

HOSPITALITY EDUCATION

October 2014

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EDUCATION

Industry Partnerships

One would think people in the art world would know other people in the art world. But come to find out, they too are too busy and caught up in their own organizations or close community – they don't get out much to explore. I was asked by the Marketing St. Pete Arts group to organize one of their quarterly meetings and take them on a Familiarization Tour (FAM) of the emerging art districts and share some background stories on new developments. The city picked up the Trolley and we escorted 18 representatives from most of the genres of the arts community. I supplied historical information, pointed out public art along our route and emphasized what we talk about when VSPC is selling the destination from that perspective. Having art and culture experts on board also gave them a chance to engage with one another and give their point of view of the arts culture. This was only a half day tour but we manage to cover all five arts districts with several brief stops at Craftsman House Gallery, Morean Center for Clay, Duncan McClellan's, Soft Water/ MGA Studios and Art Pool Gallery.

Hospitality Connect is a collaborative effort by VSPC, the City of St. Petersburg, the Chamber of Commerce and Downtown Business Association -- to bring together the hospitality partners so they learn about the latest developments that impact our industry and the downtown sector. In our third year, we had so many relevant and timely events to report on that we had to have breakout tables with representatives from each topic: Sundial opening, GreenLight Pinellas, BLUE Ocean, BitCoin Bowl, new art mural tours, food trucks, emerging Arts Districts, St. Petersburg Greenhouse, East/West Shrine Game, Dolphin Tale 2, and promoting the wildly popular craft beer trail. We had about 150 tourism partners which even included some beach neighbors interested in staying connected.

VSPC has been supporting the Clearwater Jazz Holiday for decades in a variety of ways, but not typically having a booth during the event. However, we thought there was so much going on County-wide; we wanted to get the word out to a captive audience of our Tampa Bay Region and outlying areas. Our booth was festive and inviting for conversations with lots of materials, as well as a 'selfie' photo opportunity with Winter and Hope (actually it was a poster the City of St. Pete made for us and gave me that replicated our marketing on the trams at Tampa Airport). We occupied the both all weekend with volunteers from staff as well as from the Dali Museum and BLUE Ocean who pitched in to specifically talk up their current programs.

Pinellas County has 14 Chambers of Commerce, all of whom are invested in promoting their members business success within their communities. They are valued key partners with us as we go to great efforts to market awareness of our area and the diversity of the destination. Even though we attend as many events and functions throughout the County as possible, it's important to gather with the Chamber Presidents and our management staff for conversations on how we can strengthen these relationships for seamless efficiency to promote tourism. Technology has necessitated that we all re-examine the way we work and our relevancy. In October we met and started those discussions for the process, and what actions we all need to do moving forward in 2105. We can look forward to joining forces as we extend the VSPC brand in destination with the same goal to create an enhanced visitor experience.

Professional Development

Webinar, "Stop Beating Your People with Carrots"

Value of Tourism Presentation

Academic Majors Career Fair, St. Petersburg College

HOSPITALITY

VSPC Representation

- Bit-Coin Introduction meeting
- Volunteered for George Takei event
- Leadership St. Pete Alumni Assoc. LSPAA First Friday
- Advisory meeting for SHARE Academy at Clearwater High School
- TDC monthly meeting
- Boat House Meeting Heritage Village
- Exempt Meeting
- Hospitality Connects Wrap meeting
- TBB Chamber Leadership Institute, Government Seminar
- TBB Chamber Board of Directors
- UF-IFAS Sea Grant meeting
- John's Pass Soft Opening of Mad Beach Brewery
- Arts Update City of St. Pete
- Tony Jannus Awards
- Taste of Clearwater
- SKAL International
- Capital Projects Funding info session
- Clearwater & St. Pete Chambers, Politics in Pinellas
- Clearwater Regional Chamber Tourism Partners meeting
- John's Pass Seafood Festival
- Clearwater Beach Chalk Art Walk
- University of Tampa Majors Career Fair
- Rowdies Soccer Game
- Send-off for Kimberly Bailey, St. Petersburg Economic Development

VSPC Planning Meetings

- FOCUS St. Pete – an Orientation Program for Business, Civic & Non-Profit Leaders
- BLUE Ocean Conservation Film Festival