PRE-SESSION UPDATE

The 2022 Legislative Session is less than a month away and is set to begin on January 11, 2022 and conclude on March 11, 2022.

CFHLA is tracking a number of issues that are of high priority going into session, including bills that will impact the future of VISIT FLORIDA, how the Tourist Development Tax (TDT) can be spent and more.

VISIT FLORIDA
Legislation that will revise VISIT FLORIDA’s sunset date has once again been filed in both Chambers. The sunset dates aren’t identical, but their intent is the same.

HB 489 relating to Florida Tourism Marketing by Rep. Chaney (R, St. Petersburg) would change the Sunset date from October 1, 2023 to October 1, 2028.

SB 434 relating to Florida Tourism Marketing by Sen. Hooper (R, Palm Harbor) would change the Sunset date from October 1, 2023 to October 1, 2031.

While HB 489 hasn’t been heard in its first committee, SB 434 recently passed its first committee and has one more stop before it reaches the Senate floor.

Tourist Development Tax (TDT)
Two bills have been filed to expand the use of the Tourist Development Tax.

- HB 6075 by Rep. Eskamani (D, Orange)

HB 6075 - Tourist Development Taxes by Rep. Eskamani proposes to delete the requirement that a county must first use at least 40% of the total TDT collected to promote and advertise tourism before it could authorize and use
TDT’s for those improvement projects. In current law there are five requirements counties must adhere to before spending TDT on infrastructure projects.

The bill has only been filed in the House so far and it has been referenced to three committees.

**HB 673 - Tourist Development Taxes by Rep. Shoaf** seeks to make changes to the area of the statute that allows for TDT’s to be used for lifeguards in certain rural coastal counties. You might recall this expansion was made in 2016. Rep. Shoaf’s bill, as filed, would increase the percentage that could be used from 10% to 20% as well as expand the uses from public safety to include “tourism training programs”. The exact bill language makes the following changes:

A Senate companion is expected but it has not been filed yet. The House bill has been referenced to four committees but not heard yet.

**Vacation Rentals**

The annual fight regarding short term rental legislation looks like it will continue again this Session, as legislation on the issue has been filed in both chambers.

**SB512 and HB325 - relating to Vacation Rentals by Sen. Burgess (R, Zephyrhills) and Rep. Fischer (R, Jacksonville)**

Like past years, the legislation applies to any local law, ordinance, or regulation adopted AFTER June 1, 2011. Unlike in past years the House and Senate bills were filed identically and essentially pick up where the Senate bill ended last Session.

- Requiring advertising platforms to collect and remit taxes for certain transactions.
- Revising the regulated activities of public lodging establishments and public food service establishments preempted to the state to include licensing.
- Expanding the authority of local laws, ordinances, or regulations to include requiring vacation rentals to register with local vacation rental registration programs.
- Authorizing local governments to adopt vacation rental registration programs and impose fines for failure to register.
- Requiring advertising platforms to require that persons placing advertisements for vacation rentals include certain information in the advertisements and attest to certain information,
- Effective Date: Except as otherwise expressly provided in this act, this act shall take effect upon becoming a law.

CFHLA will continue to monitor these bills and include a more comprehensive review of the bill(s) as they start to move in the coming weeks.

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**GA COMMITTEE**
On December 8th, the CFHLA Governmental Affairs Committee held their monthly meeting at the Citrus Club (Thank you, Justin Vermuth) with special guest speaker, Osceola County Commissioner Vivana Janer, District 2. The Commissioner briefed our members about several issues that she is championing, including a more robust regional transportation system and increasing workforce housing opportunities in the Central Florida region. Additionally, she heard from several of our members about a variety of other important issues facing the hospitality and tourism industry today.

The next CFHLA Governmental Affairs Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 12th, at FantasyWorld Resort with special guest Osceola County Commissioner Cheryl Grieb, District 4.

REGIONAL TOURIST DEVELOPMENT TAX UPDATE

Recently, Orange, Osceola and Seminole counties released their October 2021 Tourist Development Tax collection numbers.

Orange County TDT

In October 2021, Orange County announced that the monthly TDT collection was $21,410,100. That is a 177.63% increase over October 2020.

Month-over-month, October collections were higher than September collections by $4.96 million but were lower than October 2019 collections by $3.43 million. However, collections remain significantly above where they were at the beginning of the pandemic.

For more information on Orange County TDT numbers, please CLICK HERE.
Osceola County TDT

In October 2021, Osceola County collected $4,324,335 in Tourist Development Tax, which is a 146% increase over October 2020! October 2021 collections were only $117,170 less than October 2019 TDT collections.

Seminole County TDT

In October 2021, Seminole County is estimating a collection of over $400,000 in Tourist Development Tax, which is more than a 35% increase over October 2020!

CFHLA PAC RECEPTION
CLICK HERE to purchase tickets.

DONATE

CFHLA MEMBERS - Please consider making a donation of $50 via the link below to the CFHLA-PAC to support its efforts in supporting and endorsing Hospitality-Friendly candidates in the State of Florida.
As a reminder, all CFHLA Board Members, PAC Board Members, and ARC Board Members have committed to contributing $100 to the CFHLA-PAC in 2021. If you are a part of one or more of these groups, please fulfill your invoice today, or pay via the link above.

IN THE NEWS

Tourist tax bill seeks tiny change that could be ‘sea change’ (Florida Politics)

Gov DeSantis Recommends $50 Million for Visit Florida Funding (Travel Pulse)

Amid Florida’s affordable housing crisis, DeSantis proposes highest spending in a decade (Tampa Bay Times)

Orange County resort taxes climb in October (Orlando Business Journal)

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis announces budget proposal for 2022-23 fiscal year (WTXL Tallahassee)

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