass-bottom boats that launched Florida's first tourist attraction, as well as of a more contemporary fleet of clear kayaks that afford prime views of a local wild population that includes manatees.

Silver Springs is among the more than 600 lakes, rivers and springs that dot Ocala, where a cool place to laze away the day is never far, but those who prefer activities on the drier side can also camp and hike to their heart's content at Ocala National Forest.

'Small places of enchantment' — and horses! — abound in Ocala and Marion County

Florida Today

History buffs will appreciate the 172.5-acre Ocala Historic District with its abundance of Victorian revival styles, bungalows and vernacular architecture framed by a canopy of live oaks. The district has successfully guarded its character and historic significance, and many of its nooks and crannies are golf cart-friendly.

In Gainesville, less than an hour away from Ocala are even more attractions, such as the [Florida Museum of Natural History](http://floridamuseum.ufl.edu) (floridamuseum.ufl.edu), one of the nation's top five natural history museums and one where admission is free. Also offering free admission is the neighboring [Harn Museum of Art](http://harn.ufl.edu) (harn.ufl.edu), one of the largest university-affiliated art museums in the nation.

Not far from the Gainesville hubbub is the very different world of the [Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Historic State Park](#) at sleepy, tiny Cross Creek, where the Pulitzer Prize-winning author found inspiration in the once wild land and its people. The house and homestead remain as if Rawlings had just stepped out to pick a couple of oranges in her grove back in the 1930s.

"I do not understand how anyone can live without some small place of enchantment to turn to," wrote the author of "The Yearling."

In Ocala and Marion County, these small places of enchantment abound.

Maria Sonnenberg is a Brevard-based freelance travel and lifestyles writer. For more info, visit ocalamarion.com.



Manatees love Silver Springs almost as much as do the kayakers. *Maria Sonnenberg For FLORIDA TODAY*

Press Trip - Lori Burton

OMCVCB hosted a press trip December 2024 for a freelance travel journalist working on assignment for Lifestyles After 50, as well as additional potential stories, covering Ocala/Marion County as a place to visit for the leisure traveler, with a focus on equine.

During this quarter, Lori Burton published an article in Lifestyles After 50 and in Rochester Woman Online's 2024 Holiday Edition.

REACH: Lifestyles After 50 has 2,900 locations of distribution in 10 Florida counties

Below and on the next 4 pages is the article in Lifestyles After 50.

12 Joyful Activities to Rediscover Your Christmas Spirit Lifestyles After 50



By Lori Bruton

12 Joyful Activities to Rediscover Your Christmas Spirit Lifestyles After 50

It's the most wonderful time of the year—a season that brings joy, cheer, and the opportunity to rediscover your childlike spirit. This holiday season, awaken your senses with a memorable medley of activities, history, and connections perfect for celebrating your golden years.

Step Back In Time



Wonder House, Bartow (image courtesy of www.wonderhousebartow.com)

Begin your journey by stepping back in time to the 1920s with a Christmas tour of the **Wonder House** in Bartow. This architectural marvel, built by Conrad Schuck, is a testament to creativity and resilience. Hoping Florida's climate would improve his health, Schuck moved his family from Pittsburgh and poured his brilliance into this cross-shaped mansion. Each detail, from intricate hand-carved woodwork to a clever mirror system allowing him to see visitors from his outdoor bathtub balcony, sparks awe. Each floor's fireplace adds warmth, evoking the timeless value of preserving family and legacy. (Note: The tour involves stairs, so visitors may explore the ground floor if mobility is a concern.)

Continue your journey at the **Festival of Wreaths** at the Polk County History Center, housed in a stunning courthouse from 1908. Each December, its marble halls are adorned with wreaths crafted by local artisans, symbolizing eternal life and faith. Every wreath tells a unique story, filling the air with holiday cheer and creating a scene that feels like a classic holiday postcard come to life.

12 Joyful Activities to Rediscover Your Christmas Spirit Lifestyles After 50

Dancing and Strolling

May I have this dance? Consider dancing the morning away at the **Lakeland Seniors Dance and Social Club**. Held every Thursday at the Magnolia Building next to Hollis Garden in downtown Lakeland, it's a welcoming place to meet fun, friendly people. No partner? No problem! Everyone is invited to enjoy the rhythm and camaraderie.

While in the neighborhood, take a stroll through **Hollis Garden**, an artfully landscaped oasis within **Lake Mirror Park**. The garden's patterned flower beds, ornamental fountains, and native trees create a serene setting that's perfect for reflection or special moments—I even spotted a wedding party taking photos there.

As you explore **Lake Mirror Park**, you'll be captivated by its festive décor. Ducks swim near the flowing fountain as Christmas lights illuminate the faces of all ages walking around the lake. The magic of the holidays truly comes alive here.

Fabulous Holiday Fare

This season calls for culinary indulgence. Treat yourself to a fine dining experience at **Nineteen 61**, a Latin fusion restaurant with creative flair. As a 1961 baby, I felt especially pampered with a complimentary flute of champagne and a birthday card signed by the staff. Meeting Chef Cesar was the cherry on top after savoring their decadent Crème Brûlée. This isn't just a meal, it's an unforgettable experience.

The **Lakeland Christmas Parade** lit up the sky with fireworks followed by festive floats, marching bands, and more. From my spot at the **Joinery Food Hall**, I enjoyed handcrafted ice cream in a waffle cone from **Mayday**, savoring the sweet treat as decked-out fire engines rolled by with their sirens.

Related: [Armchair Adventures: The Fascinating Tale of the Silent Night Chapels](#)



12 Joyful Activities to Rediscover Your Christmas Spirit Lifestyles After 50

Holiday Horses



Mayday ice cream, photo by Lori Bruton

Next, head to **Ocala's Winter Wonderland** at the **World Equestrian Center**, where the holidays shine brighter than ever. The Grand Plaza dazzles with a 60-foot Christmas tree, oversized ornaments, and over a million twinkling lights. The skilled craftsmanship of the gingerbread display, especially the gingerbread horse, made my eyes pop.



Maven Photo and Film

Holiday music fills the air as families laugh and explore the festive displays, while the aroma of seasonal treats drifts from nearby cafes. Known as the Horse Capital of the World, Ocala celebrates the strength, grace, and beauty of its equine residents. Visitors can experience this heritage and see the holidays come to life in spectacular fashion that leaves a lasting

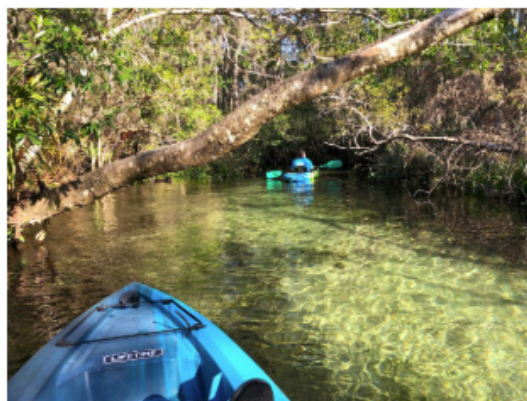
impression. This isn't just a holiday attraction, it's a tribute to Ocala's equestrian legacy.

Speaking of legacy, Shannon and Karen Cobbs, owners of **Grandview Clydesdales Farm** will warm your heart. The VIP Christmas Holiday Tour is handicapped and elderly friendly. You'll get the best seating, cookies, and carrots to feed the horses through the barn. See the family's awards and art amongst the spectacular holiday décor. You'll fall in love with this family and their beloved Clydesdales.

12 Joyful Activities to Rediscover Your Christmas Spirit Lifestyles After 50

Outdoor Adventure

For adventure seekers, Central Florida's outdoor offerings provide the restorative power of nature. Saddle up and take a horseback riding tour, go kayaking or ziplining at **Canyons Zip Line and Adventure Park**. Glide across the glassy waters in a kayak in Marion County at **KP Hole Park** on the Rainbow River, the gentle rhythm of the paddle bringing peace. Or try a boat cruise and get a senior discount at **The**



KP Hole Park kayaking, photo by Meloday Moser

Living Water Boat Cruises in Winter Haven, where vibrant greens and calm blues unfold like a watercolor painting, punctuated by the occasional splash of wildlife.

Through it all, one theme comes to light: Central Florida isn't just a destination; it's an experience. Its historic treasures, festive celebrations, and natural beauty remind us that the true gift of the season lies in the memories we make and the joy we carry with us long after the holidays.

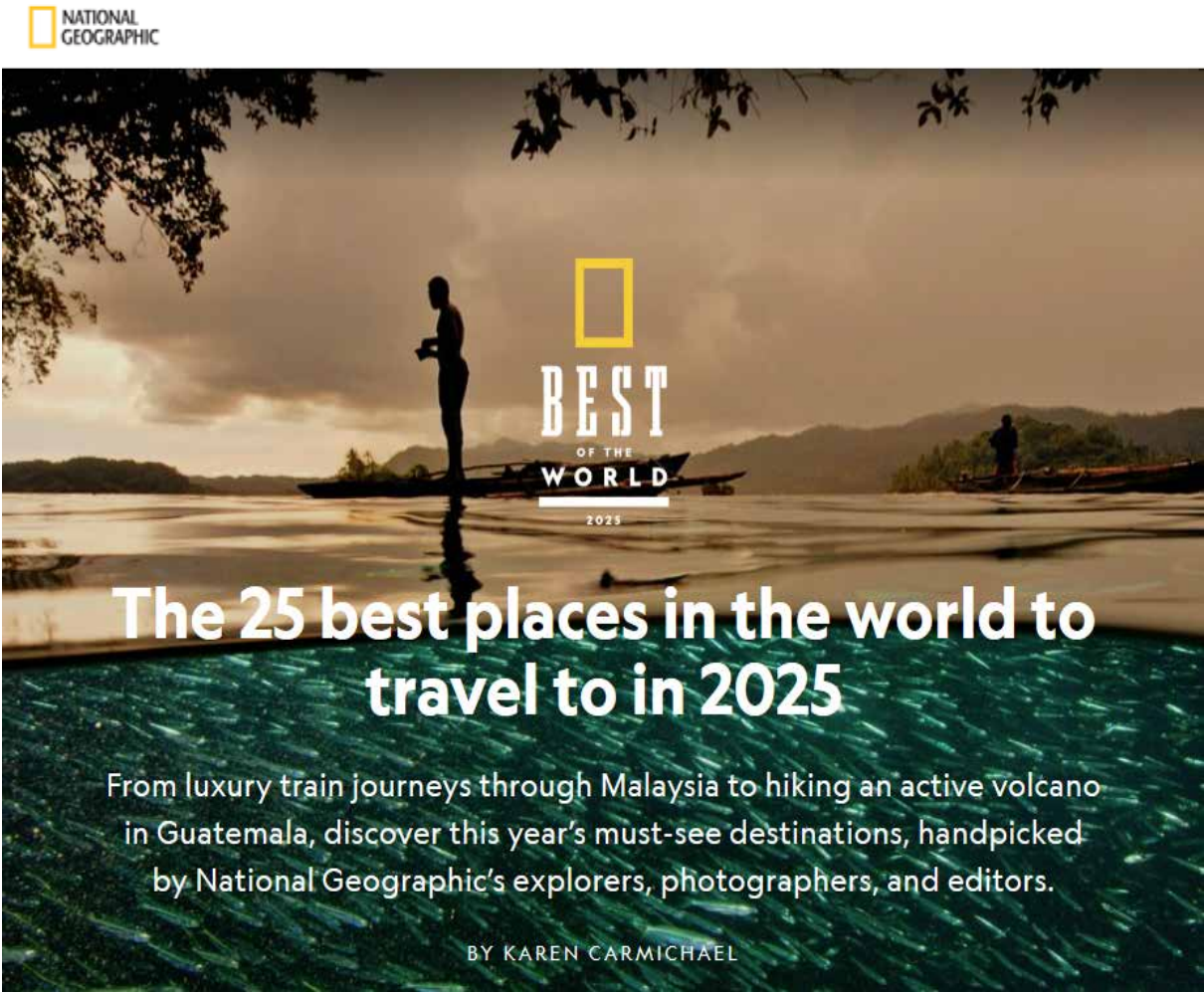
Additional Earned Media: National Geographic

National Geographic reached out in early Fall 2025 to coordinate the announcement of the Ocala National Forest being on the publication's Best of the World 2025 places to travel list. Once the announcement was made in October 2024, the OMCVCB sent out a press release and promoted the honor via multiple platforms.

REACH: 6,892,121
EARNED MEDIA VALUE: \$63,752.12

Below and on the next page includes the protion of the article highlighting Ocala/Marion County.

The 25 best places in the world to travel to in 2025 National Geographic



The 25 best places in the world to travel to in 2025

National Geographic



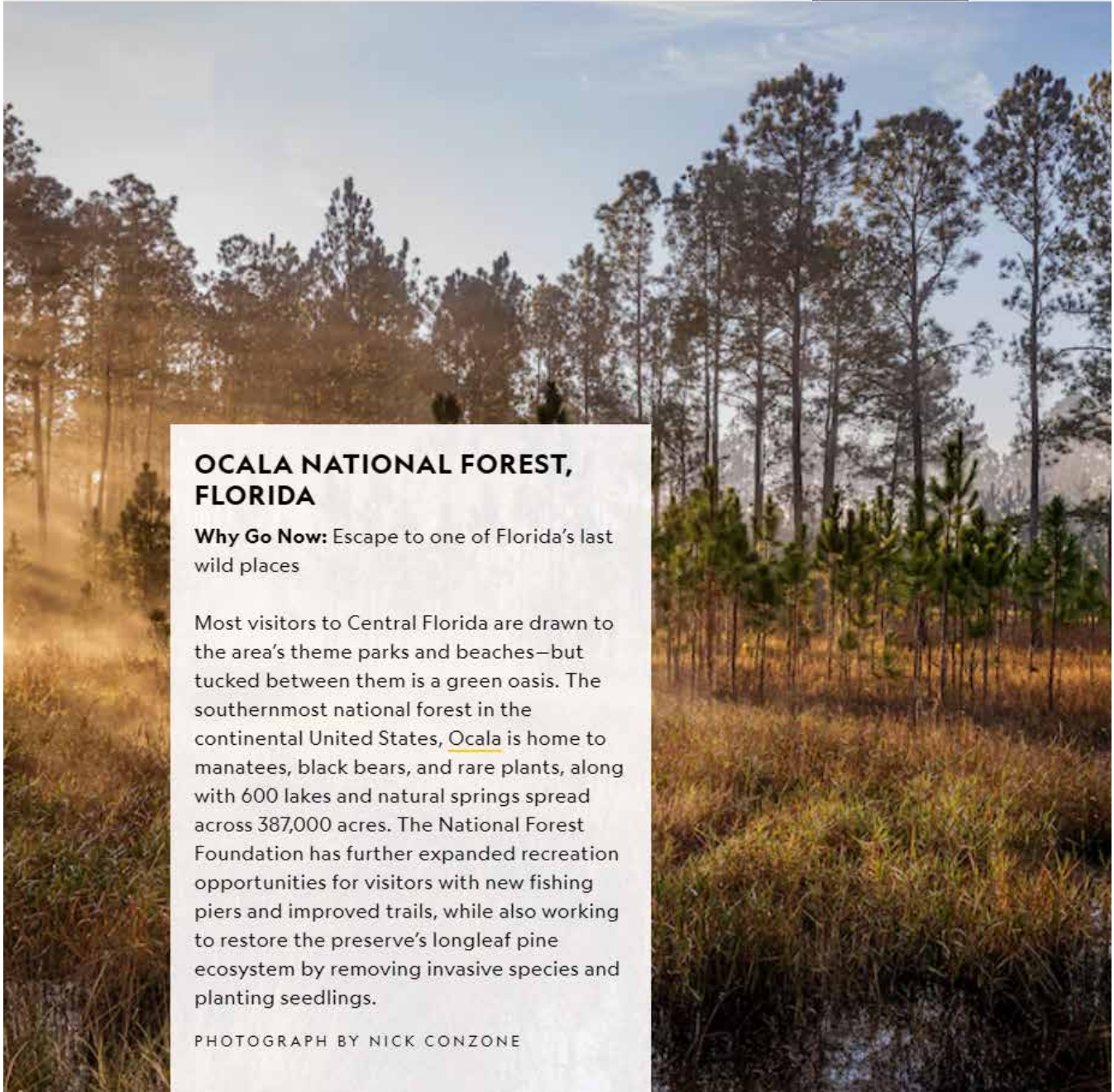
jessica ▾



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OCALA NATIONAL FOREST, FLORIDA

Why Go Now: Escape to one of Florida's last wild places

Most visitors to Central Florida are drawn to the area's theme parks and beaches—but tucked between them is a green oasis. The southernmost national forest in the continental United States, Ocala is home to manatees, black bears, and rare plants, along with 600 lakes and natural springs spread across 387,000 acres. The National Forest Foundation has further expanded recreation opportunities for visitors with new fishing piers and improved trails, while also working to restore the preserve's longleaf pine ecosystem by removing invasive species and planting seedlings.

PHOTOGRAPH BY NICK CONZONE

Additional Earned Media: Business Insider

The OMCVCB provided an video interview with Business Insider following the National Geographic Best of 2025 announcement that included the Ocala National Forest. The article was published in english and spanish, as well as re-published by other outlets in multiple languages.

TOTAL REACH: 50,052,724

TOTAL EARNED MEDIA VALUE: \$462,987.69

Below and on the next 2 pages includes the portion of the article highlighting Ocala/Marion County.

10 travel destinations you need to visit in 2025 — and what to do when you're there Business Insider

TRAVEL

10 travel destinations you need to visit in 2025 — and what to do when you're there

Privanka Rajput Dec 6, 2024, 8:45 AM EST



muratart/Shutterstock

- **National Geographic** shared a list of best travel destinations for 2025.
- **Cities like Bangkok, Thailand; Kanazawa, Japan; and Brasov, Romania, made the list.**
- **BI spoke with travel experts who shared their tips on how to best explore each of these spots.**

10 travel destinations you need to visit in 2025 — and what to do when you're there

Business Insider

Ocala National Forest, Florida



An aerial view of Silver Glen Springs in Ocala National Forest. Ocala/Marion County Visitors & Convention Bureau

Spanning nearly 385,000 acres, Ocala National Forest highlights a unique side of Florida in contrast to its famous beaches and theme parks.

Jessica Heller, a marketing and communications supervisor at [Ocala/Marion County Visitors and Convention Bureau](#), says the forest's remote location makes it ideal for those looking to skip overcrowded tourist spots next year.

What to do: Swim or snorkel in one of the forest's four natural springs fed by the Florida aquifer that stay at 72°F year-round. Heller recommends checking out each spring — Silver Glen, Juniper,

10 travel destinations you need to visit in 2025 — and what to do when you're there

Business Insider

Alexander, and Salt Springs — to experience their "distinct personalities."

Hiking enthusiasts can take various trails, such as the Florida Trail or the Cross Florida Greenway, which cuts across the forest.

If you visit during the holiday season, between Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Eve, you can cut your own Florida sand pine to take home.

Where to stay: While most people prefer to camp in the forest — Salt and Juniper Springs being the top camping spots — those who prefer hotels to tents and RVs can opt to stay at the Hilton Garden Inn in the downtown square.

For a more upscale experience, The Equestrian Hotel, a 60-minute drive away, offers a great escape and easy access to the World Equestrian Center.

Where to eat: Downtown Ocala has many dining options, but Heller recommends trying out La Cuisine for French-inspired fine dining or District Bar & Kitchen if you prefer a more relaxed vibe.

Closer to the forest, Lena's, located on the Florida Black Bear Scenic Byway (open from October to June), is a local favorite for seafood.

When to go: According to Heller, January through March is the best time to visit if you'd like to watch horse shows. However, that's also when hotels are most expensive.

But if you're looking to bike, hike, or enjoy any water activities, Heller suggests planning your trip around wintertime. The end of summer — when it's not too hot — is most popular for springs.

"We even have a tubing season," said Heller, adding that their natural version of lazy river tubing is open from April through September.

Additional Earned Media: Wind-FM

Following the OMCVCB's Tourism Annual Meeting, Wind-FM published an article highlighting the meeting and the successes of the OMCVCB.

TOTAL REACH: 11,046

Below and on the next 4 pages includes the article.

Tourism in Ocala/Marion County tops \$1 billion, driving economic growth

Wind-FM



Tourism in Ocala/Marion County tops \$1 billion, driving economic growth



Source: Saga Communications | While Ocala/Marion County is known as the Horse Capital of the World, the VCB has worked to market the area as an overall tourist destination. Canva Pro

Tourism in Ocala/Marion County tops \$1 billion, driving economic growth

Wind-FM

OCALA, FL (352today.com) — Ocala and Marion County have become synonymous with being a preferred vacation destination, now flourishing into a more than \$1 billion industry.

The Ocala/Marion County Visitors and Convention Bureau (VCB) presented its 2023-2024 annual report on Dec. 12 at the Paradise Ballroom at Silver Springs State Park. Opening remarks were delivered by Danny Gaekwad, a global entrepreneur and chairman of the Marion County Visitors and Convention Bureau. Gaekwad is also a past chairman of the Marion County Tourism Development Council.

|RELATED: Marion County anti-litter campaign bags national award

“This past year has been a major one for tourism in Ocala and Marion County,” said Loretta Shaffer, Ocala/Marion County’s tourist development director. Shaffer highlighted the significant contributions made by the VCB team, whose primary mission is to promote Ocala and Marion County as a top destination for visitors.

“There are two main ways in which we do this: sales and marketing. We have an exceptional team in both these areas,” said Shaffer.

Marketing and Public Relations Impact

Destination marketing encompasses various efforts, including research, public relations, social media, media campaigns, website content, and mobile app development. These tools allow the VCB to share the area’s story with tourists, potential visitors, and residents.

Efforts in public relations alone generated \$6.4 million in media value, reaching an audience of over 1 billion people.

Tourism in Ocala/Marion County tops \$1 billion, driving economic growth

Wind-FM



Debie (left) and Rubbish (right) engage the community with fun and educational initiatives to promote a litter-free Ocala/Marion County. Courtesy: Ben Baugh

“The most important variable is the residents who live in Ocala and Marion County, who really are the heartbeat of the community’s amazing personality. How grateful we are that people understand that we’re warm and accepting to our guests,” said Shaffer. “My primary message would be gratitude for everyone who has taken that ambassadorship so seriously and has been an extension of our team by their warm welcome.”

Shaffer emphasized the economic impact of tourism, explaining how the taxes generated by visitors help fund essential community services like libraries, parks, and first responders. “We should be grateful to those who are making Ocala/Marion County a preferred destination to vacation,” said Shaffer.

Tourism in Ocala/Marion County tops \$1 billion, driving economic growth

Wind-FM

Annual Highlights for Fiscal Year 2023-2024

Marketing (Social Media):

- Facebook followers: 259,000
- Facebook impressions: 26,710,988
- Instagram followers: 21,500
- Instagram impressions: 871,098

Website Metrics:

- Visits: 1,203,322
- Users: 986,118
- Page views: 2,054,833
- Engaged sessions: 618,040
- Engagement rate: 46.42%

Other Key Figures:

- Tourist development tax revenue: \$5,481,186
- Room nights generated: 1,167,947

Sales Impact:

- Total approved funding: \$652,730
- Estimated economic impact of funded events: \$67,845,892

Tourism in Ocala/Marion County tops \$1 billion, driving economic growth

Wind-FM

Showcasing Local Wonders

Marion County Commission Vice Chair Carl Zalak III, underscored the importance of the area's natural attractions, branding Marion County as a unique blend of natural wonders and equestrian excellence.

"In today's world, our most powerful tool is our technology," said Zalak. "Marion County is making it easier for those visiting the area and their residents to be ambassadors to explore the county's incredible natural resources and wonders of the Horse Capital of the World."

To further this mission, the VCB partnered with Marion County Public Relations and Zalak to launch a new video series that highlights the area's hidden gems, local cuisine, and leisure activities. Marion Insider's Guide, which debuted in July, is hosted by Zalak and can be accessed on the VCB website.

"Thanks to the dedication of everyone involved in our vibrant tourism industry," said Zalak. "Our community is now on the map, not just nationally, but globally. We're covering the things that make our home special."

Additional Earned Media: WKMG - TV 20

The OMCVCB coordinated with the event planner for Rock the Country concert to announce the return of the concert to Ocala/Marion County at a new venue, The Florida Horse Park. Multiples articles were published specifically highlighting that Ocala/Marion County is a location, including a news segment and article from WKMG-TV 20

TOTAL REACH: 11,046

Below and on the next page is the article.

Kid Rock and Nickelback headline Rock The Country Ocala 2025 WMKG-TV 20



Kid Rock and Nickelback headline Rock The Country Ocala 2025



Rock The Country, a two-day country festival, will return to Ocala on May 9 and May 10, 2025.

Kid Rock and Nickelback headline Rock The Country Ocala 2025

WMKG-TV 20

By [WCJB Staff](#)

Published: Nov. 12, 2024 at 1:36 PM EST



OCALA, Fla. (WCJB) - Rock The Country, a two-day country festival, will return to Ocala on May 9 and May 10, 2025.

Ocala will mark the fourth stop on the 10-stop tour across the country. Kid Rock and Nickelback will be heading all 10 shows.

The lineup for Ocala will feature Hank Williams Jr., Tracey Lawrence, Gavin Adcock, Jo Dee Messina, Diamond Rio, Mark Chesnutt, Sammy Kershaw, Little Texas, Hudson Westbrook, Logan Crosby, Afroman, Ying Yang Twins and Dee Jay Silver.

Rock The Country attracted over 30,000 fans to Ocala last year and the city is excited to welcome the festival back in 2025.

"We are thrilled to be welcoming back Rock the Country to Ocala/Marion County in 2025," said Marion County Commissioner Carl Zalak, III. "Having an event of this magnitude in our community is not only exciting for locals, but also brings more visitors to the area, putting our county on the map for hosting impressive entertainment."

For more information about Rock The Country, including the full lineup and ticket details, click [here](#).



Print And Digital Earned Media

NEWS/MEDIA OUTLET	ARTICLE/COVERAGE	REACH
DorisPinheiro	Temporada do peixe-boi na Flórida proporciona experiência inesquecível	9,374
UOL Jogos	Primeira atração turística da Flórida custava 5 centavos (e não era parque)	54,278,743
MSN.com	'Small places of enchantment' — and horses! — abound in Ocala and Marion County	127,645,172
Florida Today	'Small places of enchantment' — and horses! — abound in Ocala and Marion County	965,208
Lifestyles After 50	12 Joyful Activities to Rediscover Your Christmas Spirit	891
Rochester Woman Online's 2024 Holiday Edition	Fill Your Cup: Take Time to Reflect, Design, and Align	16,437,104
Travel Lens	22 Best Things to Do in Ocala, FL	2,328
Travel Lens	15 Free Things to Do in Ocala, FL	2,328
Southern Living	20 Secret Places In Florida That Only Locals Know	14,270,453
MSN.com (10 articles)	From ziplines to boat rides: 30+ ideas for experiences to gift this holiday season	131,017,479
Miami Herald (11 articles)	10 Things to Do in the Horse Capital of the World in Ocala, FL	11,856,431
USA Today	These 7 hidden gems in Florida go way beyond the typical tourist trap	110,904,207
National Geographic	Best of the World 2025	6,892,121
MSN.com	United States Well Represented on National Geographic's 'Best of the World Travel'	125,649,351
Yardbarker	United States Well Represented on National Geographic's 'Best of the World Travel'	3,904,237
Sports Illustrated	United States Well Represented on National Geographic's 'Best of the World Travel'	31,695,493
Travel Off Path	These Are The Top 3 U.S. Destinations To Visit In 2025 According To National Geographic	542,243
Associated Press	National Geographic Announces BEST OF THE WORLD 2025 List, Names Top 25 Destinations to Inspire Your Next Trip	46,239,784
Newssummedup	Ocala National Forest makes Best in World list	<i>Not Reported</i>
Business Insider	10 travel destinations you need to visit in 2025 — and what to do when you're there	47,170,061
Business Insider	10 destinos que visitar en 2025 y qué hacer allí	2,050,890
Lademeure Duparc (France) *Published in 5 languages	Les 10 destinations de voyage incontournables en 2025 et les activités à ne pas manquer	11,776
DNYUZ	10 travel destinations you need to visit in 2025 — and what to do when you're there	819,997
WCJB-TV	Kid Rock and Nickelback Headline Rock The Country Ocala 2025	355,520
WINDFM	Tourism in Ocala/Marion County tops \$1 billion, driving economic growth	11,046
Rejsespejder	Roadtrip i Florida	83,372
TouristSecrets	Mysteries Of Florida's Ocala Forest Waters	43,691
MSN.com	13 holiday destinations for festive family fun	125,649,351
The Points Guy	13 holiday destinations for festive family fun	5,581,173
RTTNews	Kid Rock, Nickelback To Headline Rock The Country & Rock The South	106,052
Blabbermouth.net	KID ROCK And NICKELBACK To Headline 2025 Edition Of 'Rock The Country' Touring Festival	1,614,158
MSN.com (3 articles)	Rock the Country 2025 in Ocala: Organizers announce artist lineup and venue change	126,620,431
WINDFM	Kid Rock, Nickelback to headline Rock the Country Ocala 2025	10,428
Florida Restaurant & Lodging Association	FRLA Supports 2025 Rock the Country Music Festival in Ocala	8,122
Brasilturis	VISIT FLORIDA Brazil Manatee Season Press Release December 2024	72,870
Travel Awaits	VISIT FLORIDA USA Gift of Florida Pitch Press Release November 2024	2,332,053
Elite Magazine	VISIT FLORIDA Brazil Dive into Florida Press Release July 2024	35,000
Nerd Wallet	VISIT FLORIDA USA Gift of Florida Pitch Press Release November 2024	17,928,765
Touristica International	VISIT FLORIDA Canada Mission September 2024	115,000

*Notation: The Media Value Equivalent totals \$9,239,984.92 for Oct-Dec 2024.
The total reach is 1,012,932,703*

SOCIAL MEDIA

Overview

 @ocalamarion
 ocalamarion






 Ocala/Marion County, Florida
 Ocala/Marion County, Florida

The OMCVCB has a daily presence across various social media channels. This section provides the analytics and reporting for these social media platforms. The data compares this quarter, October 1-December 31, 2024, to the previous quarter (July 1-Sept 30, 2024).

Performance Summary

View your key profile performance metrics accrued during the selected time period.

Impressions 4,348,937 ↘44.8%	Engagements 179,597 ↘0.1%	Post Link Clicks 56,264 ↘1.1%
Engagement Rate (per Impression) 4.1% ↗81.1%		

Reporting Period	286,178	1,007	230	4,348,937	179,597	4.1%	1,343,722
Oct 1, 2024 - Dec 31, 2024	↗ 0.3%	↘ 80.5%	↗ 32.9%	↘ 44.8%	↘ 0.1%	↗ 81.1%	↘ 35.5%
Compare to	285,214	5,151	173	7,884,096	179,736	2.3%	2,081,737
Jul 1, 2024 - Sep 30, 2024							
 Ocala/Marion County	422	39	5	3,312	524	15.8%	0
 @ocalamarion	2,874	-22	52	5,953	365	6.1%	19
 Ocala/Marion County, Florida	259,993	362	98	4,071,234	167,424	4.1%	1,279,684
 Ocala/Marion County, Florida	1,271	-1	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
 ocalamarion	21,618	629	75	268,438	11,284	4.2%	64,019

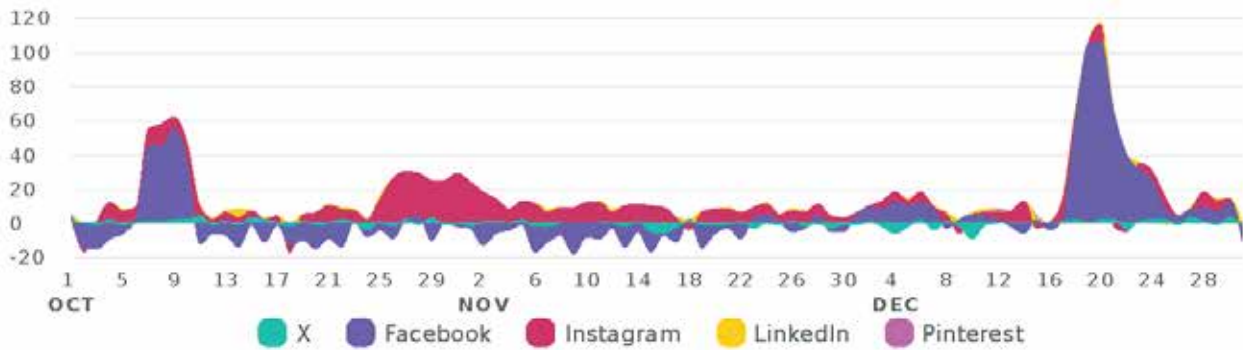
Overview: Growth



Audience Gained, by Day

Audience Growth

See how your audience grew during the selected time period.

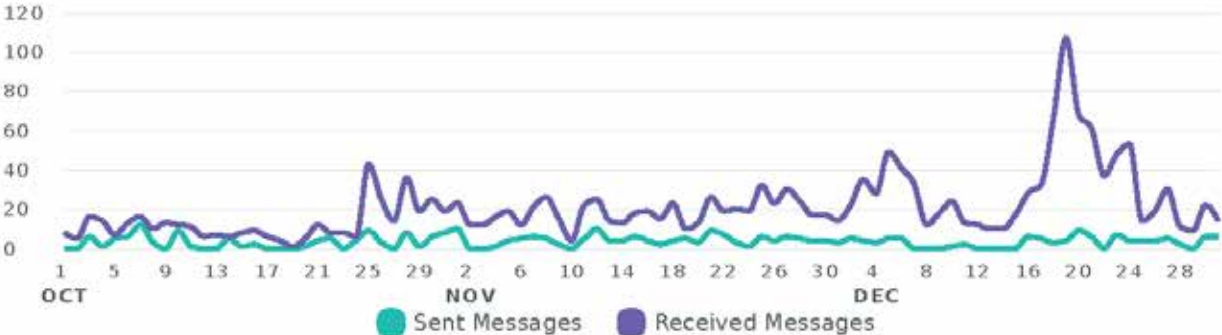


Audience Metrics	Totals	% Change
Audience	286,178	↗0.3%
Net Audience Growth	1,007	↘80.5%
X Net Follower Growth	-22	↘140.7%
Facebook Net Follower Growth	362	↘92.1%
Instagram Net Follower Growth	629	↗32.7%
LinkedIn Net Follower Growth	39	↘35%

Overview: Messages

Message Volume

Review the volume of sent and received messages across networks during the selected time period.
Messages per Day



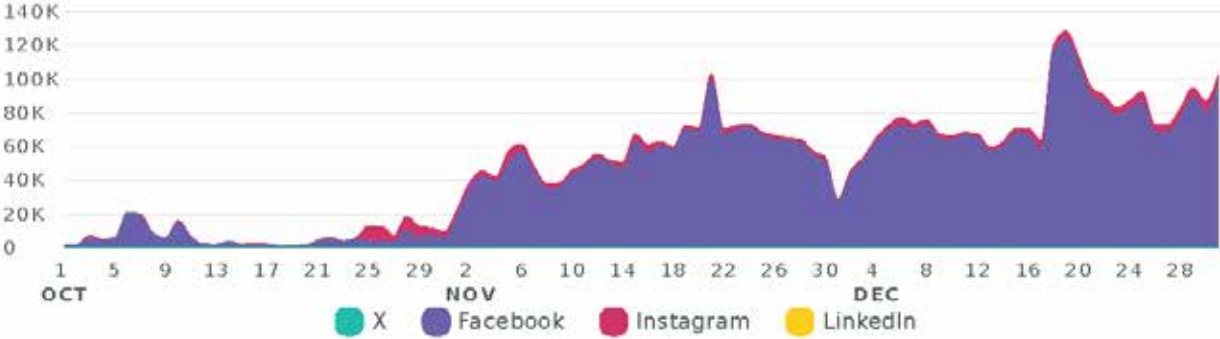
Sent Messages Metrics	Totals	% Change
Total Sent Messages	328	↗19.3%
X Sent Messages	52	↗126.1%
Facebook Sent Messages	140	↗4.5%
Instagram Sent Messages	131	↗20.2%
LinkedIn Sent Messages	5	→0%
Pinterest Sent Messages	0	↘100%



Overview: Impressions

Impressions

Review how your content was seen across networks during the selected time period.



Impression Metrics	Totals	% Change
Impressions	4,348,937	↘ 44.8%
X Impressions	5,953	↗ 173.7%
Facebook Impressions	4,071,234	↘ 46.6%
Instagram Impressions	268,438	↗ 5.3%
LinkedIn Impressions	3,312	↗ 23.7%

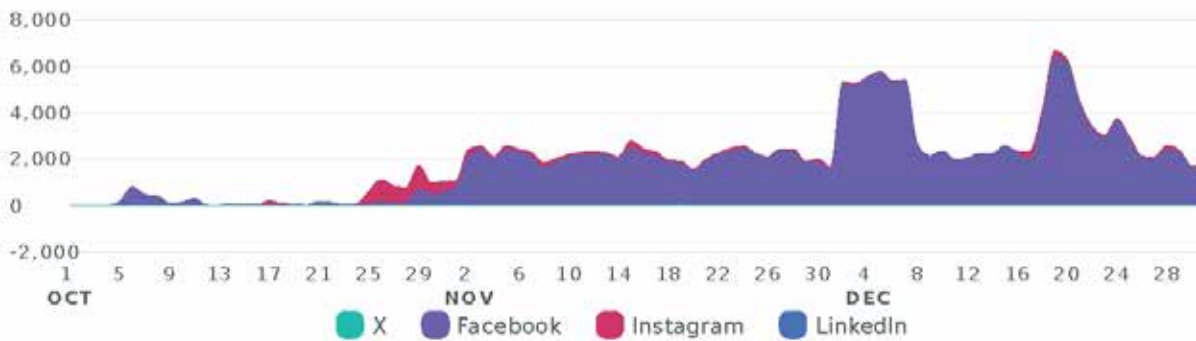


Overview: Engagements



Engagements

See how people are engaging with your posts during the selected time period.



Engagement Metrics	Totals	% Change
Engagements	179,597	↘0.1%
X Engagements	365	↗178.6%
Facebook Engagements	167,424	↘3.4%
Instagram Engagements	11,284	↗93%
LinkedIn Engagements	524	↗25.7%

User Generated Content Leveraging Social Media

The following are examples of User Generated Content assets acquired in this quarter using CrowdRiff:



Instagram




Instagram Performance Summary

Impressions 268,438 ↗5.3%	Organic Impressions 171,806 ↗70.4%	Paid Impressions 96,632 ↘37.3%
Engagement Rate (per Impression) 4.3% ↗75.8%	Organic Engagement Rate (per Impression) 6.6% ↗13.2%	Paid Engagement Rate (per Impression) 0.3% ↗4.7%
Engagements 11,535 ↗85.2%	Organic Engagements 11,284 ↗93%	Paid Engagements 251 ↘34.3%


Profile	Followers	Net Follower Growth	Published Posts	Impressions	Organic Impressions	Paid Impressions	Engagements
Reporting Period	21,618	629	75	268,438	171,806	96,632	11,535
Oct 1, 2024 - Dec 31, 2024	↗ 2.8%	↗ 32.7%	↗ 29.3%	↗ 5.3%	↗ 70.4%	↘ 37.3%	↗ 85.2%
Compare to	21,030	474	58	254,814	100,816	153,998	6,229
Jul 1, 2024 - Sep 30, 2024							
ocalamarion	21,618	629	75	268,438	171,806	96,632	11,535

Instagram


Top Posts

 **ocalamarion**
Fri 10/25/2024 3:00 p...


Ocala National Forest is officially on @natgeo BEST OF THE WORLD 2025 list!...



Total Engagements	4,920
Likes	2,650
Comments	63
Shares	1,781
Saves	426

 **ocalamarion**
Mon 10/28/2024 5:47 p...

In Case You Missed It! 📌
Ocala National Forest is officially on National...



Total Engagements	649
Likes	419
Comments	10
Shares	169
Saves	51

 **ocalamarion**
Tue 12/17/2024 11:12 ...

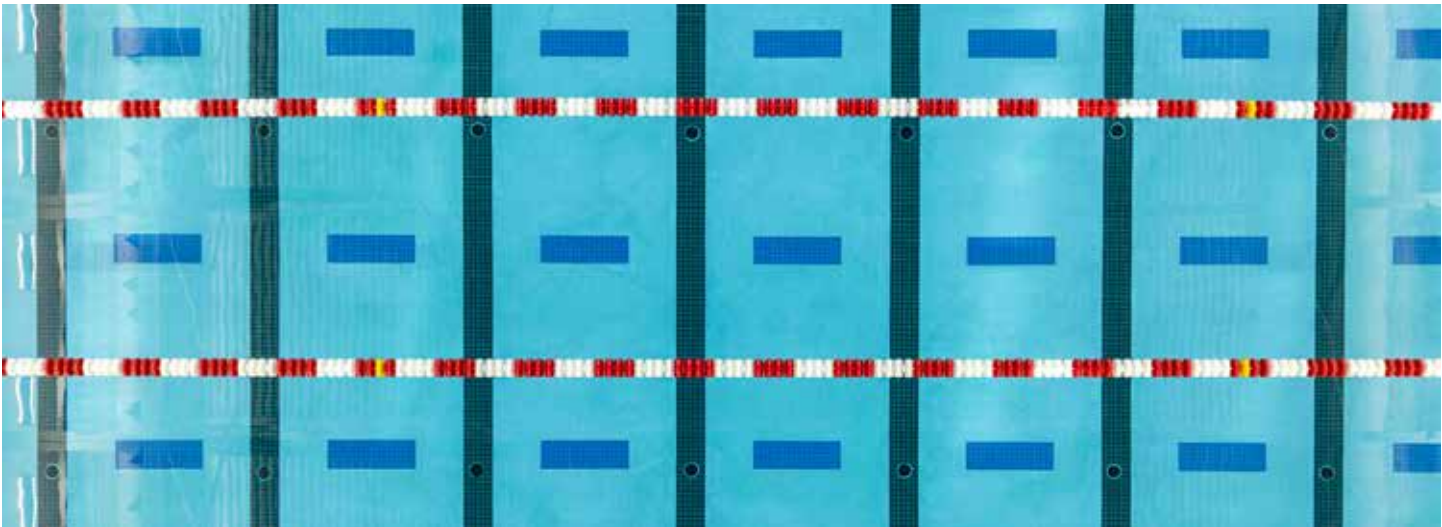
Did you know? @NatGeo is calling the Ocala National Forest one of Florida's "last..."



Total Engagements	440
Likes	421
Comments	6
Saves	13

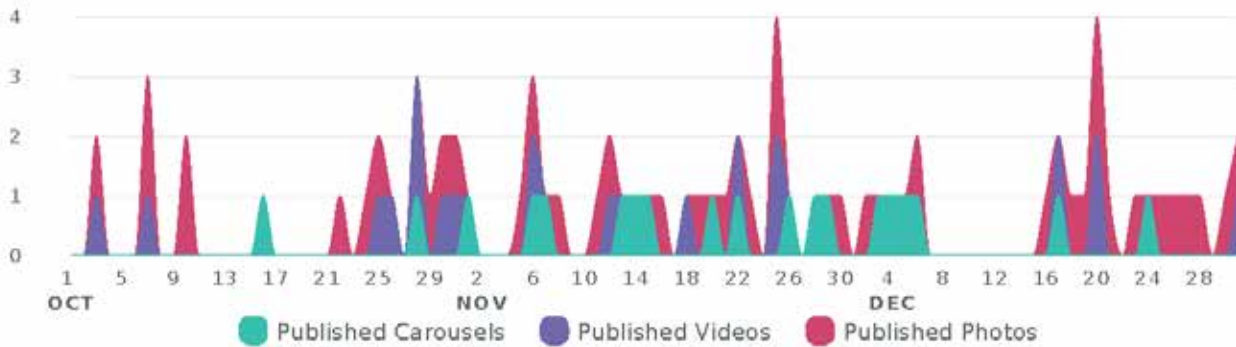


Instagram: Publishing



Publishing Behavior

View the different types of posts, stories, and reels you published during the selected time period.



Publishing Behavior by Content Type	Totals	% Change
Published Posts	75	↗ 29.3%
Published Carousels	19	↗ 171.4%
Published Videos	18	↘ 14.3%
Published Photos	38	↗ 26.7%

Instagram: Growth

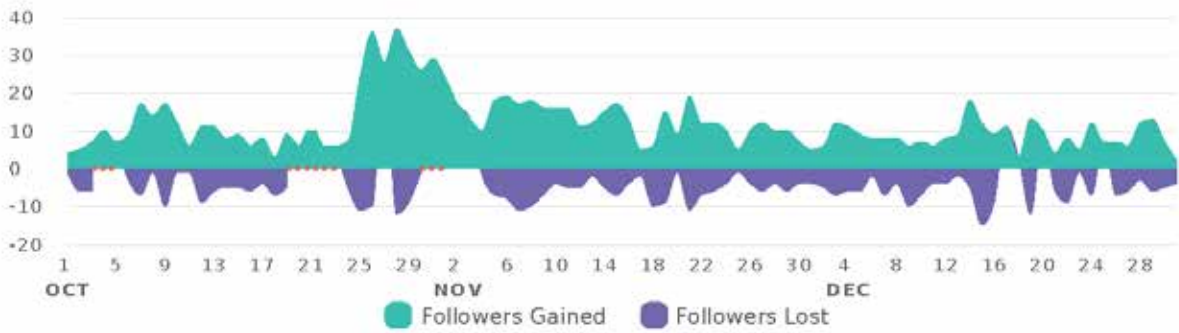
Instagram Audience Growth

Net Follower Growth Breakdown, by Day

Audience Growth

See how your audience grew during the selected time period.

 We are unable to display data for some of this date range. .



Audience Metrics	Totals	% Change
Followers	21,618	↗ 2.8%
Net Follower Growth	629	↗ 32.7%



Instagram: Impressions

Impressions

Review how your content was seen during the selected time period.



Impression Metrics	Organic	Paid	Totals	% Change
Impressions	171,806 ↗ 70.4%	96,632 ↘ 37.3%	268,438	↗ 5.3%
Average Daily Reach per Profile	N/A	N/A	2,180.73	↘ 7.3%



Instagram: Stories

Stories Performance

Review how people are viewing and interacting with the stories that you published during the selected date range.



Story Metrics	Totals	% Change
Published Stories	22	↗ 46.7%
Story Replies	11	↗ 1,000%
Story Taps Back	463	↗ 146.3%
Story Taps Forward	8,677	↗ 131.5%
Story Exits	1,335	↗ 97.8%
Story Impressions	13,169	↗ 177.1%
Average Reach per Story	593.77	↗ 88.3%

Instagram: Engagement



Engagement Metrics	Totals	% Change
Organic Shares	2,187	↗ 285.7%
Organic Saves	637	↗ 188.2%
Story Replies	11	↗ 1,000%

Engagement Rate

See how engaged people are with your posts during the selected time period.



Instagram: Competitors

Summary

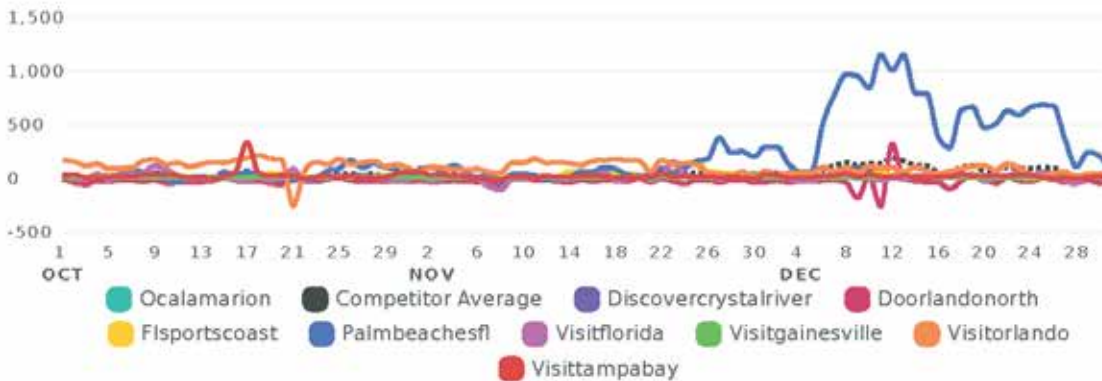
Compare your profile performance to your competitors.



To gauge our brand’s success, we compare the Ocala/Marion County social profile performances to nearby competing markets. These include: Visit Gainesville, Discover Crystal River and Florida’s Sports Coast. Below is their overall growth and performance compared to Ocala/Marion.

Audience Growth

View how your audience grew compared to your competitors.



Instagram Net Follower Growth	Followers	Net Follower Growth	% Follower Growth
Your Average	21,618.00	629.00	3.00%
Competitor Average	252,861.25	4,024.50	1.62%
visitflorida	516,104	374	0.07%
visitorlando	483,445	9,187	1.94%

Followers

Facebook



Performance Summary

Impressions 4,071,234 ↘46.6%	Organic Impressions 805,733 ↘67.9%	Paid Impressions 3,265,501 ↘36.2%
Engagement Rate (per Impression) 4.1% ↗80.9%	Organic Engagement Rate (per Impression) 3.4% ↗24.1%	Paid Engagement Rate (per Impression) 4.3% ↗110.1%
Post Link Clicks 55,735 ↘1.5%	Organic Post Link Clicks 482 ↗95.1%	Paid Post Link Clicks 55,253 ↘1.9%
Engagements 167,424 ↘3.4%	Organic Engagements 27,500 ↘60.1%	Paid Engagements 139,924 ↗34%

Page	Followers	Net Follower Growth	Fans	Net Page Likes	Published Posts	Impressions	Organic Impressions
Reporting Period	259,978	347	251,148	-6	98	4,071,234	805,733
Oct 1, 2024 - Dec 31, 2024	↗0.1%	↘92.4%	↘0.1%	↘175%	↗15.3%	↘46.6%	↘67.9%
Compare to	259,631	4,560	251,298	8	85	7,624,430	2,507,310
Jul 1, 2024 - Sep 30, 2024							
Ocala/Marion County, Florida	259,978	347	251,148	-6	98	4,071,234	805,733

Facebook

Top Posts

 **Ocala/Marion ...**
Sun 12/1/2024 7:12 p...

🌲 Celebrate the season in Ocala/Marion County with festive lights, parades, live...

Ocala/Marion County...



Total Engagements	32,790
Reactions	3,778
Comments	219
Shares	221
Post Link Clicks	20,135
Other Post Clicks	8,437

 **Ocala/Marion ...**
Fri 12/20/2024 11:22 a...

Discover the magic of Ocala/Marion County's crystal-clear springs and...



Total Engagements	20,676
Reactions	7,581
Comments	207
Shares	957
Post Link Clicks	2,388
Other Post Clicks	9,543

 **Ocala/Marion ...**
Fri 11/1/2024 5:48 pm ...

There's always an outdoor adventure to be had in Ocala/Marion County. It's...

Ocala/Marion County...



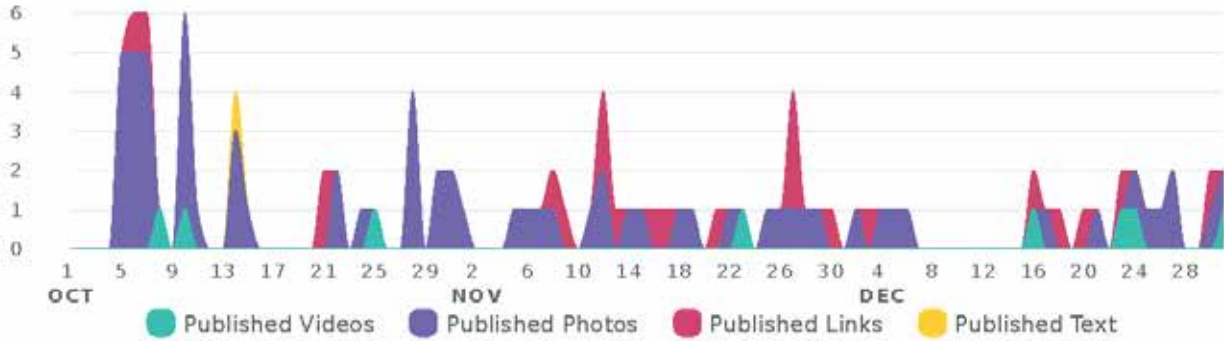
Total Engagements	19,882
Reactions	100
Comments	7
Shares	11
Post Link Clicks	19,290
Other Post Clicks	474



Facebook: Publishing

Publishing Behavior

View the different types of posts you published during the selected time period.



Publishing Behavior by Content Type	Totals	% Change
Published Posts	98	↗ 15.3%
Published Videos	8	↘ 33.3%
Published Photos	67	↗ 15.5%
Published Links	22	↗ 57.1%
Published Text	1	→ 0%



Facebook: Growth



Audience Growth

See how your audience grew during the selected time period.

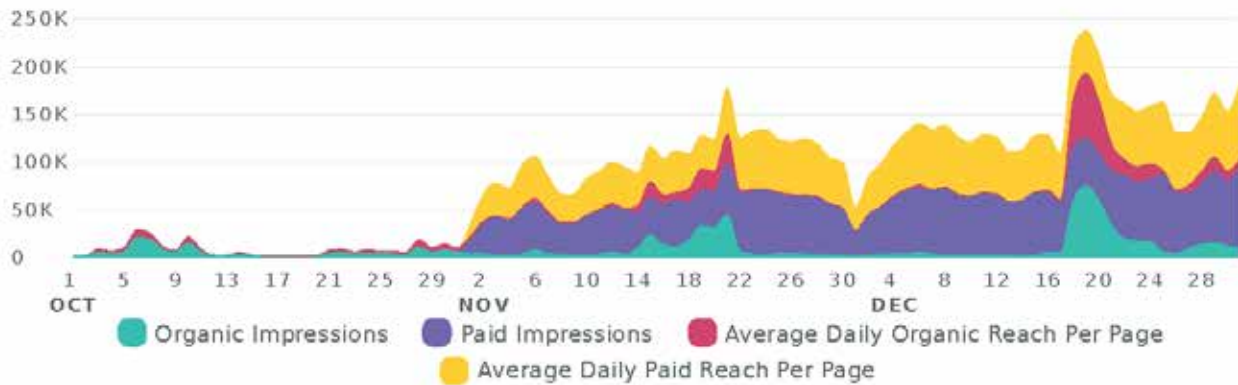


Audience Metrics	Totals	% Change
Followers	259,978	↗0.1%
Net Follower Growth	347	↘92.4%
Fans	251,148	↘0.1%
Net Page Likes	-6	↘175%
Organic Page Likes	143	↗6.7%
Paid Page Likes	107	↘26.7%
Page Unlikes	256	↘5.5%

Facebook: Impressions

Impressions

Review how your content was seen during the selected time period.



Impression Metrics	Organic	Paid	Totals	% Change
Impressions	805,733 ▼ 67.9%	3,265,501 ▼ 36.2%	4,071,234	▼ 46.6%
Average Daily Reach per Page	6,472.4 ▼ 74.3%	32,606.43 ▼ 36.9%	39.08K	▼ 49.1%



Facebook: Engagement



Engagements

See how people are engaging with your posts during the selected time period.



Engagement Metrics	Organic	Paid	Totals	% Change
Engagements	27,500 ↘60.1%	139,924 ↗34%	167,424	↘3.4%
Reactions	11,096 ↘76%	11,263 ↗72.6%	22,359	↘57.6%

Engagement Metrics	Organic	Paid	Totals	% Change
Comments	1,159 ↗41.9%	379 ↗101.6%	1,538	↗53%
Shares	2,271 ↗21.8%	1,529 ↗184.2%	3,800	↗58.1%
Post Link Clicks	482 ↗95.1%	55,253 ↘1.9%	55,735	↘1.5%
Other Post Clicks	12,492 ↘36.9%	71,500 ↗75.2%	83,992	↗38.6%

Facebook: Competitors

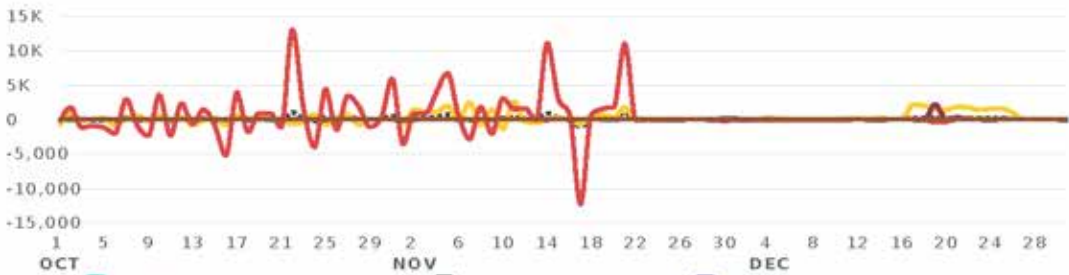
Summary

Compare your profile performance to your competitors.



Audience Growth

View how your audience grew compared to your competitors.



- Ocala/Marion County, Florida
- Competitor Average
- Discover Crystal River Florida
- Discover Lake County FL
- Discover The Palm Beaches
- DiscoverCitrusCounty
- Do Orlando North
- Florida's Sports Coast
- Travelling Foodie
- VISIT FLORIDA
- Visit Gainesville / Alachua County, FL
- Visit Mount Dora
- Visit Orlando
- Visit Tampa Bay

Facebook Net Follower Growth		Followers	Net Follower Growth	% Follower Growth
Your Average	<div style="width: 25%; background-color: teal;"></div>	259,978.00	347.00	0.13%
Competitor Average	<div style="width: 35%; background-color: teal;"></div>	314,120.25	7,304.08	2.38%
Visit Orlando	<div style="width: 65%; background-color: teal;"></div>	1,612,567	4,086	0.25%
VISIT FLORIDA	<div style="width: 55%; background-color: teal;"></div>	1,260,263	50,092	4.14%

Followers

Performance Summary

View your key profile performance metrics from the reporting period.

Impressions	Engagements	Post Link Clicks
5,953 ↗173.7%	365 ↗178.6%	31 ↗47.6%

Reporting Period	2,874	-22	52	5,953	365	31	6.1%
Oct 1, 2024 - Dec 31, 2024	↘ 0.8%	↘ 140.7%	↗ 126.1%	↗ 173.7%	↗ 178.6%	↗ 47.6%	↗ 1.8%


Compare to	2,897	54	23	2,175	131	21	6%
Jul 1, 2024 - Sep 30, 2024							

Profile	Followers	Net Follower Growth	Published Posts	Impressions	Engagements	Post Link Clicks	Engagement Rate (per Impression)
@ocalamarion	2,874	-22	52	5,953	365	31	6.1%

Top Posts

@ocalamarion
Mon 11/18/2024 3:06 p...


Did you know you can cut down your own Christmas tree in the Ocala National...



Total Engagements	26
Likes	5
@Replies	1
Reposts	4
Post Link Clicks	8
Other Post Clicks	8
Other Engagements	0

@ocalamarion
Tue 12/17/2024 10:45...


Raising your hand if you want to vacation HERE. 🙋
[#OcalaMarion](#) . 📍...



Total Engagements	20
Likes	10
@Replies	2
Reposts	2
Post Link Clicks	—
Other Post Clicks	6
Other Engagements	0

@ocalamarion
Fri 11/8/2024 3:23 pm...

Getting that extra hour of sleep on Sunday certainly set the mood for this week 🤪



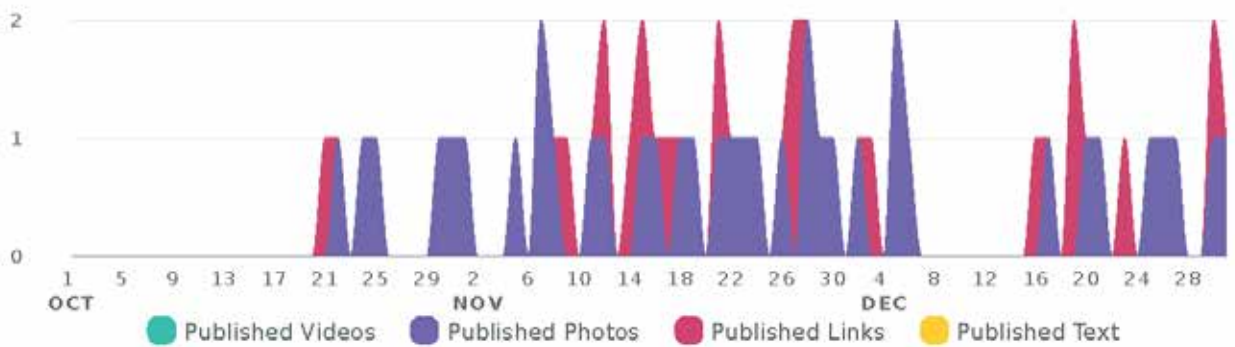
Total Engagements	16
Likes	6
@Replies	0
Reposts	2
Post Link Clicks	—
Other Post Clicks	8
Other Engagements	0

X: Publishing



Publishing Behavior

View the different types of posts you published during the selected time period.



Publishing Behavior by Content Type	Totals	% Change
Published Posts	52	↗ 126.1%
Published Videos	0	↘ 100%
Published Photos	37	↗ 236.4%
Published Links	15	↗ 87.5%
Published Text	0	→ 0%

X: Growth



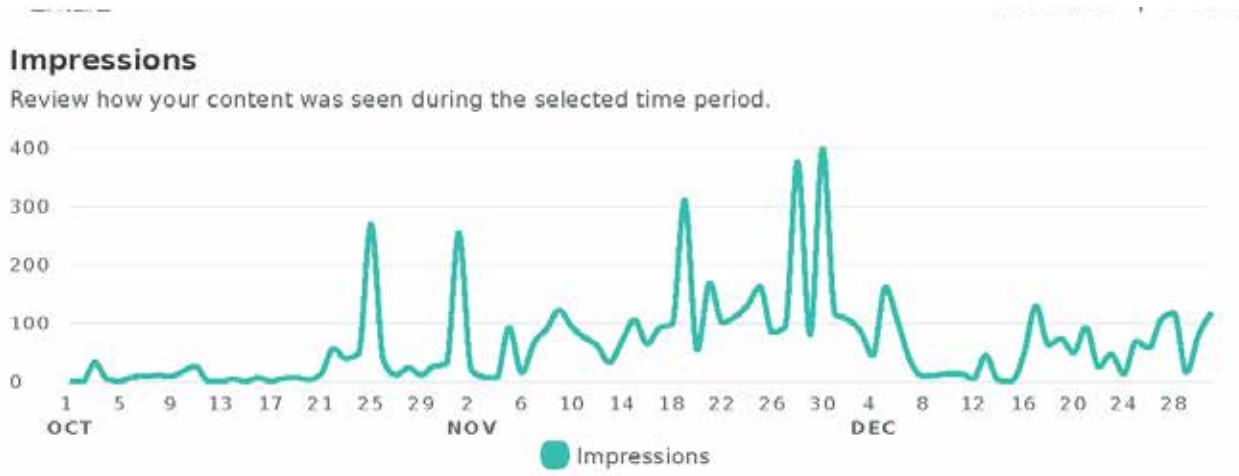
Audience Growth

See how your audience grew during the selected time period.



Audience Metrics	Totals	% Change
Followers	2,874	↘0.8%
Net Follower Growth	-22	↘140.7%
Followers Gained	61	↘18.7%
Followers Lost	83	↗295.2%
Following	4,277	↘3.1%

X: Impressions



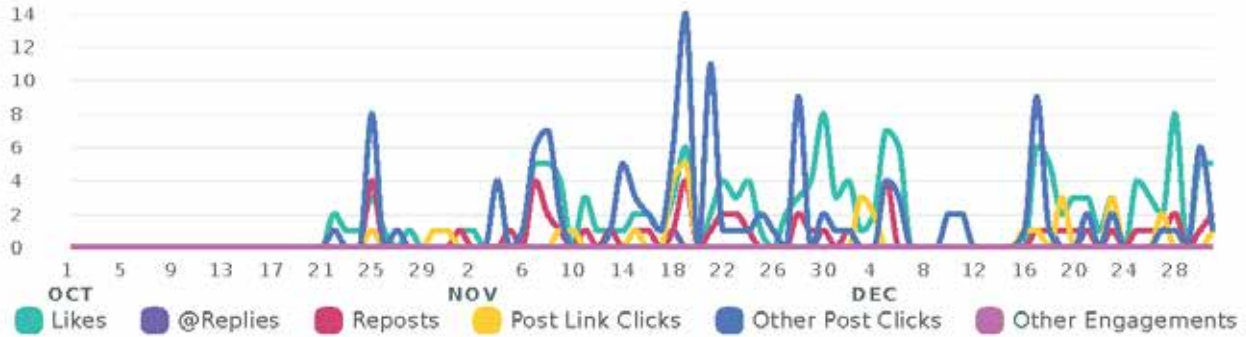
Impression Metrics	Totals	% Change
Impressions	5,953	↑ 173.7%



X: Engagement

Engagements

See how people are engaging with your posts during the selected time period.



Engagement Metrics	Totals	% Change
Engagements	365	↗178.6%
Likes	150	↗294.7%
@Replies	6	↗20%
Reposts	51	↗325%
Post Link Clicks	31	↗47.6%



X: Competitors

Summary

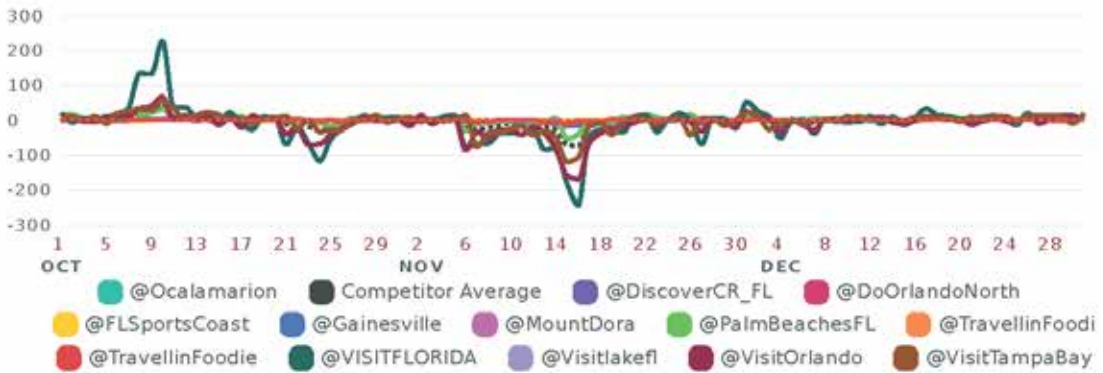
Compare your profile performance to your competitors.



Audience Growth

View how your audience grew compared to your competitors.

We are unable to display data for some of this date range...



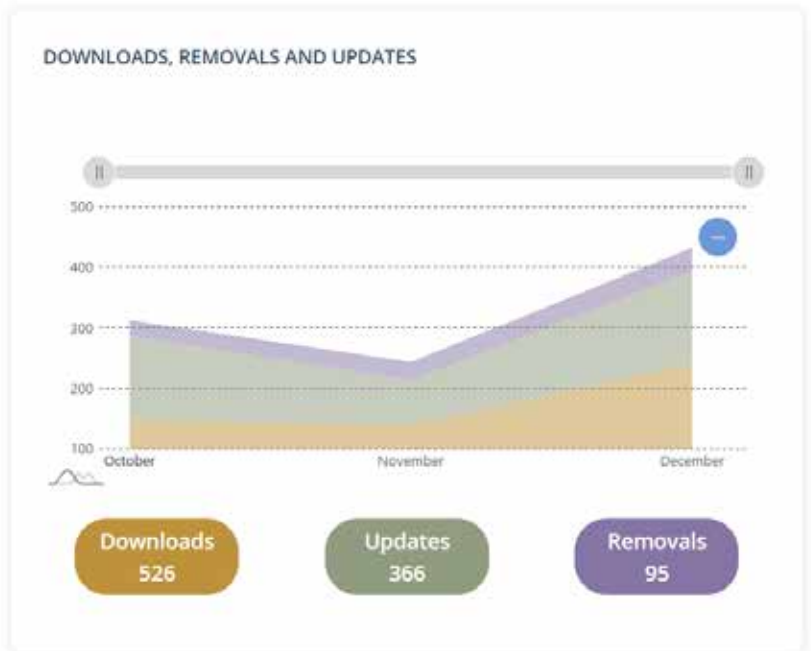
X Net Follower Growth	Followers	Net Follower Growth	% Follower Growth
Your Average	2,874.00	-22.00	-0.76%
Competitor Average	68,266.00	-290.25	-0.42%
@VISITFLORIDA	192,652	-708	-0.37%

Followers

App: OcalaMarion Travel Guide

Below and on the following page is reporting for **October - December 31, 2024** on the OcalaMarion Travel Guide. This tourism app is available to download in the Apple App Store and Google Play Store.

Directly below is a map indicating where app downloads originated during this time period.



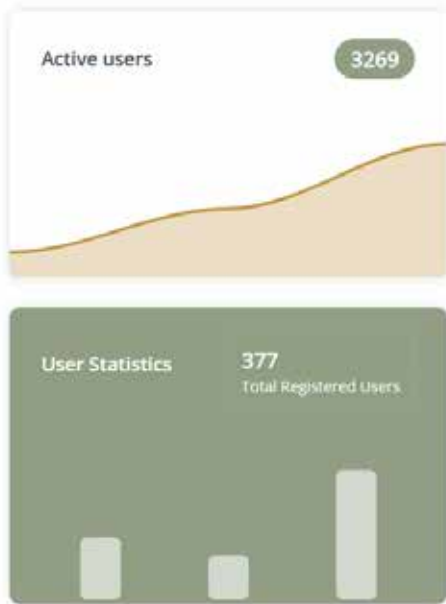
App: OcalaMarion Travel Guide

App

PER PAGE VIEWS

TOTAL NUMBER
2,526

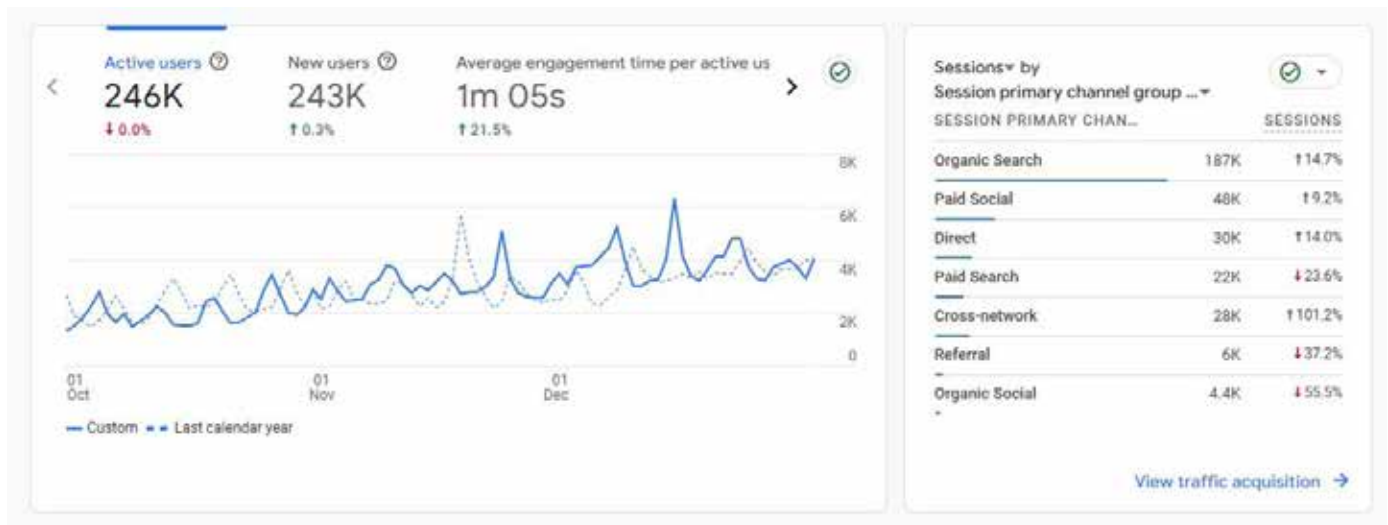
Page Name	# of views
Event Detail Screen	501
Home Screen	440
Events Screen	272
Splash Screen	181
Location List Screen	178
Location Screen	178
Coupon List	148



WEBSITE

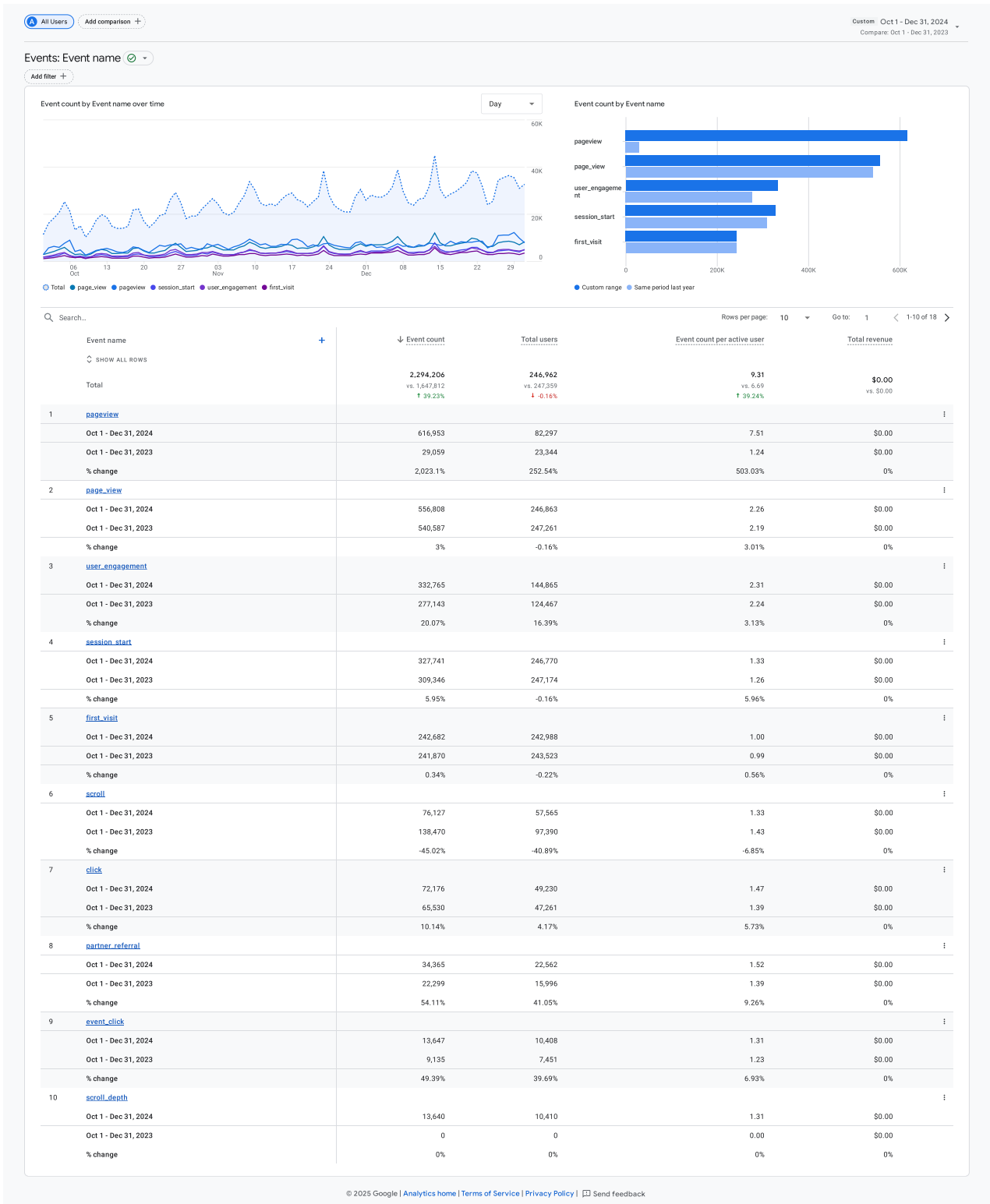


The data in this portion of the report compares this quarter, October 1- December 31, 2024, to the same time last year, October 1- December 31, 2023.



Events

The graph below indicates events that occurred by users during the quarter. These include actions like pageviews, engagement, first visit, newsletter sign-up and partner referrals.



Blogs: Driving Visitors To Ocalamarion.com Through Content

To drive more traffic to OcalaMarion.com and boost Search Engine Optimization (SEO), the OMCVCB is posts blogs. In addition to boosting SEO, unique content in blogs personalizes Ocala/Marion County’s messaging and increases organic visits. To make more of the blogs relevant and utilize already established SEO, we also heavily updated previous blogs to include information/activities currently available to visitors and residents.




New Blog

- 40 Things to Do

Updated Blogs

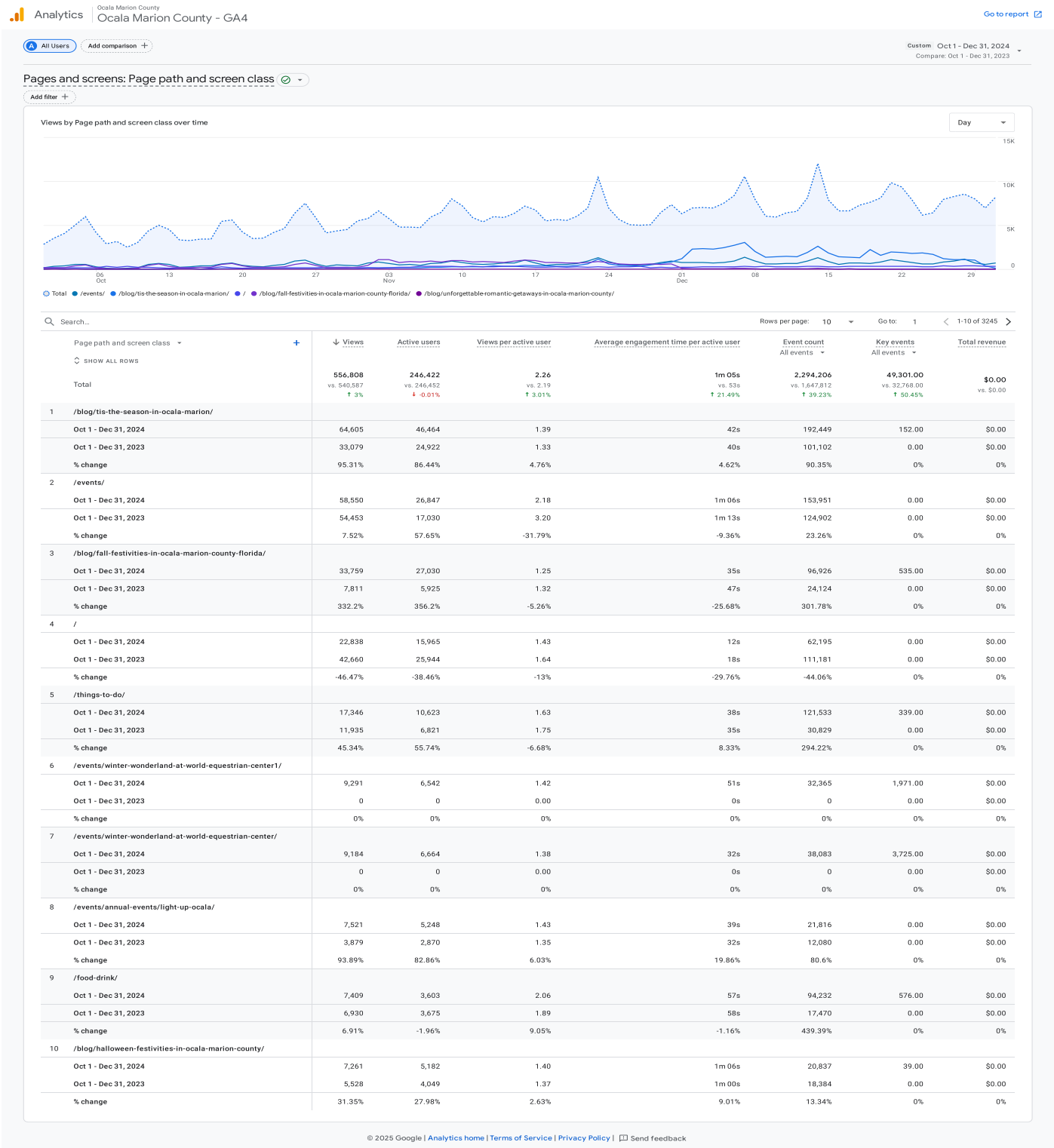
- Manatee Season in Ocala/Marion County
- ‘Tis the Season in Ocala/Marion County
- Christmas Tree Farms
- Ring in the New Year in Ocala/Marion County
- Halloween Festivities
- Fall Festivities
- Ocala/Marion County Celebrates Veterans’ Day
- Top 11 Things to Do as a Family

Below are examples of the updated blogs on the website.

		
<p>40 Things to Do in Ocala/Marion County</p> <p>There is a LOT to explore when you visit Ocala/Marion County. So much so, in fact, that it can be a little daunting. But don't worry!</p> <p>LEARN MORE ↗</p>	<p>Christmas Tree Farms</p> <p>Kick off the holiday season with a festive family adventure to an enchanting Christmas tree farm.</p> <p>LEARN MORE ↗</p>	<p>'Tis the Season in Ocala/Marion</p> <p>The holidays are a special time of year and Ocala/Marion County offers ways to celebrate throughout the entire season.</p> <p>LEARN MORE ↗</p>

Top Visited Pages

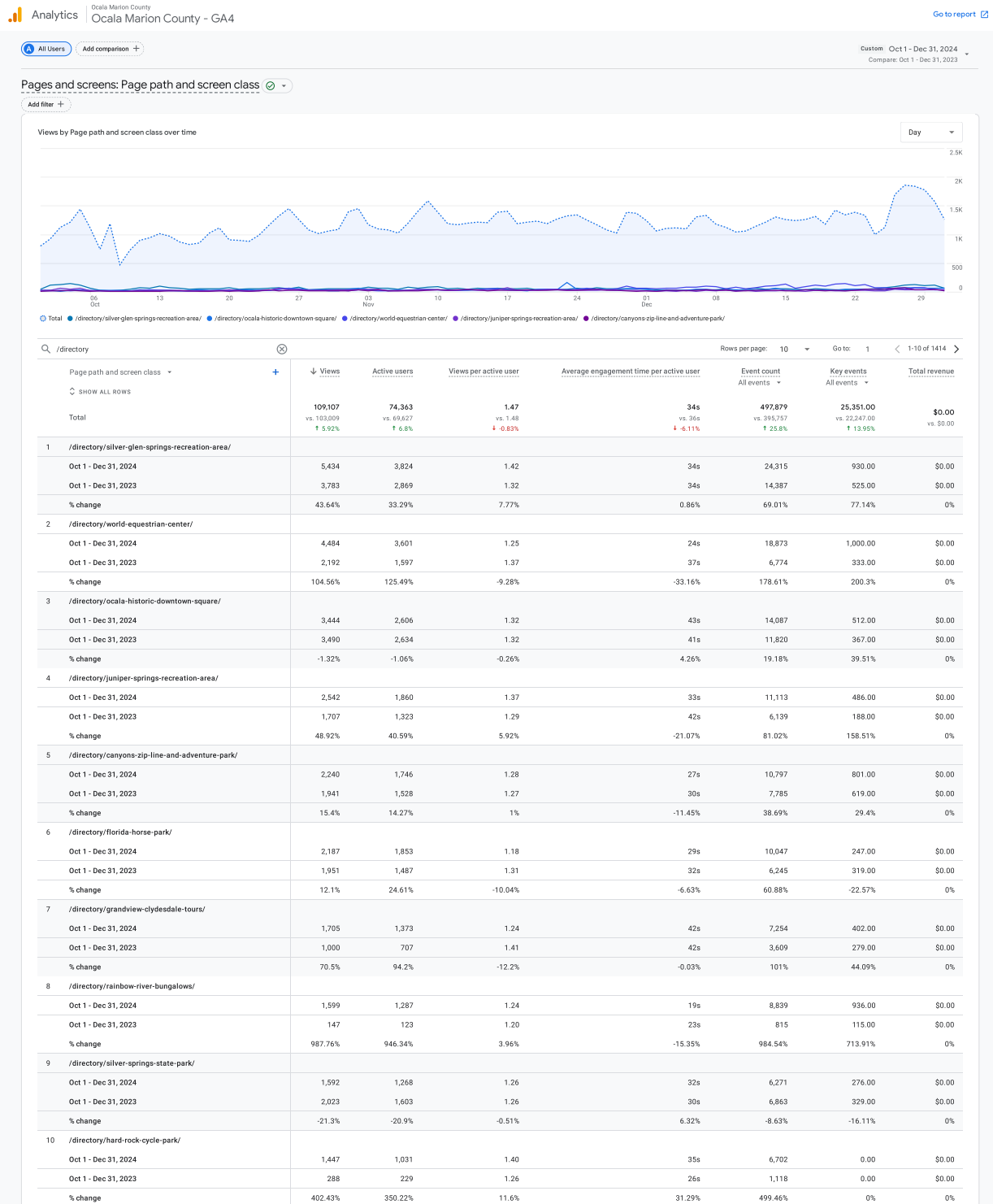
Below is a list of the top visited pages on the website during this time period.



Partner Pages

OcalaMarion.com has hundreds of directory listings on the website. The table below displays the top visited directory listing pages (partner pages) during the quarter.

There was a total of 103,009 visits to partner directory pages.



Where Audience Lives



By Country

Most of the website use comes from people located in the United States. The data indicates that the majority of users of the website that are international are located in Canada, the UK, Germany, Puerto Rico, India and Brazil.

By City

The data indicates that the majority of users of the website had their location set as Orlando, Miami, Atlanta, Ocala, New York, Tampa and Jacksonville.



User Devices

Device category	Active users	New users	Engaged sessions	Engagement rate	Engaged sessions per active user	Average engagement time per active user	Event count All events	Key events All events	Total revenue
SHOW ALL ROWS									
Total	294,091 vs. 249,101 ↑ 18.06%	290,317 vs. 245,116 ↑ 18.44%	184,960 vs. 151,901 ↑ 21.76%	48.87% vs. 49.71% ↓ -1.7%	0.63 vs. 0.61 ↑ 3.14%	48s vs. 44s ↑ 9.26%	2,582,918 vs. 1,539,789 ↑ 67.74%	50,440.00 vs. 29,292.00 ↑ 72.2%	\$0.00 vs. \$0.00
1 mobile									
Jul 1 - Sep 30, 2024	223,882	220,195	136,383	47.44%	0.61	40s	1,820,475	34,755.00	\$0.00
Jul 1 - Sep 30, 2023	191,239	188,416	110,873	47.39%	0.58	35s	1,113,913	20,277.00	\$0.00
% change	17.07%	16.87%	23.01%	0.09%	5.07%	12.86%	63.43%	71.4%	0%
2 desktop									
Jul 1 - Sep 30, 2024	61,945	60,195	44,137	57.54%	0.71	1m 20s	685,605	14,534.00	\$0.00
Jul 1 - Sep 30, 2023	49,946	48,360	35,509	59.22%	0.71	1m 19s	377,720	8,170.00	\$0.00
% change	24.02%	24.47%	24.3%	-2.84%	0.22%	0.47%	81.51%	77.89%	0%
3 tablet									
Jul 1 - Sep 30, 2024	10,131	9,914	5,396	42.36%	0.53	41s	76,786	1,151.00	\$0.00
Jul 1 - Sep 30, 2023	8,422	8,319	4,431	45.92%	0.53	41s	48,070	845.00	\$0.00
% change	20.29%	19.17%	21.78%	-7.76%	1.24%	-2.11%	59.74%	36.21%	0%
4 smart tv									
Jul 1 - Sep 30, 2024	14	13	5	35.71%	0.36	47s	52	0.00	\$0.00
Jul 1 - Sep 30, 2023	21	21	5	17.86%	0.24	13s	86	0.00	\$0.00
% change	-33.33%	-38.1%	0%	100%	50%	247.23%	-39.53%	0%	0%

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Visitation And Performance By Month



October

76,383 VISITS TO WEBSITE -10% YOY	58,080 WEBSITE USERS -17% YOY	58,290 VISIT FROM ORGANIC +16% YOY	133,723 PAGE VIEWS -17% YOY
00:00:53 AVERAGE ENGAGEMENT TIME PER SESSION +13% YOY	47,010 ENGAGED SESSIONS -6% YOY	61.55% ENGAGEMENT RATE +3% YOY	

November

109,595 VISITS TO WEBSITE +1% YOY	84,426 WEBSITE USERS +5% YOY	56,715 VISIT FROM ORGANIC +11% YOY	184,959 PAGE VIEWS +5% YOY
00:48 AVERAGE ENGAGEMENT TIME PER SESSION +12% YOY	60,932 ENGAGED SESSIONS +13% YOY	55.60% ENGAGEMENT RATE +1% YOY	

December

1,572,073 VISITS TO WEBSITE +39% YOY	802,464 VISIT FROM ORGANIC +41% YOY	1,213,059 TOTAL USERS +28% YOY	2,607,961 PAGE VIEWS +30% YOY
00:40 AVERAGE ENGAGEMENT TIME PER SESSION -4% YOY	809,786 ENGAGED SESSIONS +27% YOY	51.51% ENGAGEMENT RATE -1% YOY	

Total of 34,365 clicks to partner websites
 Total of 164 newsletter signups
 Total of 1,125 visitor guide requests through the website

Monthly Email Newsletters

October

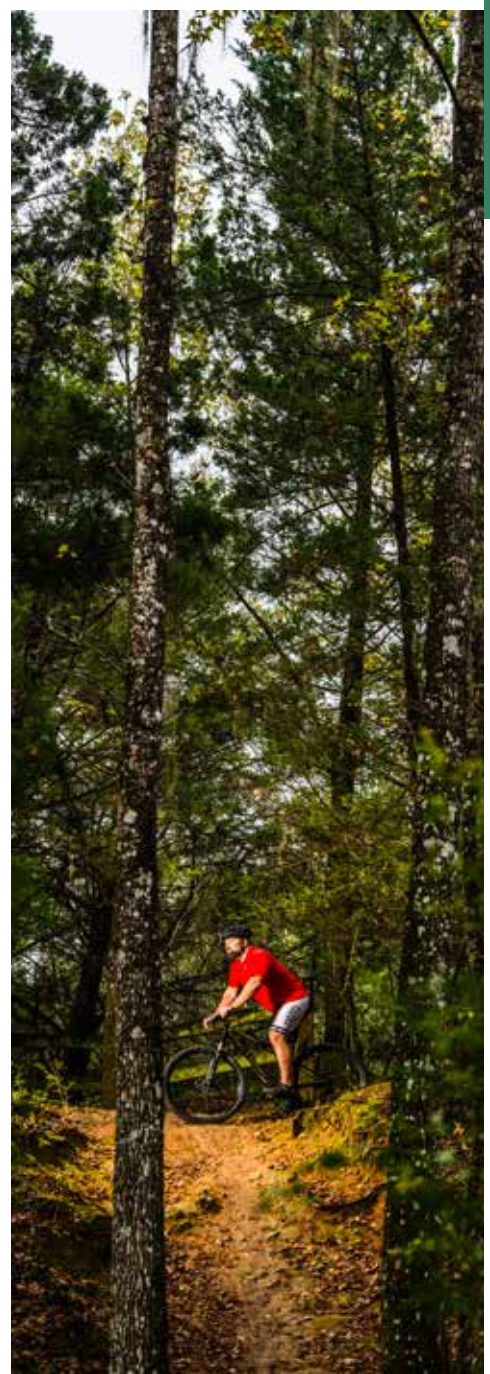
7,798 MESSAGES SENT	44% OPEN RATE	29% CLICK-TO-OPEN RATE	3,228 TOTAL OPENS
926 TOTAL CLICKS	623 VISITS TO WEBSITE	02:56 AVG. LENGTH OF VISIT	1.86 TOTAL PAGES VIEWED

November

7,496 MESSAGES SENT	36% OPEN RATE	37% CLICK-TO-OPEN RATE	2,672 TOTAL OPENS
952 TOTAL CLICKS	581 VISITS TO WEBSITE	02:58 AVG. LENGTH OF VISIT	2.04 TOTAL PAGES VIEWED

December

7,650 MESSAGES SENT	33% OPEN RATE	22% CLICK-TO-OPEN RATE	2,521 TOTAL OPENS
549 TOTAL CLICKS	408 VISITS TO WEBSITE	03:37 AVG. LENGTH OF VISIT	1.9 TOTAL PAGES VIEWED





Marion County Tourist Development Council

Agenda Item

File No.: 2025-18560

Agenda Date: 3/28/2025

Agenda No.:

SUBJECT:

PRESENTATION: Florida Huddle and Encounter Recap

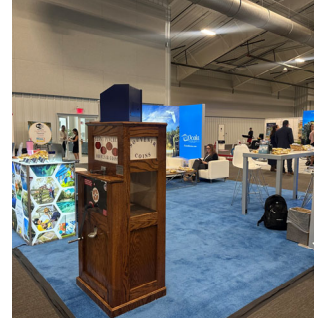
DESCRIPTION/BACKGROUND:

Information only.

2025 Florida Huddle and Encounter Recap Ocala, FL



Booth



Local Partner Attendance

- Cape Leisure – Silver Springs
- Hilton Ocala
- LBA Hospitality
- World Equestrian Center



Appointments

Total number of appointments

- Encounter: 42
- Huddle: 34
- 550 attendees
- 7,000 total appointments



Opening Reception Hosted by: Ocala/Marion County VCB & World Equestrian Center



Equine Panel



Hosted Buyer Event at The Pavilion at Green Gaits



Media

- Media Q & A with Dana Young & Loretta Shaffer
- Media Dinner - Ivy on the Square
- FAM - Todd and Shelly's, Canyons Zip Line and Adventure Park, Mojos



Media Coverage

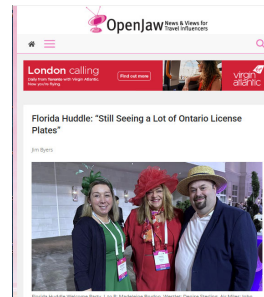
- Media from UK, Brazil, Canada, Mexico, Germany, and Latin America.

Ocala CEP highlights Florida Huddle 2025



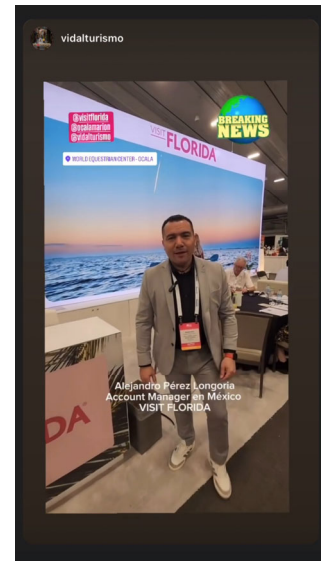
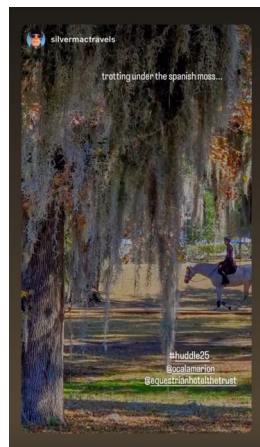
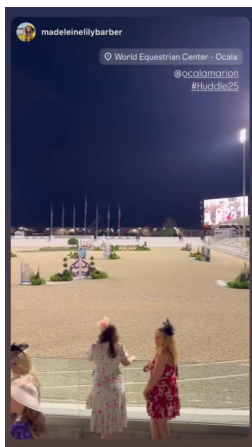
We take a look at an event that looks to bring in even more guests in 2025 in the Weekly Buzz.

Disney World For Horse Lovers? A Unique Family Road Trip To World Equestrian Center In Ocala



Media Coverage

- More than 7.8 Million in reach





THANK YOU!

**2026
Florida Huddle &
Encounter**

Date: February 2-4, 2026

Location: Hilton Orlando



Marion County Tourist Development Council

Agenda Item

File No.: 2025-18584

Agenda Date: 3/28/2025

Agenda No.:

SUBJECT:
Marketing and Communications Update

DESCRIPTION/BACKGROUND:
Information only.



Marketing & Communications Update March 2025

- **Current Running Media**
 - Print:
 - Visit Florida Vacation Guide – (2025)
 - Full page Ad
 - Prevue Magazine (Jan/Feb 2025 Issue)
 - Full Page Ad
 - Full Page Advertorial
 - Sports Planning Guide
 - 2-Page Spread in Sports Planning Guide Magazine (2025)
 - 2-Page Advertorial Content in Florida Sports Guide section (2025)
 - Billboards (OOH)
 - Outfront
 - 2 Billboards
 - Clear Channel
 - 1 Billboard
 - Ad+Genuity – Vistar Programmatic (always on – excluding Jan, May, Sept 2025)
 - Florida statewide digital billboards
 - Tampa International Airport & Orlando International digital panels
 - Urban panels – New York & Atlanta digital panels
 - Digital
 - Ad + Genuity DSP (always on)
 - Total Impressions for Jan- Feb 2025 : 5.5 M
 - Total Clicks for Jan- Feb 2025: 8,100 clicks
 - Sports Planning Guide
 - Video + Content on SportsPlanningGuide.com (October 2024-September 2025)
 - eNewsletter Banner Ads (Nov 2024 - Jan 2025)
 - Undertone (Feb 2025 – Aug 2025)
 - Total impressions for Feb 2025: 225,172
 - Total clicks for Feb 2025: 5,512
 - Nativo (Dec 2024 – Aug 2025)
 - Total impressions for Jan- Feb 2025: 3.5 M
 - Total clicks for Jan- Feb 2025: 21,112
 - TripAdvisor (Dec 2024 – March 2025)
 - Total impressions for Jan- Feb 2025: 1.5 M
 - Total clicks for Jan- Feb 2025: 3,237
 - Prevue
 - 5 e-blasts
 - Target Audience - Meeting planners
 - Total impressions for Jan- Feb 2025: 25,824
 - Total clicks for Jan- Feb 2025: 112



- Social (always on)
 - Facebook/Instagram
 - YouTube
- Search (always on)
 - Keyword and Performance MAX through Google
- **Industry/Advocacy Communications**
 - Career Day at Ina A Cohen Academy
 - Feb 24, 2025
 - VCB Hosted Tourism and Hospitality Industry Roundtable
 - March 12, 2025
 - VCB Industry Newsletter
 - March 2025
 - Florida Tourism Day in Tallahassee
 - March 26, 2025
 - Marion County Day
 - March 29, 2025
- **Public Relations**
 - Press Releases:
 - Top 10 Must See's in Ocala/Marion County– Jan 2025
 - Florida Huddle and Encounter – Feb 2025
 - Gateway Update – Feb 2025
 - What's New in Ocala/Marion County – March 2025
 - VISIT FLORIDA Releases:
 - 16 total (Jan-March)
 - Topics: Sustainable Florida, Spring Break, Solo Female Travel, Music Festival SZN, Escape the Hustle, Florida Superlatives, Family Fun in the Sun, Earth Day, Celebrating Motherly Love, Celebration National Museum Day, End of School, Florida Foodie Festival, Florida's Wildlife, Global Accessibility Awareness Day, Luxury Florida
 - Press Trips/ Familiarization Tours (FAM)
 - Germany - Front Row Society
 - REACH: Website: 394,000 unique monthly visitors; Social Media: 490,530+ followers.
 - Canada - World Traveller Magazine
 - REACH: 150,000 unique monthly visitors
 - Florida Huddle – (19 media)
 - Media covered markets from UK, Brazil, Canada, Mexico, Germany, and Latin America.
 - REACH: The combined total unique monthly reach for these media outlets is more than 7.8 million.
 - Canada – Family Traveller Canada
 - REACH: Global UVM: 500,000 and Canada UVM: 35,000. Email database: 42,000



Marion County Tourist Development Council

Agenda Item

File No.: 2025-18561

Agenda Date: 3/28/2025

Agenda No.:

SUBJECT:
Sales Update

DESCRIPTION/BACKGROUND:
Information only.



Monthly Sales Update March 28, 2025

- **New Business**
 - Babe Ruth 16-18 World Series
 - August 1-9, 2025
 - Estimated Room Nights: 1,400
 - Major League Fishing Heavy Hitters presented by Bass Pro Shops
 - May 16-22, 2026 OR May 9-15, 2026
 - Estimated Room Nights: 560

- **Leads**
 - International Miniature Bull Riding Association World Finals
 - October 2025
 - Estimated Room Nights: 950
 - Double K Rodeo Productions
 - May 2025 OR February 2026
 - Estimated Room Nights: 500
 - CDC National Workshop
 - July 8-12, 2026
 - Estimated Room Nights: 500
 - American Advertising Federation District 4 Fall Conference
 - November 6-7, 2026
 - Estimated Room Nights: 50
 -

- **Ongoing Leads**
 - American Darter's Association National Championship
 - July 2026 (5 days)
 - Estimated Room Nights: 600
 - Lady Bass Anglers Pro Bass Tour
 - October 11-16, 2026
 - Estimated Room Nights: 500
 - World Fishing Tour
 - October 17-24, 2026
 - Estimated Room Nights: 600



Marion County Tourist Development Council

Agenda Item

File No.: 2025-18562

Agenda Date: 3/28/2025

Agenda No.:

SUBJECT:
TDT Collections/STR and Key Data Update

DESCRIPTION/BACKGROUND:
Information only.

TDT COLLECTIONS

	ACTUAL 4%	ACTUAL 4%	ACTUAL 4%	ACTUAL 4%	ACTUAL 4%	ACTUAL 4%	ACTUAL 4%	ACTUAL 4%	ACTUAL 4%	Change from Last Year	PROJECTED AVERAGE (Last 5 Years) 4%		
	FY 17-18	FY 18-19	FY 19-20	FY20-21	FY21-22	FY22-23	FY23-24	FY23-24	FY24-25				
						PTD	PTD	Monthly	PTD				
OCT	259,157.91	204,924.52	208,480.07	208,964.21	271,833.28	349,930.49	349,930.49	365,854.69	365,854.69	379,319.18	379,319.18	\$ 13,464.49	281,012.55
NOV	259,465.87	228,758.97	231,208.87	223,081.69	293,149.84	442,324.12	792,254.61	349,743.98	715,598.67	558,579.61	937,898.79	\$ 208,835.63	307,901.70
DEC	259,851.68	225,689.89	236,936.54	185,291.99	418,818.13	369,635.90	1,161,890.51	398,894.92	1,114,493.59	462,549.20	1,400,447.99	\$ 63,654.28	321,915.50
JAN	227,275.36	208,911.55	220,533.21	226,855.23	346,052.50	428,869.17	1,590,759.68	399,341.68	1,513,835.27	537,175.62	1,937,623.61	\$ 137,833.94	324,330.36
FEB	286,456.85	273,064.02	299,288.30	294,191.48	413,140.70	512,970.04	2,103,729.72	525,512.43	2,039,347.70	626,799.77	2,564,423.38	\$ 101,287.34	409,020.59
MAR	350,071.35	323,299.80	302,080.26	359,419.51	524,933.16	601,255.70	2,704,985.42	628,714.27	2,668,061.97		0.00	\$ (628,714.27)	483,280.58
APR	359,327.08	385,618.64	214,603.12	402,060.20	630,194.20	677,443.18	3,382,428.60	697,599.40	3,365,661.37		0.00	\$ (697,599.40)	524,380.02
MAY	262,256.88	280,438.82	102,814.80	333,193.04	463,117.34	425,025.51	3,807,454.11	498,796.44	3,864,457.81		0.00	\$ (498,796.44)	364,589.43
JUN	199,261.84	232,018.65	149,677.12	322,508.82	348,876.21	374,531.93	4,181,986.04	402,595.36	4,267,053.17		0.00	\$ (402,595.36)	319,637.89
JUL	212,855.41	232,238.24	242,501.19	379,652.81	359,850.15	413,140.96	4,595,127.00	450,585.02	4,717,638.19		0.00	\$ (450,585.02)	369,146.03
AUG	197,702.74	196,329.01	264,335.05	320,233.46	445,047.73	439,053.97	5,034,180.97	409,648.68	5,127,286.87		0.00	\$ (409,648.68)	375,663.78
SEPT	188,010.37	203,554.83	174,264.90	420,995.81	327,614.07	334,784.79	5,368,965.76	353,899.19	5,481,186.06		0.00	\$ (353,899.19)	322,311.75
TOTAL:	\$ 3,061,693.34	\$ 2,994,846.94	\$ 2,646,723.43	\$ 3,676,448.25	\$ 4,842,627.31	\$ 5,368,965.76		\$ 5,481,186.06		\$ 2,564,423.38		\$ 112,220.30	\$ 4,403,190.16

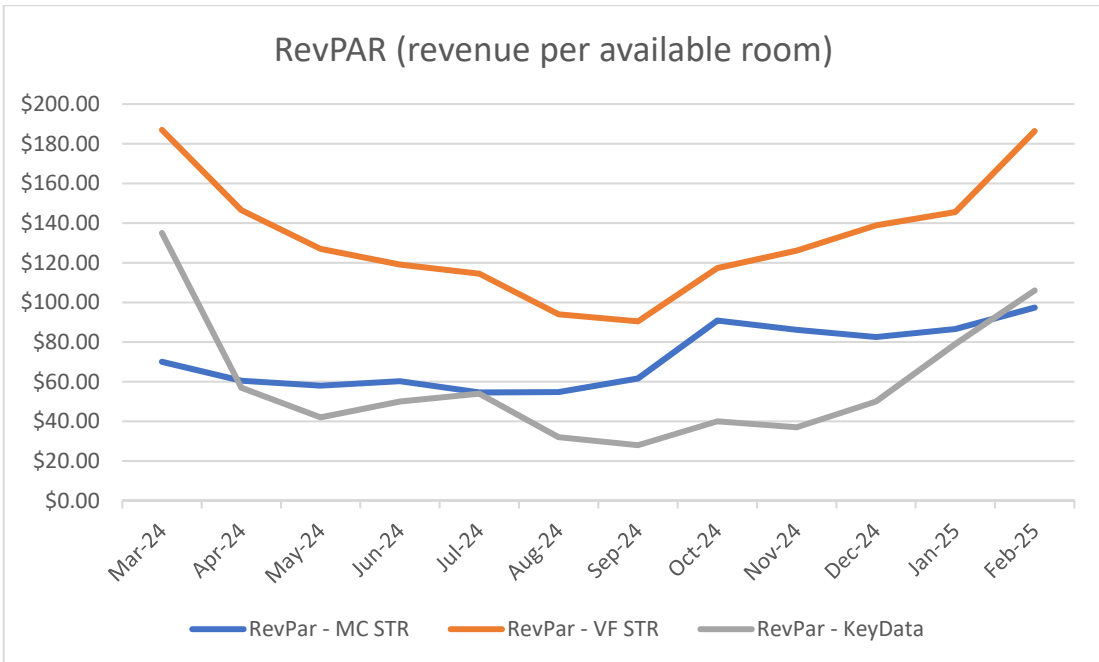
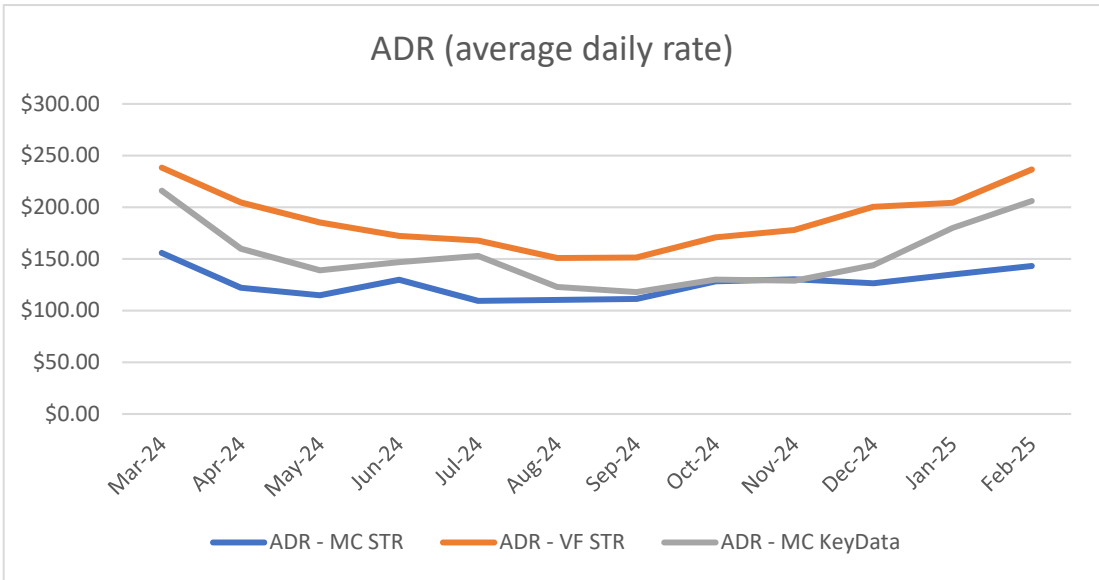
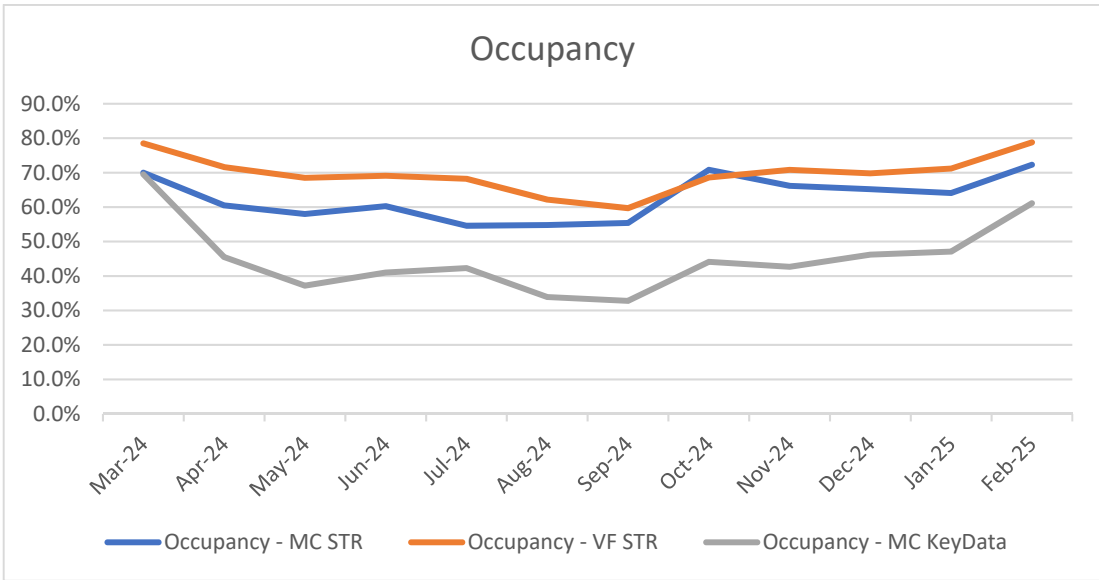
TOURIST DEV TAX
MONTHLY REPORTS

REVENUE PERIOD	FEB.24	MAR.24	APR.24	MAY.24	JUN.24	JUL.24	AUG.24	
REPORTING PERIOD	MAR.24	APR. 24	MAY.24	JUN.24	JUL.24	AUG.24	SEPT.24	
REMITTANCE DATE	APR.24	MAY.24	JUN.24	JUL.24	AUG.24	SEPT.24	OCT.24	
RPT								
LINE							145,522,644.22	
1	Gross Rental Receipts	16,562,909.74	18,453,878.70	13,283,224.92	10,834,044.12	12,004,928.89	11,060,370.30	9,707,758.00
2	Exempt Rental Receipts	693,839.58	870,818.49	711,844.28	540,228.45	547,925.35	544,576.09	636,556.75
3	Taxable Rental Receipts	15,869,070.16	17,583,060.21	12,571,380.64	10,293,815.67	11,457,003.54	10,515,794.21	9,071,201.25
4	Total Tax Collected	634,762.80	703,322.46	502,855.23	411,752.64	458,280.18	420,631.74	362,848.08
5	Adjustments	0.09	0.29	0.06	0.03	0.03	0.05	0.03
6	Bal Fwd / Overpaid	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
7	Total Tax Due	634,762.89	703,322.75	502,855.29	411,752.67	458,280.21	420,631.79	362,848.11
8	Less Collection Allow	(2,717.00)	(3,293.72)	(2,335.51)	(2,367.89)	(2,713.75)	(2,346.50)	(2,159.41)
9	Plus Penalty	1,365.30	2,722.16	1,969.58	3,218.67	8,904.28	4,135.66	3,841.54
10	Plus Interest	54.09	119.70	76.37	1,101.29	49.88	227.11	314.34
11	Current Amount Due	633,465.28	702,870.89	502,565.73	413,704.74	464,520.62	422,648.06	364,844.58
12	Credit Balance Used							
13	Underpayments							
14	NSF Cancels							
15	Total Amount Collected	633,465.28	702,870.89	502,565.73	413,704.74	464,520.62	422,648.06	364,844.58
16	Current Total Rate							
17	Dist to TD Council						5,063,496.74	
18	BCC	628,714.27	697,599.40	498,796.44	402,595.36	450,585.02	409,968.68	353,899.19
19	Tax Collector Comm	4,751.01	5,271.49	3,769.29	11,109.38	13,935.60	12,679.38	10,945.39
20	Total Collections Dist.	633,465.28	702,870.89	502,565.73	413,704.74	464,520.62	422,648.06	364,844.58

TOURIST DEV TAX
MONTHLY REPORTS

	REVENUE PERIOD	SEPT.24	OCT.24	NOV.24	DEC.24	JAN.25
	REPORTING PERIOD	OCT.24	NOV.24	DEC.24	JAN.25	FEB. 25
	REMITTANCE DATE	NOV.24	DEC.24	JAN.25	FEB.25	MAR.25
RPT						
LINE						
1	Gross Rental Receipts	10,407,695.73	15,048,140.88	12,808,134.10	14,652,715.23	16,736,590.10
2	Exempt Rental Receipts	623,818.09	648,958.86	847,195.76	769,691.01	625,432.40
3	Taxable Rental Receipts	9,783,877.64	14,399,182.02	11,960,938.34	13,883,024.22	16,111,157.70
4	Total Tax Collected	391,355.15	575,967.29	478,437.58	555,320.96	644,446.40
5	Adjustments	0.06	0.45	-	0.51	1.50
6	Bal Fwd / Overpaid	-	-	-	-	-
7	Total Tax Due	391,355.21	575,967.74	478,437.58	555,321.47	644,447.90
8	Less Collection Allow	(2,240.82)	(2,150.90)	(2,226.25)	(2,807.17)	(2,638.28)
9	Plus Penalty	2,102.99	2,147.83	610.00	1,154.96	4,255.06
10	Plus Interest	56.23	199.83	33.53	120.02	120.65
11	Current Amount Due	391,273.61	576,164.50	476,854.86	553,789.28	646,185.33
12	Credit Balance Used					
13	Underpayments					
14	NSF Cancels					
15	Total Amount Collected	391,273.61	576,164.50	476,854.86	553,789.28	646,185.33
16	Current Total Rate					
17	Dist to TD Council					
18	BCC	379,319.18	558,879.61	462,549.20	537,175.62	626,799.77
19	Tax Collector Comm	11,954.43	17,284.89	14,305.66	16,613.66	19,385.56
20	Total Collections Dist.	391,273.61	576,164.50	476,854.86	553,789.28	646,185.33

Trend Data for Occupancy, ADR, RevPAR (3/2024-2/2025)





Marion County Tourist Development Council

Agenda Item

File No.: 2025-18563

Agenda Date: 3/28/2025

Agenda No.:

SUBJECT:
TDC Events Calendar

DESCRIPTION/BACKGROUND:
Information only.

Calendar of Upcoming TDC Events

HITS Ocala Winter Circuit Weeks 6-10	February 18, 2025	March 23, 2025	Hits Post Time Farm
MARION COUNTY DAY (at McPherson)	March 29, 2025	March 29, 2025	Ocala, FL
MARION AT THE CAPITOL	April 10, 2025	April 10, 2025	Tallahassee, FL
Nike Winner's Circle Volleyball Tournament	April 12, 2025	April 13, 2025	World Equestrian Center
NCEA National Championships	April 12, 2025	April 14, 2025	World Equestrian Center
Rock the Country	May 9, 2025	May 11, 2025	Florida Horse Park
Cal Ripken T-Ball/Rookie B-State Tournament	June 5, 2025	June 8, 2025	Rotary Sportsplex
USA Swimming Speedo Sectionals	June 26, 2025	June 29, 2025	FAST
Dixie Softball State Tournament	June 25, 2025	June 30, 2025	Bellevue Sportsplex
Florida Swimming FLAGS Championship	July 10, 2025	July 13, 2025	FAST
Florida Swimming Senior Championship	July 17, 2025	July 20, 2025	FAST
USA Swimming Futures Championship	July 23, 2025	July 26, 2025	FAST
YMCA National Long Course Championship	July 29, 2025	August 3, 2025	FAST
Cal Ripken 8U World Series	August 1, 2025	August 9, 2025	Rotary Sportsplex
Babe Ruth 16-18 World Series	August 1, 2025	August 9, 2025	Rotary Sportsplex



Marion County Tourist Development Council

Agenda Item

File No.: 2025-18564

Agenda Date: 3/28/2025

Agenda No.:

SUBJECT:
Sales Report

DESCRIPTION/BACKGROUND:
Information only.

Ocala/Marion County Visitors & Convention Bureau Sales Report

2/27/2025 - 3/28/2025

Event Type: All

Status: ALL FUTURE DEFINITE

Account Name	Event Name	Sales Rep Rep %	Market Type	Source # Partners Sent Lead	Event Start Event End	Scope New/Repeat	EI Est \$ EI Act \$	OOT Att Total Att	Peak Rooms	Requested Rooms	Contracted Rooms
Florida Council for History Education	FLCHE Annual Conference	Bryan Day 100.0%	Education	Email	7/25/2025	Local	\$0.00	120	70	120	0
					7/26/2025	new	\$0.00	140			
Babe Ruth League	Babe Ruth 16-18 World Series	Corry Locke 100.0%	Sports	Sports ETA Symposium 0	8/1/2025	National	\$1,814,844.00	135	175	1,400	0
					8/9/2025	new	\$0.00	2,135			
Bellevue Girls Softball Association, Inc.	Dixie Softball State Championships	Corry Locke 100.0%	Sports	Email	6/25/2025	State	\$1,697,760.00	375	250	858	0
					6/29/2025	new	\$0.00	450			
Bellevue Girls Softball Association, Inc.	Dixie Softball World Series	Corry Locke 100.0%	Sports	Email	7/24/2026	State	\$0.00	375	250	900	0
					7/31/2026	new	\$0.00	450			
Cal Ripken Baseball	Cal Ripken T-Ball/Rookie B State Championship	Corry Locke 100.0%	Sports	Email	6/5/2025	State	\$1,078,606.00	500	225	750	0
					6/8/2025	repeat	\$0.00	800			
Cal Ripken Baseball	Cal Ripken Rookie World Series	Corry Locke 100.0%	Sports	Sports ETA Symposium 0	8/1/2025	International	\$898,265.00	285	240	800	0
					8/9/2025	repeat	\$0.00	335			
Citrus County Kennel Club	Citrus County Kennel Club All-Breed Dog Show	Corry Locke 100.0%	Social	Email	7/4/2025	Regional	\$0.00	2,000	129	358	0
					7/6/2025	repeat	\$0.00	2,500			
CSF Aquatics	USA Swimming Futures Championships	Corry Locke 100.0%	Sports	Email	7/23/2025	National	\$2,140,397.00	2,000	1,000	2,900	0
					7/26/2025	new	\$0.00	2,300			

Status: ALL FUTURE DEFINITE

Account Name	Event Name	Sales Rep Rep %	Market Type	Source # Partners Sent Lead	Event Start Event End	Scope New/Repeat	EI Est \$ EI Act \$	OOT Att Total Att	Peak Rooms	Requested Rooms	Contracted Rooms
CSF Aquatics	Florida Swimming Senior Championships	Corry Locke 100.0%	Sports	Email 0	7/17/2025 7/20/2025	State repeat	\$2,071,066.00 \$0.00	2,000 2,500	730	1,500	0
CSF Aquatics	Florida Swimming FLAGS Championships	Corry Locke 100.0%	Sports	Email 0	7/10/2025 7/13/2025	State repeat	\$2,314,698.00 \$0.00	2,300 2,900	600	2,000	0
CSF Aquatics	USA Swimming Speedo Sectionals	Corry Locke 100.0%	Sports	Email 0	6/26/2025 6/29/2025	National new	\$2,232,888.00 \$0.00	2,000 2,300	1,000	2,900	0
Florida High School Athletic Association	Swimming and Diving State Championships	Corry Locke 100.0%	Sports	Email 144	11/6/2025 11/15/2025	State new	\$3,123,708.00 \$0.00	1,400 1,500	367	2,220	0
Joseph Volleyball Camps JVC	Nike Winner's Circle Volleyball Tournament	Corry Locke 100.0%	Sports	Connect Sports Marketplace 0	4/12/2025 4/13/2025	Regional repeat	\$720,282.00 \$0.00	1,400 2,200	536	1,072	0
Rock the Country Ocala	Rock the Country Ocala	Corry Locke 100.0%	Social	Email 150	5/9/2025 5/10/2025	National repeat	\$9,161,342.00 \$0.00	20,000 30,000	2,000	3,000	0
YMCA	National Long Course Swimming Championship	Corry Locke 100.0%	Sports	Phone 0	7/27/2026 7/31/2026	National	\$2,386,697.90 \$0.00	800 1,000	275	1,750	0
YMCA	National Long Course Swimming Championship	Corry Locke 100.0%	Sports	Phone 0	7/28/2025 8/1/2025	National	\$2,350,187.58 \$0.00	800 1,000	275	1,750	0
Event Count:						16	\$31,990,741.48	36,490	8,122	24,278	0
							\$0.00	52,510			

Status: CURRENT DEFINITE

Account Name	Event Name	Sales Rep Rep %	Market Type	Source # Partners Sent Lead	Event Start Event End	Scope New/Repeat	EI Est \$ EI Act \$	OOT Att Total Att	Peak Rooms	Requested Rooms	Contracted Rooms	
College Swimming and Diving Coaches Association of America	CSCAA National Invitational Championship	Corry Locke 100.0%	Sports	Email 0	3/12/2025 3/15/2025	National new	\$2,358,380.00 \$0.00	900 900	500	2,000	0	
CSF Aquatics	Florida Swimming FLAGS Spring Championships	Corry Locke 100.0%	Sports	Email 0	3/6/2025 3/9/2025	State new	\$1,399,205.00 \$0.00	1,500 1,700	600	1,530	0	
Florida Municipal Electric Association	FMEA Lineman Competition	Corry Locke 100.0%	Government	Referral 0	3/1/2025 3/1/2025	State new	\$0.00 \$0.00	0 0	0	0	0	
Lightning City Gymnastics	Charity Challenge Cup	Corry Locke 100.0%	Sports	Email 0	3/7/2025 3/9/2025	State new	\$756,892.00 \$0.00	3,000 3,150	120	358	0	
Live Oak International	Live Oak International	Corry Locke 100.0%	Equine	Email 0	3/13/2025 3/16/2025	International repeat	\$1,586,988.00 \$0.00	5,000 15,000	400	1,000	0	
Event Count:							5	\$6,101,465.00	10,400	1,620	4,888	0
								\$0.00	20,750			

Status: CURRENT LEAD

Account Name	Event Name	Sales Rep Rep %	Market Type	Source # Partners Sent Lead	Event Start Event End	Scope New/Repeat	EI Est \$ EI Act \$	OOT Att Total Att	Peak Rooms	Requested Rooms	Contracted Rooms	
Florida Farm Bureau	Women's Leadership Conference	Bryan Day 100.0%	Agriculture	Email 144	3/27/2025	State	\$0.00	125	60	130	0	
					3/30/2025	new	\$0.00	150				
Marion County Public Safety	Marion County Public Safety: FL-TERT Coordinators Collaborative	Bryan Day 100.0%	Government	130	3/12/2025	Local	\$0.00	12	12	24	0	
					3/13/2025	new	\$0.00	0				
Event Count:							2	\$0.00	137	72	154	0
								\$0.00	150			

Status: LEADS SENT

Account Name	Event Name	Sales Rep Rep %	Market Type	Source # Partners Sent Lead	Event Start Event End	Scope New/Repeat	EI Est \$ EI Act \$	OOT Att Total Att	Peak Rooms	Requested Rooms	Contracted Rooms	
Meeting Management Group, Inc.	American Advertising Federation District 4 Fall Conference	Bryan Day 100.0%	Association	Rendezvous South 148	11/6/2026	new	\$0.00	0	25	50	0	
					11/7/2026		\$0.00	0				
National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion	CDC National Workshop	Bryan Day 100.0%	Association	Rendezvous South 148	7/8/2026	new	\$0.00	100	100	500	0	
					7/12/2026		\$0.00	0				
Citrus County Kennel Club	Citrus County Kennel Club All-Breed Dog Show	Corry Locke 100.0%	Social	Email 148	7/4/2025	Regional	\$0.00	2,000	129	358	0	
					7/6/2025	repeat	\$0.00	2,500				
Event Count:							3	\$0.00	2,100	254	908	0
								\$0.00	2,500			

Status: TURNED DEFINITE

Account Name	Event Name	Sales Rep Rep %	Market Type	Source # Partners Sent Lead	Event Start Event End	Scope New/Repeat	EI Est \$ EI Act \$	OOT Att Total Att	Peak Rooms	Requested Rooms	Contracted Rooms	
Cal Ripken Baseball	Cal Ripken T-Ball/Rookie B State Championship	Corry Locke 100.0%	Sports	Email 0	6/5/2025	State	\$1,078,606.00	500	225	750	0	
					6/8/2025	repeat	\$0.00	800				
Citrus County Kennel Club	Citrus County Kennel Club All- Breed Dog Show	Corry Locke 100.0%	Social	Email 148	7/4/2025	Regional	\$0.00	2,000	129	358	0	
					7/6/2025	repeat	\$0.00	2,500				
Event Count:							2	\$1,078,606.00	2,500	354	1,108	0
								\$0.00	3,300			

Status: TURNED LEAD

Account Name	Event Name	Sales Rep Rep %	Market Type	Source # Partners Sent Lead	Event Start Event End	Scope New/Repeat	EI Est \$ EI Act \$	OOT Att Total Att	Peak Rooms	Requested Rooms	Contracted Rooms	
Meeting Management Group, Inc.	American Advertising Federation District 4 Fall Conference	Bryan Day 100.0%	Association	Rendezvous South 148	11/6/2026	new	\$0.00	0	25	50	0	
					11/7/2026		\$0.00	0				
National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion	CDC National Workshop	Bryan Day 100.0%	Association	Rendezvous South 148	7/8/2026	new	\$0.00	100	100	500	0	
					7/12/2026		\$0.00	0				
U.S. Futsal	Southeast Regional Championships	Corry Locke 100.0%	Sports	Referral 0	12/19/2025	Regional	\$0.00	0	0	0	0	
					12/21/2025	new	\$0.00	0				
Event Count:							3	\$0.00	100	125	550	0
								\$0.00	0			

Status: TURNED LOST

Account Name	Event Name	Sales Rep Rep %	Market Type	Source # Partners Sent Lead	Event Start Event End	Scope New/Repeat	EI Est \$ EI Act \$	OOT Att Total Att	Peak Rooms	Requested Rooms	Contracted Rooms	
Florida Tourist Development Tax Association	Annual TDT Conference	Corry Locke 100.0%	Government	Email 149	7/22/2025 7/25/2025	State new	\$0.00 \$0.00	90 100	60	165	0	
Event Count:							1	\$0.00	90	60	165	0
							\$0.00	100				

Status: TURNED TENTATIVE

Account Name	Event Name	Sales Rep Rep %	Market Type	Source # Partners Sent Lead	Event Start Event End	Scope New/Repeat	EI Est \$ EI Act \$	OOT Att Total Att	Peak Rooms	Requested Rooms	Contracted Rooms
Lady Bass Anglers Association(LBAA)	LBAA Women's Bass Classic	Bryan Day 100.0%	Sports	PlayEasy 0	10/11/2026	Local	\$0.00	35	0	0	0
					10/16/2026	new	\$0.00	0			
					Event Count:	1	\$0.00	35	0	0	0
							\$0.00	0			



Marion County Tourist Development Council

Agenda Item

File No.: 2025-18565

Agenda Date: 3/28/2025

Agenda No.:

SUBJECT:
TDC Attendance Report

DESCRIPTION/BACKGROUND:
Information only.

TDC Attendance Report

2025

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November
Rus Adams	X										
Jeff Bailey											
Victoria Billig											
Danny Gaekwad											
Jason Reynolds	X										
Barry Mansfield	X										
Christopher Fernandez		X									
Ron Livsey											
Carl Zalak	X										

* Last Meeting - Term Expires

+ First Meeting - Term Starts

- Last Meeting

x Absent

Resigned