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IN THIS EDITION:

PLASENCIA

GALA

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PLASENCIA

LINKS OF INTEREST

On Wednesday, December 9th, **State Representative Rene Plasencia** (District 49) joined the CFHLA Governmental Affairs Committee at the **Walt Disney World Yacht Club** for the December 2015 CFHLA GA Committee Meeting (Thank you meeting host, Sharon Smoley).

CFHLA GA Committee Members had a very productive and detailed conversation with Representative Plasencia relating to the appropriate uses of the **Tourist Development Tax** and establishing a level regulatory "playing field" for ride-sharing companies such as Uber and Lyft and "Shared Lodging" companies such as Airbnb and Homeaway.

(From left) CFHLA Governmental Affairs Committee Chairman Scott Tripoli of the DoubleTree by Hilton Orlando at SeaWorld, State Representative Rene Plasencia, and CFHLA Board of Directors Secretary Fred Sawyers of the Walt Disney World Swan & Dolphin

State Representative Rene Plasencia answers questions relating to the Tourist Development Tax from CFHLA Governmental Affairs Committee Members

The first CFHLA Governmental Affairs Committee Meeting of 2016 will be held on ***Wednesday, January 13th.***

Importantly, CFHLA thanks the 2015 Governmental Affairs Committee Meeting Sponsor, Maureen Haggerty of:

GALA

The **CFHLA Hospitality Gala** was held on Saturday, December 12th at the Walt Disney World Dolphin, featuring **1,200** Central Florida Hospitality Leaders and their guests. This program featured the recognition of CFHLA's Allied, Engineering and Lodging Members of the Year.

Additionally, **Orlando City Soccer** Founder and President, **Phil Rawlins**, was honored with the ***Charles Andrews Memorial Hospitality Award for Community Leadership***.

CFHLA Members on Saturday night were joined by a number of Central Florida Elected Officials, including:

Ricky Booth – Osceola County School Board Member, District 5

Scott Boyd - Orange County Commissioner, District 1

John Cortes – State Representative, District 43

John Horan – Seminole County Commissioner, District 2

Mike Miller – State Representative, District 47

Tony Ortiz – City of Orlando Commissioner, District 2

Rene Plasencia – State Representative, District 49

Rick Singh – Orange County Property Appraiser

Jennifer Sullivan – State Representative, District 31

Victor Torres – State Representative, District 48

Jay Wheeler – Osceola County School Board Member, District 1

A number of the Elected Officials in attendance recognized a familiar face on stage at the Hospitality Gala, when CFHLA Governmental Affairs Committee Chairman, **Scott Tripoli**, of the DoubleTree by Hilton Orlando at SeaWorld was presented with the ***2015 CFHLA Lodging Member of the Year Award.***

Scott Tripoli of the DoubleTree by Hilton Orlando at SeaWorld
receives the CFHLA Lodging Member of the Year Award

City of Orlando Commissioner Tony Ortiz (center) at the 2015 CFHLA Hospitality Gala

State Representative Victor "Vic" Torres (right) attended the
2015 CFHLA Hospitality Gala with his guest Amy Mercado

OSCEOLA

On Wednesday, December 2nd, approximately **fifteen CFHLA Lodging Members from Osceola County** participated in the first-ever **CFHLA - Osceola County "TDT Educational Workshop."**

CFHLA invited **Osceola County Office of Management and Budget Manager Amanda Clavijo** and **County Comptroller Michael Kurek** to the CFHLA Offices to provide a complimentary educational presentation on Tourist Development Tax collections in Osceola County and current Osceola County TDT expenditures.

The presentation was interactive, with CFHLA Members asking questions and engaging in a **productive conversation** with the Osceola County representatives relating to **appropriate uses of TDT funds.**

CFHLA Members in Orange County and Seminole County should "stay-tuned" for similar TDT Educational Workshops to take place in early 2016.

GAETZ

Last month, CFHLA issued an **"Action Alert" via VoterVoice** to all CFHLA Members, asking Members to contact their State Representatives and State Senators to oppose a proposal by ***State Representative Matt Gaetz*** that would have redirected **20% of County TDT revenues to the State for Visit Florida** (an idea opposed by Visit Florida) and would have allowed local Tourist Development Councils to use 10% or more of Tourist Development Tax (TDT) revenues on law enforcement funding purposes.

CFHLA Members swiftly responded, with **over 120 emails from CFHLA Members** delivered to State Representatives and State Senators in Tallahassee, asking them to preserve the integrity of the Tourist Development Tax and utilizing TDT revenues for tourism marketing and promotion.

As of this writing, **Representative Gaetz has withdrawn his plans** to redirect TDT funds away from local control. CFHLA will continue monitoring this issue as it is expected to arise again in future Legislative Sessions.

ORANGE

Over the past three months, CFHLA staff has developed ***two Tourist Development Tax Grant Request Application drafts***, one for Venues/Capital Improvement Projects and a second for large-scale events, to serve as templates for Central Florida County governments to use when awarding TDT money to non-County groups.

CFHLA is pleased to announce that Orange County government has agreed to work with CFHLA to potentially implement these TDT grant applications into **Orange County's Tourist Development Plan**.

These TDT applications aim to strengthen the TDT grant process by

awarding funds to projects that will provide the best **Return On Investment (ROI) to Orange County** as it relates to room nights generated, marketing of the Central Florida destination and long-term, recurring tourist development.

If you have any questions about these TDT grant applications, please do not hesitate to contact ***CFHLA Public Policy Director Kevin Craig at publicpolicy@cfhla.org.***

SESSION

Please note that the **Florida Legislative Session** is beginning early in 2016, as the Session is scheduled to take place beginning on **Tuesday, January 12th** and concluding on **Friday, March 11th.**

Over 28 CFHLA Members have registered to participate in **"Florida Tourism Day"** at the Capitol on **Wednesday, January 20th**. CFHLA has already secured meetings with various Central Florida Elected Officials, including Senate President Andy Gardiner, to discuss ***CFHLA's 2016 Legislative Priorities***.

CFHLA thanks Mears Transportation Group for providing roundtrip bus transportation for CFHLA Members on Tourism Day.

FL HOUSE

During the upcoming **Legislative Session**, you can easily track legislation, committees, watch FL House floor action live, contact your legislator, and find all information relating to Florida's Legislative Session on the mobile **"FL House" app** - CLICK HERE for more information.

If you have any difficulties downloading this app, please contact CFHLA Public Policy Director Kevin Craig at 407-313-5035.

THANK YOU

CFHLA recognizes

for serving as the

2015 Sponsor of
The Insider Political Newsletter!

For more information relating to
Summit Broadband, please CLICK HERE.

LINKS

Below please find news articles, relating to the political interests of the Hospitality Industry:

Rep. Matt Gaetz Drops plan to Send Local Bed Tax Dollars to Visit Florida

Orange County Tourism Development Taxes Bring in $226 Million

Gambling Deal Met With Scrutiny, Skepticism

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