

HOSPITALITY EDUCATION

May 2010

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Hospitality Education

EDUCATION

Industry Partnership

National Travel and Tourism Week officially covers the week of May 8-16th. It has been celebrated in the U.S. since 1984, when U.S. Congress designated the first week in May as the national holiday. Since then, the U.S. travel community has come together to celebrate the holiday through local rallies and events to raise awareness of the industry's significance and impact on Americans nationwide. Just a few impressive facts on how travel and tourism contribute to local American communities: According to the U.S. Travel Association, it is America's largest employer with 1 out of every 9 American jobs dependent on travel and tourism. There are 7.4 million direct travel-generated jobs in the U.S. with a total payroll of more than \$186 billion. Here in Pinellas County we can claim 81,000 jobs that are tourism related and \$2.9 billion visitor-generated wages.

To honor those in the travel and tourism business and our communities, Visit St. Pete/Clearwater has created an annual tradition of hosting a luncheon the Friday before. We had 336 guests in attendance at the Pavilion Trade Winds Island Grand Resort. Our theme was "Know Your Brand, Love Your Brand" which was on a ribbon threaded through a glass shaped kiss acknowledging our guest speaker and the Chihuly Gallery opening. Our keynote was New York branding expert, Michael Bierut who shared highlights from his career enforcing the Power of a Brand. Kate Tully, Executive Director of the Morean Arts Center gave a photographic overview of what is in store for our community when the Chihuly collection arrives. She also delighted the audience by wearing a pair of boots that had been painted in vibrant colors that replicated Dale Chihuly's signature shoes. In addition, we had a brief presentation by Peter Olsen from Clean the World about our efforts in the hospitality industry to recycle soap, reduce land fill and help save lives. Currently there are 12 hotels in Pinellas participating in this program and hopefully we can raise further awareness and sign up many more as we kick off a county wide campaign of collecting a "Million Bars of Soap for Hope". Sheraton Sand Key, Shepherd's Beach Resort, SandPearl Resort, Holiday Inn Clearwater, Hilton Resort Clearwater, Hyatt Regency Clearwater, County Inn & Suites, Renaissance Vinoy Resort & Golf Club, Residence Inn St. Petersburg, Courtyard St. Petersburg Clearwater, Holiday Inn Harbourside Indian Rocks and Alden Beach Resort & Suites. Our collective efforts in this particular campaign will provide 1,279,544 children with soap for one year.

Also part of this year's celebrations, VSPC paired up with Tampa Bay and Company on Tuesday, May 11th to host our own Travel Rally Day at the Tampa Airport. This was an event organized

across America designed to demonstrate travel's impact on local workers, businesses and economies. Dozens of hospitality partners showed up with signs like, "Tourism mean Bu\$\$ine\$\$" and "85 Visitors = 1 Florida Job". Plane loads of visitors were also treated to a lively musical presentation by the Busch Garden Sheiks traveling band, a few special guest animals and speakers including key airport personal, DT Minich and Mayor Hibbard. Media groups were also present to capture the signs and messaging that Travel and Tourism MATTERS!

Another awareness program that VSPC feels is important and will be a 'Proud Supporter' is an organization called Dolphin SMART, which is an acronym for their mission and responsible viewing practices. This is an organization that is comprised of The Dolphin Ecology Project, NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration), National Marine Sanctuaries and EDCS (Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society). It is a unique, recognition and education program helping wild dolphins by offering incentives for dolphin viewing businesses that voluntarily participate in the program and educate their customers about the importance of responsibly viewing of wild dolphins. I attended a workshop along with about 35 other water based business owners and operators. The workshop extended half a day with informational presentations by researchers about local dolphin populations and natural dolphin behaviors and to educate us on the importance of participating in a wild dolphin conservation program.

The Tampa Bay Area is becoming more and more engaged in collaborative projects that bridge our resources. Joining efforts to create awareness for the opening of the Salvador Dali's new location adjacent to the Mahaffey Theater (which is where we held the event), was Tampa Bay and Company, the St. Petersburg Chamber and the Education Dept for VSPC. We held an after-hours business members event for them to speak to representatives of some of the cultural offerings in the downtown St. Petersburg area as well as get a hard hat tour of the new Dali Museum. Business contacts were exchanged and our Tampa neighbors received a firsthand view of the revitalization of our vibrant waterfront and growing art scene.

Value of Tourism Presentations

County Volunteer Orientations: Ft. DeSoto (2) and County Extension

HOSPITALITY

VSPC Representation

BACA (Bay Area Concierge Association) at Bardmoor Country Club

Pinellas Green Government Partnership

TBBCoC (Tampa Bay Beaches Chamber) Board of Directors Monthly Meeting

TBBCoC National Tourism Lunch

TBBCoC TBB Chamber Membership Orientation

FTI FAM arrangements for production of Hair

County Volunteer Site Coordinators Meeting

BIG C Meeting – Madeira Beach

Offshore Oil Drilling volunteer meetings - Gulfport

Sports Symposium at the Palladium for high school students, Big East Tournament

VSPC Planning

Telephone Customer Service Skills for Pinellas County