

HOSPITALITY EDUCATION
July 2010
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Hospitality Education

EDUCATION

Industry Partnership

Pinellas County has fourteen Chambers of Commerce representing the fabric of our business communities. Tourism and the local economy go hand in hand. Working together as one destination is a challenge but must be embraced and massaged to be effective for the sum total. Several times throughout the year the CVB Directors host the Chamber Executives Partnership Roundtable to share information as well as, seek opportunities to voice concerns and expectations moving forward to promote Pinellas County. Of major concern and interest were updates on the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill and response from the CVB and Visit Florida. In addition, this meeting gave us a chance to get to know the three new Chamber Presidents.

Another response to the Gulf Oil disaster were various grassroots efforts surfaced who took the responsibility to speak out and take on America's energy challenge. Armed with messages that support clean energy and climate solutions that will create millions of jobs, protect our unique environment, and put America back in control of its economic and energy future. Armed with messages of protest that join hands on their favorite beaches to oppose drilling off Florida's coast; Armed with messages that go directly to Washington DC and our lawmakers, letting them know what our constituents have been doing as environmental stewards and messages that we support "Clean Energy Now". I had an unexpected opportunity to be part of one such event in Washington DC. Taking a couple days off, I went to DC to share my concerns about the impact from a tourism perspective, if we jeopardized our pristine beaches and crystal clear gulf waters. I took the message that that tourism was the #1 industry in Pinellas County, employing 81,000 friends, family and neighbors, who generated over \$3 million in wages that created an economic impact for the smallest county in Florida of \$6.3 billion! We all have a responsibility to make clean decisions.

As part of my job description I am tasked with developing programs with various educational institutions to encourage students to enter the hospitality or tourism industry. In July, I had the pleasure of successfully placing several university seniors in internships for credit to graduate. All students were in tourism programs, two from Pinellas and wanted completely different experiences. After a conversation to determine their goals and interests, I found out that one of the students, Kim was interested in learning about the operations of running a property and she would prefer a larger conference type facility. Knowing the Tradewinds was intern friendly I made a couple calls and hooked Kim up for an interview. It worked out great and after a couple days, this is what she had to say. "I started Friday and the plan is for me to stay in the Sandpiper Front Desk area for the next three weeks, look into Bell, Valet, and such at the Island Grand the following three weeks, followed by two weeks in Engineering/Renovations, two weeks of activities, two weeks in Laundry and two weeks in Housekeeping. I think that'll give me a good overview as to what it entails to be running a resort :) Another of the students, Colleen was

interested in learning more about the basics of hotel management and community events as she had a taste for planning a HorrorHound Weekend during college in Indiana. Gulfport was one of the first places that came to mind for their eclectic community and numerous events. Plus their Chamber President also owns a B&B. Colleen wrote to let me know how it was going. “I thought you might like to know that I am having a wonderful time interning with Lori Rosso at Sea Breeze Manor. She is an amazing person and has taught me a lot so far. I can't thank you enough for referring her! “The last student placed was Claire, who had been a referral from Meetings and Conventions. She was very interested in environment pursuits. Participating myself in several grassroots volunteer meetings; I knew how strapped the organizers were for time to do everything they wanted to. So I arranged for the Hands Across the Sand and Sierra Club to use an intern. Here's an excerpt from an email that Claire sent, “Thank you so much for connecting me with Cathy and Phil. This opportunity you gave me really changed my life for the better. ... With the unfortunate loss of summer tourists, I learned it was up to Florida residents to come together and make a difference by encouraging "stay-cations" and clean energy awareness. I met so many positive people when working at press conferences, presenting at convention centers, working at the Sierra Club, and finally joining Hands Across the Sand. With your help, I have truly been inspired to dedicate myself to Florida's beaches and economy. I can't thank you enough for going out of your way of your very busy day to help a lost college student. Since this summer my goals are clearer and closer!”

Professional Development

Webinar with Visit Florida, Marketing response to Gulf Oil Spill
Toastmasters Officer Training for Contest

Value of Tourism Presentations

County Volunteer Orientations (2) Heritage Village

HOSPITALITY

VSPC Representation

TBBCoC (Tampa Bay Beaches Chamber) Ambassador fundraising committee
St. Petersburg College Oil Spill Panel
Clearwater Chamber of Commerce Tourism Partner meeting
VSPC Leisure Forum
Women in Tourism
Fundraiser for Seabird Sanctuary and Oil Spill
BACA (Bay Area Concierge Association) Chihuly Art Gallery & 400 Beach Drive
TBBCoC Sizzlin Summer Annual Fundraiser
Big C Mayors Council
Survey Participant for County Volunteerism
St. Petersburg Chamber of Commerce- Meet the new President

VSPC Planning

Healthy Hotel workshops for Superior Small Lodging & Condo Alliance
FAM for Concierge – Tampa Bay Area and Orlando
Hospitality Law educational workshop