

# HOSPITALITY EDUCATION

**JUNE 2015**

**Rhonda Sanborn**

**Hospitality Education Director**

## **EDUCATION**

### **Industry Partnerships**

Hurricane Season officially begins June 1 for Florida and would have a devastating impact if we were not prepared. Every year, plenty of information is provided online and numerous presentations are offered to make sure we are, “Storm Ready”. Although we all know this, sometimes complacency takes over especially when memories go soft after so many years of tourism friendly weather. Duke Energy knows this and is arguably one of the most diligent campaigners to ‘be prepared’ and lets their customers know what can and can’t be done by their company in the event of a named storm. We are fortunate that Duke Energy is also a strong ally for the tourism industry and wanted to partner with VSPC to reach the #1 industry in Pinellas. We collaborated to host a ‘Weathering the Storm’ Seminar and held that at the new Pinellas EOC. We had over 100 participants and panelist shared a wealth of knowledge. Duke Energy and the US Coast Guard reminded us they both leave with equipment until safe to return. The Coast Guard reiterated one of their first priorities after rescue is to open our ports for commerce. Randy Piatt, VP Hilton Get Away Vacations lost numerous properties in the 2005 hurricanes. He had invaluable information of lessons learned, and one of his important take-aways was how vital it was that your roof was secure. David Downing reminded everyone that our role in an emergency situation is to relay information from the EOC about the storm and provide information of accommodations accordingly. Sally Bishop gave a great overview of their role and demoed the Counties new online Storm Surge Simulation to show our vulnerability with very little rise in water levels.

Twice a year I have the pleasure of escorting a new crop of French Interns around Pinellas County to familiarize them with our destination. These students are from the B.E.A.U. Institute and are seniors or in their masters in Tourism related degrees. The program started with the Clearwater Beach Chamber of Commerce with three students and has grown up to 35; half of which also intern with tourism partners through the St. Petersburg Chamber. Typically we have a summer group and again in the fall. Not only do I give them an overview of the County lay of the land, I provide a presentation that gives them an outline of how our municipalities, chambers and VSPC work together to promote the Tourism Economic Engine.

A brief shout out of sincere appreciation to one of our industry partners, the Clearwater Beach Chamber at their Annual Awards; for recognizing David Downing as Tourism Partner of the Year and myself for Citizen of the Year. I am truly honored.

### **Value of Tourism Presentations**

G.E.T. Tampa Bay (Guest Experience Training)

B.E.A.U. Institute French Interns

## **Professional Development**

Webinar with Visit Florida, Online Hospitality Training

## **HOSPITALITY**

### **VSPC Representation**

- Clearwater Beach Annual Awards
- College of Marine Sciences
- SKAL
- Tampa Bay Beaches Chamber Tourism (TBBCoC) ribbon cutting Madeira Beach Marriott
- TDC monthly meeting
- Superior Small Lodging Awards Dinner
- TBBCoC Leadership Institute - Kickoff at Bilmar
- Clearwater Regional Tourism Meeting, David and Santiago presenting
- TBBCoC Board Meeting
- USFSP Orientation
- Bay Area Concierge (BACA) at Weedon Island
- 14 Chambers delivering Live Amplified VSPC materials
- BACA, Armed Forces History Museum
- St. Petersburg Yacht Club, Leadership St. Pete Graduation
- Guy Harvey Outpost, 1<sup>st</sup> Gulf Ocean water polo event
- Miss Florida Pageant (3) events
- BACA, Seasons 52
- Big C Mayors Meeting at St. Pete Beach Community Center
- TBBCoC Ribbon Cutting, Verducci Italian Market
- PRIDE Events, Museum of Fine Arts, kickoff / Parade/ Welcome Table
- Women in Tourism, Bilma
- FIVB/ AVP Volley Ball, VIP event at Vinoy, volunteered (4)

### **Upcoming Event Planning**

- Good Burger with St. Petersburg Chamber – weekly meeting