Bill Talbert Joins U.S. Travel and Tourism Advisory Board

In conjunction with National Travel and Tourism Week, U.S. Deputy Secretary of Commerce Rebecca Blank announced the appointment of six new members to the Travel and Tourism Advisory Board (TTAB). One of these new members is our own William D. (Bill) Talbert, president and CEO of the Greater Miami CVB.

The TTAB, established in 2003, serves as the advisory body to the secretary of commerce on matters relating to the travel and tourism industry in the United States. Its members represent a broad cross-section of the industry, including transportation services, financial services, and hotels and restaurants, as well as a mix of small and large firms from across the country.

Talbert looks forward to his service on the board, saying, “I want to make a difference, particularly in the entry process for international visitors to Florida. Compared to other countries, the United States’ entry process is still one of the toughest. It doesn’t need to be. There is a way to balance safety and security; they are not mutually exclusive.”

He goes on to say that the TTAB has direct input to the U. S. Dept of Commerce on issues important to travel and tourism, Florida’s number one industry.

“There is not a more important group than this board to the entire state. Florida should always have a rep on the TTAB,” Talbert says emphatically. “This is a can-do board. I was appointed one day, and we had a meeting the next day. This group moves at warp speed! It is a very active group advising the administration and making a difference for Florida’s number one industry, travel and tourism.”

Santiago Corrada Takes Helm of Visit Tampa Bay

Following a three-month national search, Visit Tampa Bay has hired Santiago Corrada as its new president and chief executive officer. Corrada was selected for his local experience, management skills, industry knowledge, collaboration expertise and overall leadership ability as well as for his passion for Tampa Bay.

Only moments into a conversation with Corrada, one gains a sense of his energy and urgency to do all he can to promote his destination.

“Our focus here at Tampa Bay is easy: We brand. We sell,” Corrada says in fast-flowing sentences. “We are in the final phases of developing our new brand, and we are looking at areas we haven’t attacked before. We shouldn’t concede markets because we think visitors are going elsewhere.”

Corrada says he plans to partner with the airport to bring in more direct flights from Latin American and European countries, as well as focus on domestic markets in the Midwest and the West Coast.

Worth It

by Robert Skrob, CPA

Thank you for all the well wishes and comments about the new FADMO headquarters office. It’s been a dream for 10 years to have a nice office that provides a positive impression for guests and an asset for attracting the best team.

It seemed like it would never happen. Even as it was happening, there were constant obstacles along the way. The worst part is it came on top of everything else I had to do.

You know how challenging the end of the legislative session was with our work to educate lawmakers about the importance of tourism marketing? All that happened while we were putting up new walls and replacing the roof on the building. Some contractors needed answers, others were making mistakes and they all wanted money. It was a lot to manage on top of my regular projects.

But we persevered. We kept at it a little bit each day, and finally it was completed. Now we’ll get to enjoy our building for many years.

The legislative session revealed a key opportunity for DMOs: to build
You are welcome to visit FADMO’s new headquarters office in Tallahassee, Fla. Its location is convenient to Tallahassee’s largest neighborhoods as well as to the state Capitol and state offices.

Your New Association Headquarters Office

The Florida Association of Destination Marketing Organizations has moved to a new headquarters office in Tallahassee, Fla. Update your records and especially your accounts payable systems to reflect the new address:

1390 Timberlane Drive
Tallahassee, FL 32312
Phone: 850/222-6000

You are welcome to visit us the next time you are in Tallahassee. In the meantime, here is a virtual tour:

Here is FADMO’s new conference room, where we will be able to host meetings with important policymakers from throughout the state.

Visitors to FADMO’s new headquarters office are greeted in a clean and bright reception area.

FADMO Executive Director Robert Skrob has a red office, complete with a table for important guests, such as you, who stop in to meet with him.
DMO directors from Key West to Pensacola gathered in Sarasota, Fla., to share and learn the best practices in attracting visitors to their communities.

Will Seccombe and Paul Phipps of VISIT FLORIDA open the Destination Marketing Summit with a discussion of how DMOs work closely with VISIT FLORIDA to attract more visitors to their communities.

Virginia Haley of Visit Sarasota announces the International Federation of Rowing Associations is considering hosting its 2017 World Rowing Championships at Sarasota’s new state-of-the-art rowing facility. The event would bring teams from around the world to Florida for the event and to destinations around the state for training months before the event.

FADMO Executive Director Robert Skrob leads a CEO discussion of how DMOs are restructuring their organizational charts to address the new opportunities presented by social media and the visitor engagement this media creates.

Attendees snap up the items donated for the silent auction to help fund the Dave Warren Scholarship Program, which supports students of Florida’s hospitality programs who are interested in pursuing careers in destination marketing. The silent auction raised $3,146 to support this program.

Bill Geist closes the Destination Marketing Summit by continuing the industry discussion we began at the annual meeting in October about designing the DMO for success in the world by using tomorrow’s technology and communication tools.
DMOs Celebrate National Travel & Tourism Week

Bradenton
The Bradenton Area CVB announced the winners of its 2013 Champions of Tourism Awards during its NTTW luncheon: Fredrick Piccolo of Sarasota Bradenton International Airport, Tourism Outreach; Anna Maria Island Resorts (David Teitlebaum accepting); Tourism Partner—Lodging, Restaurant, Attractions; and Paul Blacketter of Suncoast Aquatic Nature Center, Tourism Catalyst. The BACVB also presented its 2012 year in review, showing that Manatee County saw increases in visitors, expenditures, economic impact and employment.

Central Florida
Visit Central Florida recognized distinguished tourism organizations and professionals at its NTTW luncheon: Desiree Chasse of Holiday Inn and Hampton Inn (Winter Haven), Polk County Tourism Professional of the Year; Ridge Island Groves of Haines City, Tourism Partner of the Year; and The Lake Mirror Classic Auto Festival, Dick Pope Sr. Tourism Award. This year’s luncheon featured a new component, the announcement of the Ledger Media Group’s second annual Golden Plate Awards. Favored restaurateurs from across Polk County attended to receive their Golden Plates.

Gainesville
Visit Gainesville’s weeklong celebration included the 21st Annual Bed-Making Contest at the Paramount Plaza Hotel. Other events included specials and discounts at local attractions, announcing the winners of the Alachua County Customer Service Awards at the NTTW luncheon, Gainesville’s Amazing Race and featured attractions and an NTTW proclamation signing during the county commission meeting.

Greater Fort Lauderdale
The Greater Fort Lauderdale CVB rallied 400 members of the hospitality industry wearing the color red, in celebration of the importance of this economic engine for Broward County. More than 141,647 people are directly employed in travel-related jobs in Broward, larger than any other single private sector industry. “March 2013 was a landmark month for Greater Fort Lauderdale, collecting an unprecedented $6,295,740 million in a single month,” said Nicki E. Grossman, GFLCVB president.

Hernando County
The Hernando County Tourism Bureau celebrated NTTW with the launch of its new website, www.NaturallyHernando.org. The redesigned and expanded website offers more in-depth content, provides listings for tourism partners in Hernando County and highlights the activities offered on the Nature Coast.

Kissimmee
Experience Kissimmee celebrated Osceola County’s hospitality workers with a street party at Old Town USA and Fun Spot USA. The event was kicked off by a fly-over by a Mustang plane from Stallion 51, followed by the playing of the national anthem. Representatives of a number of Experience Kissimmee’s industry partners set up booths, offering tourism employees interactive fun, games and prizes.

Lee County
The Lee County VCB held a Travel Rally Day at the Downtown Fort Myers River Basin. You can check out all 100+ photos on the VCB’s Facebook page, www.Facebook.com/LeeVCB.

Martin County
The Martin County CVB sponsored a Facebook contest to involve residents and visitors in sharing their stories about their travel experiences in Martin County. In addition, the CVB had proclamations signed by the city and county boards of commissioners, held a luncheon for the Stuart/Martin County

Brocard County
Commissioners Stacy Ritter and Dale Holness, with GFLCVB President Nicki E. Grossman, present a check for $9,906,757,561 from the 12 million visitors to Greater Fort Lauderdale in 2012.
Orlando
Visit Orlando celebrated with proclamations presented by Orange County Mayor Teresa Jacobs and City of Orlando Mayor Buddy Dyer. Visit Orlando also delivered balloons and cakes to Transportation Security Administration and Customs and Border Patrol employees at local airports, held a bowl-a-thon to benefit Junior Achievement of Central Florida’s hospitality education program, hosted students from the Central Florida National Academy Foundation for a day-long job shadow experience, hosted the annual NTTW luncheon and wrapped up the week with the I-Drive 5K Run to benefit Orlando’s YMCA Aquatic Center’s “Learn to Swim” scholarship fund.

Palm Beach County
Palm Beach County CVB hosted more than 350 members of the hospitality and tourism industry to recognize the importance of travel on the local economy, to announce International Polo Club Palm Beach as the 2013 Provi-
dencia Award winner and to celebrate the CVB’s 30th anniversary. Susanna Costello, VP of Global Brand for VISIT FLORIDA, was the keynote speaker, and the CVB revealed a progress report of positive growth over the past 30 years that demonstrates travel’s impact in Palm Beach County.

Palm Coast and the Flagler Beaches
Palm Coast and the Flagler Beaches honored its annual H.E.R.O.E.S. (Hospitality Employee Recognition Of Excellent Service) award winners: Jason Hutsell of Flagler Fish Company, Tony Greaves of Gamble Rogers Recreational Area, Sky Austin of Marineland Dolphin Adventure, Kellie Scribner of Best Western and Jason Olivares (not pictured) of Hammock Beach Resort.

Panama City Beach
The Panama City Beach CVB celebrated Tourism Day with free music, food and refresh-
ments at the Aaron Bessant Park Amphitheater, and on June 1, British pop band The Wanted, along with Cody Simpson and other rising stars, performed at the first ever "Real. Fun. Beachfest."

Pasco County
Pasco County hosted the Canopy Piloting Nationals at Skydive City in Zephyrhills. You can enjoy the fun on YouTube. Search for “Skydive City Canopy Piloting Nationals May 2013” and scroll to the video posted by Visit Pasco Tourism.

Pensacola
Visit Pensacola hosted the first annual Pensacola Travel Rally at Pensacola International Airport, welcoming passengers to stop by the Escambia County visitor centers to pick up a special Travel Rally welcome gift bag and to register for three grand prize packages. Additionally, the visitor information center staff said, “The Pensacola Area takes the cake,” by providing slices of tourism-and-travel themed cakes daily to visitors. The first visitor to stop by each day was asked to cut the cake.

Sarasota County
Visit Sarasota County announced the recipients of the 2013 National Tourism Week Awards at a ceremo-
nity breakfast: Nik Wallenda, Voice of Sarasota; Kate Hedding of Crow’s Nest Marina Restaurant, Guest Service Excellence-Management; Barbara Slater of The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Guest Service Excellence-Front Line; Kevin Greene of The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Guest Service Excellence-Heart of House; Carol Clark of Holiday Inn Lido Beach, Guest Service Excellence-Lodging; Barbara and Ian McKenzie of Doctors Hospital of Sarasota; and Tommy Vaughan-Birch of Mote Marine Laboratory & Aquarium, Guest Service Excellence-Volunteer.

Tallahassee
Visit Tallahassee celebrated with a proclamation from the Leon County Commission. County Commis-
sion Chairman Nick Maddox recognized the group for the tourism industry’s record year of growth.

Tampa Bay
Visit Tampa Bay’s NTTW luncheon started with entertainment from Busch Gardens Tampa Bay’s new Madagascar show. The characters and dancers brought a lively and musical performance. Promoting Visit Tampa Bay’s social media, attendees could use the hashtag #NTWTampaBay to upload photos to Instagram to appear on a large screen during the lunch. A highlight of the event was the announcement of the Gonzmart Family Ambassador of the Year, Tom Dempsey.
Tourism Industry Responds to Governor’s Budget

As follow-up to Governor Scott’s budget signing announcement, VISIT FLORIDA gathered the reactions of several key tourism industry leaders and sent them to various media outlets.

Will Seccombe, president and CEO of VISIT FLORIDA

“With the substantial increase in VISIT FLORIDA funding, Florida tourism is extremely well positioned to build on two consecutive years of record visitation and job creation. I would like to thank Governor Scott and the Florida Legislature for their visionary leadership and for their extraordinary support of VISIT FLORIDA and the state’s tourism industry.”

Glenn Hastings, chairman of the VISIT FLORIDA Board of Directors and executive director of the St. Johns County TDC

“The significant increase in VISIT FLORIDA funding over the past two years is a clear indication that our state leaders recognize the importance of tourism, and our industry’s role in strengthening the Florida economy and creating jobs for Floridians. It is also a strong endorsement of the industry-driven nature of our public-private partnership and our collective success in generating a substantial return on the state’s investment in VISIT FLORIDA’s cooperative marketing programs.”

Tammy Gustafson, vice chair of the VISIT FLORIDA Board of Directors and director of national & group sales with Universal Orlando Resort

“Every dollar the state invests in VISIT FLORIDA is matched nearly 2-to-1 in private sector investment by our tourism industry partners. The destination marketing programs VISIT FLORIDA develops give Florida tourism a distinct advantage in today’s highly competitive international travel marketplace.”

Carol Dover, member of the VISIT FLORIDA Board of Directors and president and CEO of the Florida Restaurant & Lodging Association

“It’s simple math. Every 85 visitors to the state support one Florida job. I applaud Governor Scott and the Legislature for their commitment to increased funding for VISIT FLORIDA’s marketing efforts, which will strengthen the Florida economy and create jobs by encouraging more tourism in our great state.”

J. William Seccombe Testifies at D.C. Hearing on Tourism

On May 7, 2013, the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Commerce, Manufacturing, and Trade held a hearing on “Vacation Nation: How Tourism Benefits Our Economy.” The hearing included two panels of individuals representing different sectors of the tourism industry from around the country. Our state was ably represented by VISIT FLORIDA President & CEO J. William Seccombe.

Much of the hearing was spent describing the importance of tourism to the U.S. economy, including how the tourism industry has bounced back significantly from the recession and has been a major part of our nation’s recovery, while creating domestic jobs that cannot be outsourced.
PCB Brings New Meaning to ‘Beach Sports’
Panama City Beach was a sportsmen’s paradise earlier this month, with License Free Fishing Days for saltwater and freshwater anglers on June 1 and June 7, respectively. Also in June, soccer fans are being treated to four Panama City Beach Pirates home games, and teams from across the country are competing in two Grand Slam World Series of Baseball tournaments, as well as the USFA’s Fastpitch in Paradise tournament.

www.VisitPanamaCityBeach.com; www.PlayPanamaCityBeach.com

Polk County Attractions Forum Brings ‘Big Three’ Together
Visit Central Florida organized and hosted the Polk County Attractions Forum on May 15 as a public forum featuring the leaders of Polk County’s three most prominent attractions, along with Bill Lupfer, president of the Florida Attractions Association. Lupfer joined Adrian Jones, general manager of LEGOLAND Florida; David Price, president of Bok Tower Gardens; and Kermit Weeks, founder of Fantasy of Flight in reporting that Polk County has been reaping the rewards of tourist visitation during the economic downturn and sluggish recovery.

www.VisitCentralFlorida.org

Bradentton CVB/Rosen College Launch Ambassador Program
The Bradenton Area CVB is pleased to announce its partnership with the Dick Pope Sr. Institute for Tourism Studies at the University of Central Florida’s Rosen College of Hospitality Management. Together, they have created the Bradenton, Anna Maria Island and Longboat Key Certified Destination Ambassador Program. The program is expected to also involve the hospitality program at the University of South Florida, Sarasota-Manatee.

www.BradentonGulfIslands.com

Martin County CVB Holds Facebook Contest
Martin County CVB’s Places to Go, Stories to Tell contest reached out to residents (and their visitors) to help spread the word that Martin County is a great destination for vacations, business meetings and quick get-a-ways. Throughout the month of May, Facebook fans posted pictures, videos and stories about their favorite places to hang out in Martin County to be eligible to win DiscoverMartin.com’s drawing for round-trip airfare for two to the Bahamas.

www.DiscoverMartin.com

a closer relationship between you and the lawmakers within your county. Some of our DMO directors know their legislators so well that they were able to send a text on their cell phones and get a response. We received a lot of great insight and information from those legislators.

Will you make it a goal to build that type of relationship with your legislators over the summer? I understand it may seem daunting, plus it comes on top of all your other responsibilities. But it will be worth it—for your community, for your own needs in the future and for needs your industry may have in the years to come.

Your lawmakers need you. You have information about the health of your community, new businesses and other issues your lawmakers can use in their speeches and as planks in their reelection platforms. Become a resource of information about a critical industry within your community!

If you need help getting started, let’s schedule a conversation so we can create a plan of action with your lawmakers and your situation in mind. I’m happy to help you, and I may have information and resources that will make it even easier for you to accomplish this goal.

Just like remodeling our new FADMO office building, building a relationship with your legislators will seem insurmountable at times, but in the end, you’ll be so glad you persevered and made it happen.

E.D.’s REPORT continued from page 1

U.S. Travel Association ESTO
August 18-20, 2013
Richmond, Virginia
www.ESTO.USTravel.org

Calendar
Florida Association of Destination Marketing Organizations

The Florida Association of Destination Marketing Organizations represents the 54 official county DMOs that promote their communities throughout the world. These tourism promotion activities help to attract 76.6 million visitors to Florida, generating $56.6 billion in spending and 690,700 jobs.

These activities are made possible by Tourist Development Taxes provided by Florida Statutes Section 125.0104.

The FADMO serves as the single unifying voice for all of Florida’s DMOs, providing ongoing tourism marketing efforts, legislative outreach, education, and tourism promotion activities to increase the overall competitiveness of Florida’s tourism marketplace.

The FADMO is a strong voice for Florida’s DMOs and the tourism industry throughout the state. By promoting Florida’s tourism destinations, the FADMO helps to attract millions of visitors from around the world to experience all the state has to offer.

Florida Association of Destination Marketing Organizations

Executive Director, Robert Skrob, CAE • Lobbyists, Brian Ballard and Mat Forrest, 850/577-0444

1390 Timberlane Road, Tallahassee, FL 32312, USA • Phone: 850/222-6000 • Fax: 850/222-6002 • Web: www.FADMO.org

Enclosed is your copy of Tourism Marketing Today. A monthly publication of the Florida Association of Destination Marketing Organizations.

“Bringing more customers to Florida”